



DERWENT VALLEY

Destination Action Plan 2016–2019

November 2016



Acknowledgments

The development of the Derwent Valley Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by Destination Southern Tasmania 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 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 Derwent Valley businesses that benefit from visitors and the local community, while acknowledging State and regional strategic plans and programs.

Destination Southern Tasmania would like to thank all who participated in the plan development process:

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Images used within this document are courtesy of Tourism Tasmania, Willow Court, Patchwork Café, The Agrarian Kitchen, Tynwald Willow Bend Estate, Cheeky Little Place, Tassie Bound Adventure Tours – New Norfolk, Jane Parsons – Curringa Farm, 28 Gates, Rob Burnett, Peter Whyte, Geoff Murray, Rick Eaves, Kathryn Leahy, Michael Walters Photography, Wai Nang Poon, Graham Freeman, Veronica Youd, Nick Osborne, Alan Lesheim.



Introduction

This Destination Action Plan (DAP) for the Derwent Valley identifies priority strategies and actions which if implemented over three years will enhance the region's position as one of Tasmania's premier tourism regions. DAPs are an implementation initiative of the Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-2020 (T21), Priority #4: Building capability, capacity and community.

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. This group then identified and agreed on the key priorities and actions that would make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the Derwent Valley visitor economy and experience. Given the recent history of local tourism organisations in the Valley, the group identified the need for leadership and greater industry cooperation and collaboration as a priority.

The *Derwent Valley Council STEPS to the Future Strategy* is a complementary and valuable reference to this DAP. The DAP builds on the STEPS strategy by identifying specific priorities and actions for the next three years.

The visitor economy

The Municipality of the Derwent Valley extends from Granton, north to Dromedary and Black Hills and west through Bushy Park to Strathgordon. It covers 4,103 square kilometres and includes a significant part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, including Mt Field National Park. The most significant urban area is the historic town of New Norfolk on the banks of the Derwent River. At the time of the 2011 census, manufacturing was the highest employer, followed by public services including education and health, then tourism and agriculture. This is likely to be changing towards less manufacturing and more tourism related employment.

Visitors to the Derwent Valley are 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. Greater Hobart residents should be significant contributors to the Derwent Valley economy.

Interstate and international visitors

According to Roy Morgan Research, in the year ending June 2016, New Norfolk attracted 138,161 interstate and international visitors; 26,000 visitors stayed overnight for an average of 3.4 nights yielding a total of 88,409 visitor nights; 45,550 visited and looked around but; 66,670 just passed through. In the same period, 85,400 interstate and international visitors went to Mt Field and 25,710 visited Lake Pedder.

Intrastate visitation

Tourism Research Australia estimated that in the same period, a total of 100,000 Tasmanians visited New Norfolk and a further 60,000 visited other parts of the Derwent Valley. 12,000 visitors to New Norfolk stayed overnight for a total of 33,000 nights and 8,000 visitors to other parts of the Valley stayed 16,000 nights.

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):

- 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.



Our challenges

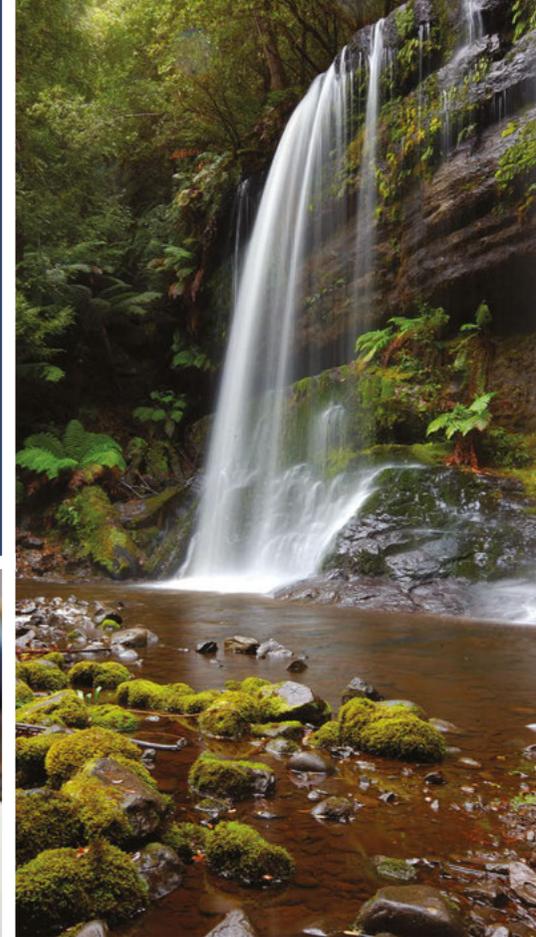
- Encourage more operator engagement, collaboration and leadership in our area when most are very small businesses
- Develop a strong central voice to facilitate communication and the development of a strong visitor destination
- Define a shared identity and develop an agreed brand for the region
- Develop a strong presence for the region in digital channels
- Agree on a defined destination area in what is a long and fragmented, partly one-way drive
- Develop more consistent service standards that meet visitor expectations
- Develop a better community understanding and appreciation of the value of the visitor economy to the Derwent Valley
- Increase yield, convert day trippers to overnight stays
- Proximity to Hobart (encourages day visitation but perhaps not overnight stays)
- Develop a more cooperative approach to marketing the region, in cooperation with Destination Southern Tasmania and State Government
- Addressing seasonality of visitation
- Attracting skilled labour market
- Technology (phone and WiFi patchy, power outages, lack of ATM between New Norfolk and Lake St Clair)
- Need for upgraded infrastructure on State-owned land, including National Parks
- Investment attraction
- Lack of success with grant applications
- Insurance for adventure activities prohibitive
- Attracting and retaining skilled staff.





Our opportunities

- Develop strong leadership through close collaboration between industry operators, the Derwent Valley Council's Economic Growth Special Committee and Destination Southern Tasmania
- Convert day visitors to overnight visitors
- Convert visitors to residents and investors.



Improve visitor experience

- Develop a strategic interpretive signage strategy that conveys the unique stories of the region to visitors
- Leverage investment by Parks and Wildlife Service in Mt Field to Lake Pedder region of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area
- Develop new product to support the brand: *World Heritage, Thylacine, Adventure, Hydro, Fishing, Heritage (Willow Court), Paddock to Plate, Arts and Culture*
- Improve visitor access to quality information and other visitor services including low-cost map, access to WiFi
- Consistent service quality and use of local produce in hospitality offerings
- Upgraded infrastructure, including tracks, viewing points, toilets and other infrastructure
- Use of rail corridor.

Coordinated marketing

- Develop a stronger, more identifiable brand position
- Engage local operators to become a united voice in promoting the region, particularly through digital channels
- Identify marketing strategies targeting length of stay and seasonality
- Develop an events program that underpins the region's competitive advantages, particularly the autumn season
- Develop and promote the food, wine, agritourism attractions of the region
- Capture the brand positioning of 'Gateway to the World Heritage Area'.

Success factors

Industry research¹ indicates that the following factors are present in successful destinations that are achieving their objectives. Workshop participants used these to gauge the effectiveness of the management of tourism in the Derwent Valley. A focus on continuous improvement of all these factors will contribute to the growth and sustainability of the visitor economy of the Valley.

Participants rated current industry performance in each of these factors on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being perfect. The outcome (below) is a guide only and will be a useful benchmark for future assessment of progress. Experience has demonstrated that consistently high performing destinations usually score above 7 on most self-assessed measures.



Characteristics

Rating Comments

Characteristics	Rating	Comments
1. Strong network of local tourism businesses focused on their core role of visitor servicing and working in collaboration with the Regional Tourism Organisation.	3.38	Lack of strong industry network(s) identified as a significant challenge.
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development and working cooperatively with local tourism businesses and local government.	5.07	DAP should provide opportunity to build stronger communication and engagement with local businesses and the Derwent Valley Council.
3. Support from Local Government for visitor servicing, destination development and infrastructure.	5.37	Opportunity to strengthen collaboration through the Derwent Valley Council's Economic Growth Special Committee (EGSC).
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations.	4.09	Opportunity for the EGSC to embrace this role with the support of industry individuals.
5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans.	5.00	Should provide blueprint to move forward. Need to determine whether single or multiple destinations.
6. Excellence in visitor services that leads to satisfied visitors, positive word-of-mouth promotion and repeat visitation.	3.67	Significant opportunity to increase effectiveness, particularly in digital channels.
7. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand.	5.33	Opportunity for continuous improvement.
8. Research-driven cooperative marketing which contributes to and maximises the effectiveness of industry and government contributions.	2.4	Can be addressed through increased leadership and collaboration.
9. Risk management plans in place that identify and address potential threats and crises e.g. fire, flood.	2.71	Address visitor risk mitigation and recovery planning through relevant Local and State Government channels.
10. Supportive communities which understand and appreciate the value of tourism.	3.83	EGSC may provide opportunity to better engage with the wider community.

¹ Wayne Kayler-Thomson, 2012. *The success factors are also supported by a research study undertaken by the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre, which studied 21 best practice destinations across Australia (Sustainable Regional Tourism Destinations 2010).*



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 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 above.

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

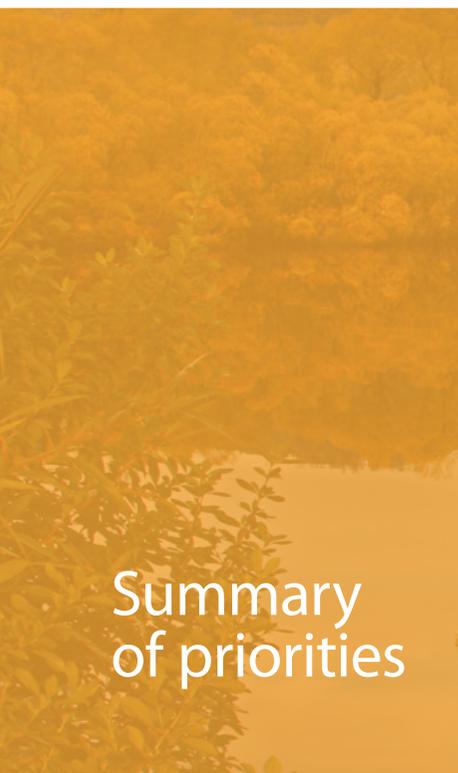
- URGENT** Immediate action
- HIGH** Within the first year
- MEDIUM** Within one to two years
- LOW** Within three years

A review of progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by Destination Southern Tasmania in consultation with the Implementation Leadership Group (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:

- Derwent Valley Council (DVC)
- Economic Growth Special Committee (EGSC) – a special sub-committee of the Derwent Valley Council
- New Norfolk Business Alliance – a special sub-committee of the Derwent Valley Council
- Destination Southern Tasmania (DST)
- Department of State Growth (DSG)
- Tourism Tasmania
- Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS)
- Hydro 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. Representatives of stakeholder organisations are welcome to attend meetings of the ILG at any time.



Summary of priorities



1. Identify and agree on actions to support an appropriate Destination Action Plan Implementation Leadership Group (ILG).
2. Define, develop and consistently promote unique Derwent Valley positioning and brand identity.
3. Develop and implement initiatives that will improve visitor experience.
4. Leverage infrastructure product development and investment attraction opportunities. E.g. Derwent River, Rail Corridor, historic New Norfolk (including Willow Court), agritourism, adventure tourism, World Heritage Area.

It is important that the ILG reviews the priorities as a matter of priority to ensure they are achievable before wider circulation of the Plan.



PRIORITY 1
Implementation leadership

Actions	Organisations	Priorities
1. Explore responsibility for the implementation of the Destination Action Plan (DAP) with the Derwent Valley Council's Economic Growth Special Committee (EGSC).	DVC, EGSC, DST	Agreed
2. Consider using the formal launch of the DAP to engage and motivate industry stakeholders and the community.	ILG	High
3. The Implementation Leadership Group (ILG) to identify 2-3 actions for immediate action and apply sound project management process with support from Destination Southern Tasmania (DST).	ILG	High
4. Develop and implement a communications plan to keep all stakeholders informed of progress and to maintain engagement and momentum.	ILG	High
5. Consider options to strengthen local business and tourism organisations to facilitate core focus on visitor servicing, industry and community engagement and cooperation with DST for cooperative marketing and destination development.	ILG, DST, Industry	Medium



PRIORITY 2

Define, develop and consistently promote a unique Derwent Valley positioning and brand identity, building on the work already commenced

Actions	Organisations	Priorities
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Derwent River, historic New Norfolk, agritourism (wine, hops & brewing heritage) b. Mt Field and Russell Falls, Gateway to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA), Lake Pedder c. Consistency and relevance to the southern Tasmanian brand and positioning. 	ILG, DST, Industry (Include Brand Tasmania and Tourism Tasmania State brand)	High
2. As part of this process, give consideration to the geography of the Derwent Valley, how visitors move through the region and whether there should be one or more discrete destinations. Consider development in collaboration with Central Highlands.		Urgent
3. Undertake a comprehensive industry and community engagement and communication process to build ownership of the brand and positioning.		Medium/High
4. 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.		Medium
5. Ensure that the positioning features consistently in operator, destination, regional and Tasmanian websites including signature images and the agreed narrative.		Medium
6. Consider including signature images on roadside signing at all key entry points to the Valley and TWWHA, including at the airport.		Medium
7. Develop a program of events that reflect the Valley brand. (Build on the Fagus and Derwent Valley Festivals in autumn; consider a unique adventure challenge event).		Medium
8. Develop a digital strategy that improves the visibility and attraction of the Derwent Valley brand in digital spaces.	ILG, DST, Industry	Already underway



PRIORITY 3

Develop and implement initiatives that will improve the visitor experience

Actions	Organisations	Priorities
1. Review the delivery of visitor information to visitors to the region, in conjunction with the Derwent Valley Council (DVC) and Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS).	DVC, PWS, DST, Operators	High
2. Improve visitors' access to information by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Actively collecting stories and imagery that conveys the uniqueness of the Derwent Valley (Tall Trees, Thylacine, the Dam, etc.) and incorporate in visitor experiences b. Exploring ways of making information more accessible to visitors, including integration with DVC activities and website and production of cheaper tear-off maps. 		High
3. Undertake an audit of visitor facilities, amenities and services to identify opportunities for maintenance renewal, service gaps and development, relative to visitor expectations.		Medium
4. 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.		Medium
5. Implement a rostering system to provide hospitality and services to visitors beyond normal business hours and over seven days to meet visitor expectations and demand opportunities.		Medium
6. Encourage participation in the THA customer engagement training program.		High
7. Apply the 'Trip Cycle and Visitor Engagement Journey' outlined in the recently produced <i>Tasmanian Visitor Engagement Strategy</i> to service delivery in the Valley as a guide.		Medium/High
8. Leverage off the 190,000 visitors to Mt Field.		Medium/High
9. Leverage events including Dark Mofo, Autumn Festival, Fagus Festival, ensuring wherever possible that new events are 'on brand'.	DVC, PWS, DST, Operators (should be considered alongside Action 1)	Medium



PRIORITY 4
Infrastructure and product development

Actions

1. Undertake an audit of public and private visitor infrastructure, products and experiences (accommodation, attractions and services) to identify market offering gaps and opportunities for maintenance, renewal and development (could be part of actions under Priority 3).
2. Establish an industry development program focussed on encouraging innovation such as operator visits to other destinations/attractions to benchmark the Derwent Valley experience and to explore opportunities for development to meet visitor expectations and new opportunities.
3. Encourage and support existing operators to renew and develop their visitor experiences, products and services: e.g. Agrarian Kitchen opening in Willow Court.
4. Consider the establishment of a business to business peer mentoring program to collectively raise standards and contribute to seamless visitor service excellence.
5. Develop active strategy to attract investment (DVC already has an economic development strategy that incorporates investment attraction).
6. Development of rail corridor.
7. Upgrade facilities and experiences in National Parks (Russell Falls Track, Day Shelter, Mt Mawson, Creepy Crawly Track, etc.). Potential new experiences under the Tasmanian Park's Expression of Interest process including: Treetop Adventure at Mt Field, Cycling at Eagle's Eerie.
8. DVC infrastructure development program (Esplanade, High Street, Willow Court, etc.).

Organisations

Priorities

EGSC currently developing EOI for audit	High
	Medium/Low
	Medium
	Medium
With State Government	High
PWS program underway	High
Some underway	