



COAL RIVER VALLEY

Destination Action Plan 2016–2019

November–December 2016



Acknowledgments

The development of the Coal River Valley Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by Destination Southern Tasmania (DST) with the support of the Department of State Growth.

The process brought together representatives from 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 Coal River Valley region and to establish achievable affordable priorities that if delivered would increase the destination's competitiveness.

This is an action-focused plan that identifies specific priorities and actions that if cooperatively acted on by stakeholders will contribute to the achievement of agreed objectives in the short term (rolling three years). As such, the Plan does not purport to be a comprehensive strategic plan but is deliberately focused on identifying the key challenges and opportunities facing the destination and to establish achievable and affordable priorities and actions to address them. It should be a 'bottom-up' plan, driven by the Coal River Valley businesses that benefit from visitors and the local community, while acknowledging state and regional strategic plans and programs.

DST would like to thank all who participated in the plan development process:

Facilitator

Malcolm Wells

Coal River Valley Destination Action Plan participants

Brogan Palmer and Justin Goc
Barilla Bay

Kerry Tinker
The Sensory

James Dryburgh
Four Regional Councils

John Pooley
Pooley Wines and Richmond and Coal River Valley Promotions Inc.

Tim Hodgkinson
Pooley Wines

Shelley Temata
Frogmore Creek

Phil Denning
Coaldale Walnuts, and Coal River Products Association

Sophie Nichols
Littlewood Farm

Lois Green
Oak Lodge

Greg Walker & Ald Daniel Hulme
Clarence City Council

Simone Carter
Richmond Barracks

Images used within this document are courtesy of Tourism Tasmania, Wai Nang Poon, Wobbly Boot Vineyard, Frogmore Creek Wines, Coal River Farm, Island Olive Grove, Nick Osborne, Pooley Wines, Brian Dullaghan, Ilona Schneider, Richmond Gaol historic site.



Introduction

This Destination Action Plan (DAP) for the Coal River Valley identifies priority strategies and actions that if implemented over three years will establish the district's position as one of Tasmania's premier tourism destinations. DAPs are an implementation initiative of the *Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-2020 (T21)*, Priority #4: Building capability, capacity and community. The need for a DAP for the Coal River and Richmond area was a key strategy in Clarence City Council's *Economic Development Plan 2016-2021*.

This DAP 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 Coal River Valley visitor economy and visitor experience.



The visitor economy

The Coal River Valley extends from the Hobart Airport, through Cambridge and Pittwater, through to Colebrook. The most significant urban areas are Cambridge and the historic town of Richmond on the banks of the Coal River. Although the Valley was named after a small coal deposit in the early 1800's, it was the development of agricultural products to feed the residents in both Hobart and Sydney Towns that established the reputation as a food producing area. At the time of the 2011 census, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and various public services were the greatest employers.

Visitors to the Coal River Valley are already substantial contributors to the local economy. Visitors include leisure tourists (intrastate, interstate and international), visitors to friends and relatives, business visitors, students and day trippers. Their expenditure is 'new money' contributed to the local economy which supports jobs, real estate value and the provision of services, facilities and activities in the community. Local visitors from greater Hobart are significant contributors to the Coal River Valley economy and this contribution could be increased by establishing Coal River Valley as the destination of choice for Greater Hobart visitors seeking a quality wine and agritourism experience.

Interstate and international visitors

According to Tourism Tasmania's Tourism Information Monitor Research, 49% of recent visitors to Tasmania were aware of Richmond and 32% of those intending to visit Tasmania were aware of Richmond when prompted, while none mentioned it of their own volition as an attraction of which they were aware prior to prompting. This is an indication of an established positioning but one that is no longer top-of-mind. Roy Morgan Research found that for the year ending June 2016, Richmond attracted 245,000 interstate visitors; of these, 21,000 visitors stayed overnight for an average of two nights yielding a total of 41,700 visitor nights; 151,400 visited and looked around but; 72,000 just passed through. This was down marginally from the previous year but significantly up since 2013.

Intrastate visitation

According to information received from Tourism Tasmania, Tourism Research Australia statistics appear to indicate vastly fluctuating visitation by Tasmanians to Richmond (118,000 in 2015 and 55,000 in 2016) and the information amalgamates visits to Richmond with Sorell making it of little use for the purposes of the DAP. These issues, coupled with small sample size, means that it is desirable to develop a locally managed Visitor Barometer.

Employment

The tourism industry in southern Tasmania provides the most significant contribution to the State's tourism sector in terms of output, employment, wages and salaries and other economic indicators (Economic Impact Analysis in southern Tasmania 2013):

- The tourism sector represents 7.1% of total employment in southern Tasmania (approximately 6,800 jobs)
- Tourism in the south is estimated to generate \$973.4m in economic output
- Major tourism related industries are accommodation and food services
- Tourism contributes \$1,849.5m to the southern Tasmanian region, accounting for nearly 13,000 jobs.

Source: *Tasmanian Visitor Survey year ending June 2016, International Visitor Survey year ending June 2016, National Visitor Survey year ending June 2016, Economic Impact Analysis in Tasmania's South 2013, Remplan.*

*Expenditure figures are calculated based on average expenditure per night in Tasmania. They are estimates only.

Objectives

The common objectives for tourism are to increase the yield from visitors by increasing:

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

The primary objective of this Plan is to maximise the visitor experience and increase visitor satisfaction. This will in turn result in more visitors, increased dispersal of those visitors across the region, increased length of stay and visitor expenditure.



Our challenges

- Poor visitor data
- Encouraging more operator engagement and leadership in our area when most are very small businesses
- Development of a strong central voice to facilitate the development of a strong visitor destination
- Defining a shared identity and developing an agreed brand for Richmond and the Coal River Valley
- Increasing yield; converting day trippers to overnight stays
- Providing better visitor information to encourage visitors to move through the Valley
- Entry signage to the Valley
- Developing more consistent service standards that meet visitor expectations
- Developing a better community understanding and appreciation of the value of the visitor economy to the Coal River Valley
- Developing a more cooperative approach to marketing the district, in cooperation with Richmond and Coal River Valley Promotions Inc, Clarence City Council, DST and State Government
- Location of and signage for toilets and parking in Richmond
- Lack of regular public and private bus transport
- Availability of good quality evening meals and evening experiences
- No real shared understanding of existing visitor experiences
- Traditional perceptions of Richmond
- Technology (phone reception, WiFi outside Richmond)
- Lack of larger scale accommodation.



Our opportunities

Strong industry leadership

- Develop strong leadership through close collaboration between industry operators, the Clarence City Council, RCRVP and DST
- Develop agreed new, contemporary positioning for the area
- Gain a better understanding of visitor activity (barometer)
- Better engagement with local community
- Consider re-positioning and consistent branding of destination.

Improve the visitor experience

- Develop a strategic interpretive signage strategy that conveys the unique stories of the region to visitors, as per the recommendations of the *2011 Creating Preferred Futures Report* into Richmond visitor information services
- Convert Richmond to a 'wine village', the centre of Tasmania's premier wine producing area
- Improve visitor access to quality information and other visitor services including a low-cost map and access to WiFi
- Provide opportunities for evening meals and experiences
- Facilitate consistent service quality and use of local produce in hospitality offerings
- Upgraded walking and cycling trails, viewing/photographic points, toilets and other infrastructure
- Convert day visitors to overnight visitors
- Convert visitors to residents and investors
- Children's playground.

Coordinated marketing

- Develop a stronger, more identifiable brand position that compliments state and regional brands
- Engage local operators to become a united voice in promoting the region, particularly through digital channels
- Develop an events program that underpins the region's competitive advantages, particularly the links between colonial and modern day food and beverage production
- Develop and promote the food, wine and agritourism attractions of the region
- Proximity to Hobart and airport should establish Richmond and the Coal River Valley as a premier day destination
- Create stronger connections between the hub of Richmond and the operators in the broader region
- Develop an events strategy to increase visitation to the region.

Success factors

DIAGNOSTIC RATING

Industry research indicates that the following factors are present in successful destinations that are achieving their objectives. A focus on continuous improvement of all these factors will contribute to the growth and sustainability of the visitor economy of the Coal River Valley. (Note that a number of participants abstained from voting in the later categories as they did not know; therefore, the scores in those categories reflect only a few votes.)

Characteristics	Rating	Comments
1. Supportive communities which understand and appreciate the value of tourism.	5.13	Opportunity for improvement, collaboration with RCRVP may provide opportunity to better engage with the wider community.
2. Strong network of local tourism businesses focused on their core role of visitor servicing and working in collaboration with the Regional Tourism Organisation.	4.63	Lack of strong industry network(s) identified as a significant challenge. This was also reflected in the high number of '5' ratings.
3. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development and working cooperatively with local tourism businesses and local government.	6.38	DAP should provide opportunity to build stronger communication and engagement with local businesses and Council.
4. Support from local government for visitor servicing, destination development and infrastructure.	4.17	Opportunity to strengthen collaboration through RCRVP.
5. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations.	5.00	Opportunity for an industry-based leadership group to embrace this role with support from Council and RCRVP.
6. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans.	5.00	DAP should provide blueprint to move forward. Assessment of need to revitalise Richmond and integrate with agritourism of the Valley.
7. Excellence in visitor services that leads to satisfied visitors, positive word-of-mouth promotion and repeat visitation.	4.75	Significant opportunity to increase effectiveness, particularly in information distribution through traditional and digital channels.
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand.	2.00	Opportunity to develop new contemporary visitor experiences and supporting infrastructure.
9. Research-driven cooperative marketing which contributes to and maximises the effectiveness of industry and government.	3.75	This cannot be addressed without increased leadership and collaboration between industry operators.
10. Risk management plans in place that identify and address potential threats and crises e.g. fire, flood.	4.00	Address visitor risk mitigation and recovery planning through relevant local and state government channels.



Action Plan implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for stakeholders to collaboratively and cooperatively implement the Plan. To facilitate this, an Implementation Leadership Group (ILG) of representatives will be formed. A 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 on page 4.

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

A review of progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by DST in consultation with the ILG. This may result in a revision and updating of the Plan. A new plan will be prepared in three years.

The following organisations have been identified to have a role to consider the DAP and to progressively work together to implement the priority actions: Clarence City Council, RCRVP, DST, Department of State Growth, Tourism Tasmania, Parks and Wildlife Service, Coal River Products Association, Wine Tasmania.

The core role of the ILG is not to implement actions, it is to manage the implementation process, monitor progress and ensure that KPI's are reviewed annually. It is important that the ILG keeps all of these groups informed of progress and engaged as required.



Summary of priorities

1. Identify and support an appropriate DAP leadership team.
2. Define, develop and consistently promote a unique Richmond and Coal River Valley positioning and brand identity supported by a cooperative marketing strategy.
3. Improve visitor facilities and services.
4. Infrastructure and product development.

It is important that the ILG reviews the priorities to ensure that they are achievable before wider circulation of the Plan. Only priorities regarded as High have been allocated responsible organisations unless that responsibility is obvious.



PRIORITY 1

Implementation leadership

Actions

Organisations

Priorities

1. Identify an ILG with strong links to Council and RCRVP.	Industry/DST	Agreed
2. Consider using the formal launch of the DAP to engage and motivate industry stakeholders and the community.	ILG	High
3. The group to identify 2-3 actions for immediate action and apply sound project management process with support from DST.	ILG	High
4. Implement a communications plan to keep all stakeholders informed of progress and to maintain engagement and momentum.	ILG	High
5. As a priority and with the support of DST, undertake industry consultation to better define the destination from a visitor perspective.	DST/Industry	High
6. In conjunction with RCRVP, consider options to strengthen a shared core focus by local businesses and tourism organisations on visitor servicing, industry and community engagement in cooperative marketing and destination development.	RCRVP, CC, ILG, DST	Urgent



PRIORITY 2

Define, develop and consistently promote a unique Coal River Valley positioning and brand identity

Actions

Organisations

Priorities

<p>1. In consultation with key stakeholders undertake a destination brand and positioning process. Give consideration to signature experiences that can determine a unique sense of place. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Coal River Valley and agritourism b. Richmond and its historic role as centre of the colony's food production and its continuing role as a hub of modern agriculture and the State's premier wine producing region c. Consistency and relevance to the regional and state brand and positioning 	DST/Industry	High
<p>2. Develop a brand style guide, including narrative and signature images related to target markets. Encourage business and organisations to consistently use these their promotional activity and communications.</p>		Medium/High
<p>3. Undertake a comprehensive industry and community engagement and communication process to build ownership of the brand and positioning through the whole region from the Tasman Highway through to Mud Walls Road.</p>		Medium
<p>4. Ensure that the positioning features consistently in operator, destination, regional and Tasmanian websites including signature images and the agreed narrative.</p>		Medium
<p>5. In consultation with key stakeholders, develop a shared resource of stories and imagery that reflect the signature experiences.</p>		Medium/High
<p>6. Develop a digital marketing strategy based on these stories and imagery that improves the visibility and attraction of the Coal River Valley in digital spaces. Content should convey the uniqueness of the Coal River Valley and be consistent with DST and Tourism Tasmania marketing strategies, including existing websites and social media.</p>		Medium/High
<p>7. Develop a program of events that enhance the key competitive advantages of the Coal River Valley. Initially, consider one signature event and a program of other events that are on brand and aimed at attracting visitors from Greater Hobart, including activities for families.</p>		Medium
<p>8. Consider including signature images on roadside signing at all key entry points to the Valley, including at the airport (extend current promotional partnership).</p>		Medium
<p>9. Communicate Richmond experiences to Tourism Tasmania for inclusion in itinerary development.</p>	RCRVP	High
<p>10. Encourage all operators to register on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse and take opportunities offered for state and regional marketing programs</p>	RCRVP, Operators	High
<p>11. Develop partnerships with targeted industry stakeholders including the Hobart Airport.</p>		



PRIORITY 3

Improve visitor facilities and services

Actions

1. Review the delivery of visitor information to visitors to the region, in conjunction with Clarence City Council and RCRVP. Consider making better use of the existing website and map (or developing a simple tear-off map) that all operators can use to promote the destination.
2. Undertake an audit of visitor facilities, amenities and services to identify opportunities for maintenance, service gaps and development, relative to contemporary competitor destinations and visitor expectations.
3. Undertake an ongoing visitor satisfaction survey to benchmark performance and to identify opportunities for improvement. Communicate the results to the industry and community with commentary to encourage a lift of standards throughout the region.
4. Revisit a rostering system to provide hospitality and services to visitors beyond normal business hours and over seven days to meet visitor expectations and/or explore ways of encouraging a new investor in a restaurant or providore.
5. Encourage participation in the Tasmanian Hospitality Association's customer engagement training program.
6. Apply the outcomes of the state-wide Tasmanian Visitor Engagement project to service delivery in the Valley as a best practice destination.
7. Explore funding opportunities to further the concept of establishing the destination as the premier wine producing region and Richmond as a wine village, building on the region's history as an agricultural producer since European settlement. Consider further development of the 'Wine Wall' project.

Organisations

Priorities

1.	Review the delivery of visitor information to visitors to the region, in conjunction with Clarence City Council and RCRVP. Consider making better use of the existing website and map (or developing a simple tear-off map) that all operators can use to promote the destination.	RCRVP, CC, DST	High
2.	Undertake an audit of visitor facilities, amenities and services to identify opportunities for maintenance, service gaps and development, relative to contemporary competitor destinations and visitor expectations.	RCRVP mystery shopper program.	Medium
3.	Undertake an ongoing visitor satisfaction survey to benchmark performance and to identify opportunities for improvement. Communicate the results to the industry and community with commentary to encourage a lift of standards throughout the region.	RCRVP mystery shopper program.	Medium
4.	Revisit a rostering system to provide hospitality and services to visitors beyond normal business hours and over seven days to meet visitor expectations and/or explore ways of encouraging a new investor in a restaurant or providore.		High
5.	Encourage participation in the Tasmanian Hospitality Association's customer engagement training program.		Medium
6.	Apply the outcomes of the state-wide Tasmanian Visitor Engagement project to service delivery in the Valley as a best practice destination.	CC, CRVP	High
7.	Explore funding opportunities to further the concept of establishing the destination as the premier wine producing region and Richmond as a wine village, building on the region's history as an agricultural producer since European settlement. Consider further development of the 'Wine Wall' project.	CC, CRVP	High



PRIORITY 4 Infrastructure and product development

Actions

1. With the support of DST, strongly advocate for the improvement of the safety of Richmond Road and its urgent upgrade.
2. With the newly developed Richmond and Coal River Valley positioning in mind, undertake an audit of public and private infrastructure that supports visitor experiences in the region, in conjunction with Clarence City Council and RCRVP to identify gaps in market offerings and adequacy of supporting infrastructure.
3. Consider establishing an industry development initiative that fosters innovation, including operator visits to other regions that are regarded as offering outstanding visitor experiences (e.g. Yarra Valley or Margaret River).
4. Improve signage pertaining to the location of toilets and parking in Richmond and review traffic management plan with Council.
5. Work with local tour operators to develop packaged tour product into Richmond and the Coal River Valley.
6. Review what initiatives may enhance the area's already strong reputation for family orientated visitor experiences.
7. With the support of DST, continue to advocate for the improvement of other public infrastructure in the region such as roads, walking tracks, toilets and signage.
8. Leverage existing events (e.g. Jazz Festival, Festival of Voices, Ten Days on the Island, etc.) and develop new ones that are on brand (e.g. Harvest Festival, Long Table Lunch)
9. Lighting to encourage more evening activity in Richmond, perhaps associated with an evening attraction or events.
10. Work with Clarence City Council to investigate potential for cycle/walking trail through the Valley.
11. Investigate potential for shell fish and seafood event experience using waterways.

Organisations

Priorities

Actions	Organisations	Priorities
1. With the support of DST, strongly advocate for the improvement of the safety of Richmond Road and its urgent upgrade.		High
2. With the newly developed Richmond and Coal River Valley positioning in mind, undertake an audit of public and private infrastructure that supports visitor experiences in the region, in conjunction with Clarence City Council and RCRVP to identify gaps in market offerings and adequacy of supporting infrastructure.		Medium
3. Consider establishing an industry development initiative that fosters innovation, including operator visits to other regions that are regarded as offering outstanding visitor experiences (e.g. Yarra Valley or Margaret River).		Medium
4. Improve signage pertaining to the location of toilets and parking in Richmond and review traffic management plan with Council.		Medium
5. Work with local tour operators to develop packaged tour product into Richmond and the Coal River Valley.		Medium
6. Review what initiatives may enhance the area's already strong reputation for family orientated visitor experiences.		Medium
7. With the support of DST, continue to advocate for the improvement of other public infrastructure in the region such as roads, walking tracks, toilets and signage.		Ongoing
8. Leverage existing events (e.g. Jazz Festival, Festival of Voices, Ten Days on the Island, etc.) and develop new ones that are on brand (e.g. Harvest Festival, Long Table Lunch)		Medium
9. Lighting to encourage more evening activity in Richmond, perhaps associated with an evening attraction or events.		Medium/Low
10. Work with Clarence City Council to investigate potential for cycle/walking trail through the Valley.		Medium/Low
11. Investigate potential for shell fish and seafood event experience using waterways.		Medium/Low