



WEST TAMAR

Destination Action Plan 2019 - 2022

March 2019

Acknowledgments

The development of the West Tamar Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by Tourism Northern Tasmania (TNT).

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

Images used within this document are courtesy of West Tamar Council, West Tamar DAP Group, Richard Strong, Sean Robson, Chris Crerar, Farmgate Festival and other local photographers.



Facilitator

Chris Griffin – Tourism Northern Tasmania

Coordinator

Sonia Mellor – Tourism Northern Tasmania

Destination Action Plan Working Group

Matt Adams – Timber@Velo

Damien Blackwell – West Tamar Council

Carol Bracken – Farmgate Festival

Jayne Cooper – Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife

Annette Ferrero – Tamar Valley Wine Route

Craig Hawkins – Seahorse World

Damien Pinkerton – Tamar Valley Resort

Fiona Stocker – Farmgate Festival

Naomi Walsh – Rosevears Tavern

Fiona Weller – Moores Hill

Introduction

Tourism Northern Tasmania is supporting the Destination Action Plan process for the West Tamar in recognition of the potential of the region, and to build on the key pillars of the Northern Tasmania 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 the West Tamar identifies priority strategies and actions which if implemented over three years will enhance competitiveness of the West Tamar 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 West Tamar visitor economy and experience.



General description of the West Tamar environs

The Tamar River/kanamaluka is Australia's largest navigable waterway, a 70 km long tidal estuary in Northern Tasmania formed by the merging of the North Esk River and South Esk River at Launceston, and flows to its mouth at Low Head, north of the second largest settlement George Town and into Bass Strait.

The Tamar Valley in which the river flows, features beautiful vistas of vineyards and orchards, jetties, pontoons and boats, and a contemporary mix of agriculture, viticulture, architecture, and industry both modern and heritage, making for a rich community proud to share stories and lifestyle with visitors to the region.

The West Tamar Municipal Area includes the western side of the Tamar River from the suburban area of Riverside in Launceston, extending north to Bass Strait and as far west as Frankford. The major industries are tourism, retailing, agriculture, fishing, world class vineyards and first class maritime education facilities. The valley has various natural attractions, including the Narawntapu National Park, Notley Fern Gorge, Tamar Island Wetlands and the Tamar River. The valley has an abundance of historic attractions and points of interest associated with the foundation of Tasmania, in particular, the York Town settlement and the Beaconsfield Mine and Heritage Centre.

The Tamar River estuary and its tributaries are home to an abundance of bird life and, combined with its beautiful landscape, make West Tamar a peaceful and idyllic residential and rural setting.



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




Our collective strengths

- The River
- Diversity of major attractions
- Writers Festival + other festivals
- Wine experience and route
- Greens Beach
- Premium wine and food experiences
- Peace and quiet
- Touring drives
- Spectacular scenery
- Agri-tourism
- History and stories
- Accommodation – undiscovered and boutique
- National Parks and Reserves including Notley Fern Gorge and Tamar Island
- Villages
- Art/artists/events/installations
- Short walks



Vision for the future – 10 years time

- River – enhanced use of it, feel like you are part of it
- Provision of 'on-river' experiences
- Connecting valley experiences – history
- Sought after destination by visitors (including Tasmanians)
- More engagement/activities evolving around the river
- Tamar Valley brand first – city second
- Small conference destination
- Leveraging agricultural strengths
- Diverse balanced tourism ecosystem
- Vibrant night time experiences/food
- Abundant local produce available 'everywhere'
- More boutique experiences dispersed around the valley
- Preferred weekender for Launceston
- Welcome mat put out by community
- Locals as 'guides' and volunteers for visitors
- Engaged community and proud tourism operators
- Community and industry share knowledge with visitors consistently and proudly
- Locals 'offer' with attractions



Our challenges

- Consistent destination-wide marketing
- Seasonality – vast differences that affects sustainable business
- Lack of business collaboration
- Economic environment
- Business investment into the region (ease of)
- Lack of co-operation between 'micro-regions'
- Lack of community confidence and engagement
- Lack of motivated/funded associations
- Lack of loud 'reasonable' voices
- Government 'red tape decisions'
- Lack of support from government at a local level
- SME training barriers
- Being 'off-route' – Tamar not the first on the list
- Access – number of flights and availability on Spirit of Tasmania
- Brand identity needed
- Health of River
- Tamar as an exclusive destination
- Community buy in and engagement
- Limited accommodation range for groups e.g. school
- Lack of population growth
- Changes in state/regional marketing focus



Our opportunities

- Making the River an icon
- Destination brand message and marketing consistency
- Engaging locals to participate in experiences e.g. free entry etc.
- Leveraging our success stories e.g. like current collaboration wine route/farmgate
- Attracting funding from state government
- Working together
- Cross regional group
- New approach to licensing food businesses – more about quality, not just regulations
- Seasonality as an advantage
- Less risk adverse government policy
- Empowering leaders in the region + next generation
- Beauty Point Tourism Precinct
- Supporting producers to value add e.g. providers; business incubators
- Investment attraction through formal process
- West Head and National Parks + Tamar Wetland + Notley Fern Gorge – PWS reinvestment
- Ride sharing for wineries 'wine Uber'
- Using the characters of the valley in marketing and to inspire
- Tamar Valley Dive Trail
- Leveraging off city accommodation
- Targeting school excursion market

Success factors

DIAGNOSTIC RATING

Industry research has established that the following factors are present in successful destinations that are achieving the above objectives. The workshop participants considered these factors relative to the West Tamar in reaching consensus on the priority strategies and actions. A focus on continuous improvement of all these factors will contribute to the competitive growth and sustainability of the visitor economy of the West Tamar.

| Characteristics | Rating | Comments |
|--|--------|---|
| 1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing | 5.4 | Launceston Tamar Valley Tourism Association |
| 2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development | 6.6 | Tourism Northern Tasmania (TNT) |
| 3. Local Government support | 5.9 | West Tamar Council |
| 4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations | 6 | |
| 5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans | 7 | |
| 6. Consistent visitor service excellence | 7.2 | |
| 7. Research driven cooperative marketing | 4.7 | |
| 8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand | 7.7 | |
| 9. Risk management plans in place | 5.3 | Mostly consisting of 'Don't Know' |
| 10. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism | 5.7 | |



Action Plan implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for the West Tamar 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 Implementation Leadership Group. This may result in a revision and updating of the Plan. A new plan will be prepared in three years.



PRIORITY 1

Unifying destination brand and marketing approach

| Actions | | Responsibilities | Priorities |
|---------|--|------------------|------------|
| 1. | Re-launch brand tool kit and communicate it to industry/community | DAP/WTC | High |
| 2. | Acknowledge and celebrate 'on-brand' experiences on #TamarValley | DAP/WTC | High |
| 3. | Coordinate and implement a collaborative marketing approach (including working with high traffic partners) | WTC/TNT | Medium |
| 4. | Develop a visual destination identity | WTC | Low |
| 5. | Review and share marketing plan to industry, council and community | DAP | High |



PRIORITY 2

Targeting seasonal audiences

| Actions | | Responsibilities | Priorities |
|---------|--|------------------|------------|
| 1. | Leverage visitors from events hosted in the city and the valley by working with TNT, Events Tasmania, Business Events Tasmania and Event Organisers to create pre and post itineraries | TNT/ET/BET/DAP | High |
| 2. | Promote cool season ‘weekend escapes’ through industry co-operative marketing to Launceston and Tasmania | TNT/COL/WTC | High |
| 3. | Attracting more mid-week conference business to the valley by supporting the promotions of Tamar Valley venues | BET | Medium |



PRIORITY 3

Making the River the icon

Actions

Responsibilities

Priorities

1. Petition state government and federal government for developments that improve visitor access to the river (e.g. Rosevears, Gravelly Beach, Beauty Point Master Plan)
2. Lobby state government for improvements to Batman Bridge (e.g. Painting bridge, improving adjoining reserve areas)
3. Promote the best ways for visitors to enjoy the river through local business channels and information centre/websites

TNT/WTC

High

DAP

Medium

DAP/WTC

Medium



PRIORITY 4

Better collaboration for experience development and delivery

Actions

1. Supporting Farmgate Festival/Tamar Valley Writers Festival/Artentwine/Vintage: Tamar to 'test run' new initiatives and experiences
2. Creating experience packages to connect local businesses to events and accommodation providers
3. Support attraction of cruise ships and experience development/shore-ex tours

Responsibilities

WTC/Event organisers

TNT/DAP/Event organisers

TNT

Priorities

Medium

High

High



PRIORITY 5

A community that 'hosts'

| Actions | Responsibilities | Priorities |
|--|------------------|------------|
| 1. Use incentive campaigns to create community awareness and increase use of #TamarValley (feedback – reporting on use/impact) | DAP/WTC | High |
| 2. Investigate a work experience program with local High School + information centre + other experiences | DAP/LTVTA | Low |
| 3. Evaluate a ‘locals’ passport developed for VFR (Visitor Friend Relatives) hosts | TNT/DAP | Low |