

Barton Deakin Brief: Tourism in Tasmanian Parks and Reserves

9 December 2014

The Tasmanian Government has launched [Parks 21](#), a joint strategic action plan developed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (**PWS**) and the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania (**TICT**).

The plan seeks to:

- Promote Tasmania as a tourism destination;
- Grow the Tasmanian economy; and
- Ensure that increased tourism activity does not compromise sustainability.

In *Parks 21*, PWS and TICT have identified “shared long term goals to facilitate and enhance tourism activity and the overall visitor experience in Tasmania’s national parks and reserves, and Crown land, as well as agreed priorities and actions by the tourism industry and the PWS to achieve those goals.”

PWS manages land covering almost 48 per cent of the state, including:

- Three World Heritage Areas;
- 19 national parks;
- seven marine reserves;
- A large portion of Crown land; and
- Nearly 800 reserves

These assets are responsible for a large portion of Tasmania’s international, interstate and intrastate tourism visitor spend.

Parks 21 will play an important role in the Tasmanian Government’s goal to increase the number of international and interstate visitors to the state by 1.5 million by 2020.

Strategy

Parks 21 outlines a number of strategic objectives and actions to facilitate sustainable tourism activity and actively enhance the visitor experience in national parks and reserves.

Objective 1: Enhanced Tourism Focus

PWS will work with industry to further develop as a leading nature-based tourism business, underpinned by best practice and research, a clear brand and marketing strategy, customer service and operator engagement.

- **Research**
 - TICT will convene a reference group with PWS, the University of Tasmania’s Tourism Research and Education Network (TRENd), Tourism Tasmania and the Regional Barton Deakin Pty. Ltd. Suite 17, Level 2, 16 National Cct, Barton, ACT, 2600. T: +61 2 6108 4535 www.bartondeakin.com ACN 140 067 287. An STW Group Company.



Tourism Organisations to report on and learn from various research projects relating to nature-based tourism.

- **Marketing and brand**

- PWS will undertake a strategic brand review.
- PWS will consider and review its consumer engagement and interfaces for a new marketing plan; including publications, website, booking processes, standing interpretation and visitor facilities.
- PWS will offer co-marketing opportunities to tourism operators as part of tourism business licences.
- TICT will facilitate a shared branding process for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and associated destinations with PWS, Tourism Tasmania and key stakeholders.

- **Partnership**

- TICT will encourage all tourism operators to recognise, respect and contribute to Tasmania's parks and reserves as a valuable tourism asset for the whole state.
- TICT will assist operators to understand the context and role of PWS with the National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002 and the Crown Lands Act 1976.
- TICT will facilitate networking and professional development opportunities for PWS staff and operators, including the annual Tasmanian Tourism Conference.
- PWS will invite TICT representatives to attend its annual staff conference.
- PWS staff will be encouraged to attend and participate in tourism professional development and familiarisation opportunities.
- PWS will have financial membership of the Regional Tourism Organisations, and will have board membership or observation status on all RTOs and relevant Local Tourism Associations.
- TICT and PWS will, in the event of any grievance between tourism operators and PWS, jointly facilitate the investigation of, and commit to supporting the outcomes of, a formal grievance process in which complaints are taken up with an independent third party arbitrator.

Objective 2: Sustainable Experience Delivery

Promote and enable exceptional, safe, appropriate and demand-driven commercially, socially and environmentally sustainable tourism experiences.

- **Infrastructure**

- PWS will conduct an audit of existing infrastructure and visitor services resources.
- TICT will provide PWS with annual advice on future infrastructure needs and priorities for the tourism industry.
- PWS and TICT will work to understand visitor expectations through research, to ensure the supply of infrastructure and opportunities within regional Tasmania meets actual demand and aligns with the brand.



- **Commercial visitor services**
 - TICT and PWS will work with the Tasmanian Government to identify opportunities and attract private capital investments in nature-based tourism activities and infrastructure, both in and around Crown lands, parks and reserves.
 - PWS will review commercial visitor service fees.
 - PWS will seek and enable innovation, continual improvement and new product development through expression of interest and other commercial visitor processes.
 - TICT will provide leadership on staff development and facilitate training opportunities for both tourism operators and PWS staff for continuing improvement of the visitor experience.

- **Responsible tourism**
 - PWS and TICT will drive and promote tourism operator-led conservation initiatives such as the PWS Green Guardians, and other programs and certification schemes.
 - PWS and TICT will encourage and develop a culture of public-private partnerships for tourism and conservation within parks and reserves.
 - TICT and PWS will engage and involve the Aboriginal community in tourism initiatives.
 - PWS will provide specific interpretation professional development opportunities for industry.
 - TICT will engage and provide advocacy on strategic policy issues affecting parks and reserves.

- **Quality assurance**
 - PWS will incorporate a customer service standard (based on specific performance indicators) within its business contracts for tourism operators.
 - PWS and TICT will require membership and accreditation with appropriate industry bodies to ensure operators are meeting high quality standards.
 - TICT will continue to facilitate a shared branding program between licensed operators and PWS.

Objective 3: Enterprise and Economic Activity

Recognition that Tasmania's parks and reserves are valuable assets that underpin tourism and other businesses making a significant economic contribution without compromising the natural and cultural values of protected areas.

- **Economic value**
 - PWS will facilitate the development of a system to measure parks and reserves' value to regional and/or the state's economies through tourism.
 - TICT and PWS will explore options for additional revenue streams which would enable PWS to further support regional tourism development.
 - TICT will actively promote the value of parks and reserves, and the value of PWS for tourism.



- **Community value**

- PWS will seek stakeholder advice when determining the most efficient use of PWS resources for recreation and tourism product development.
- PWS and TICT will actively communicate the economic and employment values of parks and reserves for the state and regional economies.
- PWS and TICT will acknowledge and promote the responsible tourism credentials and initiatives undertaken by tourism operators.

Measurement

Parks 21 lists several key performance indicators which will be used to measure the progress of the action plan:

1. Maintain or increase the market share of visitors to Tasmania also visiting national parks.
2. Increase the number of sustainable tourism businesses operating within the reserve system through Commercial Visitor Services processes, including expressions of interest.
3. Address operator issues and increase operator satisfaction with PWS.
4. Increase the number of licensed operators accredited within 12 months of operation under their licence; and increase the number of operators using the 'Share the Wonder' logo.
5. Work with tourism operators and PWS staff to improve the visitor experience and reduce the incidence of negative feedback.
6. Increase the number of operators participating in responsible tourism, triple bottom line reporting and public-private or philanthropic conservation partnerships to illustrate how tourism can assist with on-ground conservation initiatives.
7. Continue to increase revenue raised through PWS tourism-related enterprises.
8. Measure some of the indicators associated with the economic value of parks and reserves.
9. Increase PWS's positive results from its 'Community Monitor' public opinion survey across the relevant indicators.

Further information

Click [here](#) to read the *Parks 21 Joint Strategic Action Plan*.

Click [here](#) to read the Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage's media release.

Barton Deakin's June 2014 Brief on the Tasmanian Government's plan to promote development in National Parks is available [here](#).

For more information, please contact [Kristian Galanti](#) on +61 406 383 154.