

East Coast Tasmania
POSITIVE IMPACT TOURISM PLAN
PROJECT SCOPING SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2022



east coast
tasmania

DISCLAIMER

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Tasmanian tourism industry acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and their enduring custodianship of lutruwita / Tasmania. We honour 40,000 years of uninterrupted care, protection and belonging to these islands, before the invasion and colonisation of European settlement. As a tourism industry that welcomes visitors to these lands, we acknowledge our responsibility to represent to our visitors Tasmania's deep and complex history, fully, respectfully and truthfully. We acknowledge the Aboriginal people who continue to care for this country today. We pay our respects to their elders, past and present. We honour their stories, songs, art, and culture, and their aspirations for the future of their people and these lands. We respectfully ask that tourism be a part of that future.

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover: Tayla Jayne Images



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INTRODUCTION

This project aims to deliver a project scope and development roadmap for the proposed East Coast Positive Impact Tourism Plan (ECPIP). A plan that creates the framework for responsible future tourism growth – a key initiative within the East Coast Destination Management Plan 2022-2025 (DMP).

In summary, this scoping work and development pathway:

1. Addresses the threats associated with tourism growth and the need for community involvement in the design and management of visitor experiences
2. Identifies the lack of a singular place brand and decision making framework that the tourism industry, Councils and PWS can embrace to unite the East Coast tourism vision and experience
3. Evolves the tourism planning approach to more united and connected process to deliver positive impacts for community, culture and conservation alongside the visitor economy.

Based on the above insights, the project name has been changed from the East Coast Master Plan to the East Coast Positive Impact Tourism Plan (ECPIP). The ECPIP will embrace community engagement and adopt the values and principles of 'regenerative tourism' (or a similar notion) explored within this paper.



CHALLENGES ON TASMANIA'S EAST COAST

The East Coast is feeling pressure from growing visitor numbers with strains evident on core infrastructure, nature places, workforce shortages, training of employees and community lifestyle. The following captures a high level view of today's pressures along the East Coast drawn from consultations with stakeholders and industry:

- The lack of housing is perhaps the single largest and immediate pressure point facing the tourism industry today. Both the lack of housing availability and the cost to purchase or rent is leaving businesses unable to cater for existing demand, let alone future forecast demand
- The Great Eastern Drive (Tasman Highway) is a cornerstone of the East Coast experience and is under disrepair and undeveloped in terms of passing lanes and stops
- National Parks and iconic natural destinations are under pressure from growing visitor numbers. Care for the environment, wildlife and track maintenance, lookouts, parking and amenities are just a few elements feeling stress from growing visitation
- Some community members are feeling disconnected with place through a lack of parking, access to local restaurants, overcrowding on walking tracks and the general crowding of some destinations during peak periods
- Stress is rising from unfit roads and a lack of accommodation, services and facilities to cater for the growing caravan and camping sector. Introduction of the new Spirit of Tasmania with 40% increased carry capacity in 2024 will increase this stress
- Some towns and communities are struggling to service increased visitor numbers with existing services and utilities such as waste, water and sewerage. Coles Bay is perhaps the lead example today¹
- Availability of the tourism workforce and the training of the new tourism workforce are both causing operator stress and in some cases, limiting operating hours and services²

This report is not suggesting these tourism activities are not sustainable or desired. It is recognising a gap within the existing tourism planning approach which lacks community engagement and a more collaborative approach between stakeholders.

¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-11/sewage-issues-for-freycinet-national-park-tasmania/12751106>

² <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/worldtoday/workforce-shortages-hurting-tasmania-s-tourism-industry/101395486>



PROJECT APPROACH

A positive impact approach to tourism is recommended as the best pathway towards achieving a resilient tourism industry that the local community, tourism industry and primary stakeholders can embrace, collaborate and co-design. A positive impact visitor economy gives back more than it takes, a principle adopted by leading places and tourism destinations internationally.

Tasmania's East Coast residents and tourism communities can work together to rethink how the visitor economy can deliver social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits to the East Coast region. Underpinning this outcome is the desire to provide exceptional and sustainable visitor experiences.

The ECPIP project would place the East Coast on a journey towards positive impact tourism by 2030. There are four key strategic priorities to the ECPIP:

1. Enrich communities and enhance the visitor experience
2. Foster an environmentally positive visitor economy
3. Build business resilience, capability and productivity
4. Collaborate to enable a positive impact visitor economy.

The proposed ECPIP provides the vision and pathway to ensure that tourism remains a positive force for the economy, people, culture and nature.

With this plan in place, the region can better prepare for managing the continued and increasing effects of visitor growth and redirect priorities towards achieving a net-positive impact on the region.



OPPORTUNITY

The following summarises priority opportunities contained within key tourism strategies and plans between Glamorgan Spring Bay Council, Break O' Day Council and Parks and Wildlife. This list of aligned intent is designed to show the cross-over of opportunities within the East Coast region:

- Supporting arts and culture / meeting the makers within East Coast communities
- Preparing for the growth in caravan and RV tourism
- Promote ongoing tourism whilst acknowledging and protecting the values of the natural environment and National Parks
- Focusing on shaping an all-year visitor economy, taking pressure off peak visitation periods and supporting communities through lower visitation times
- Embracing positive impact tourism as an overarching way of planning and living
- Further investment in the Great Eastern Drive journey infrastructure and experience
- Challenges for business and community around housing for staff and new residents seeking to move into the regions
- Embracing the following experiences:
 - Walking tourism
 - MTB tourism
 - Aboriginal experiences
 - Agri-tourism
 - Eco-tourism
 - Events tourism (to grow shoulder period and to support the growth of hero brand experiences above)
- The attraction of eco / sustainable visitor accommodation
- Marine management and enhanced accessibility
- Town planning to enhance community and visitor experiences
- Air access and infrastructure



GAPS

The primary gaps identified within this project are not gaps in terms of specific strategies and plans, but are all connected to i) the lack of community engagement in the present DMP and previous planning processes, and ii) a somewhat disconnected approach between land and infrastructure managers.

The ECPIP would require the following approach within the methodology:

- Engagement with residents of the towns and communities along the East Coast
- Engagement with the Aboriginal communities
- A unified decision making framework for tourism strategic planning endorsed by Councils and PWS
- Quantified measures of resident sentiment towards tourism. Discussions with local Councillors along with both Council Community Engagement Programs³ have been identified as key sources to gather such sentiment towards the visitor economy

³ <https://www.bodc.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Community-Engagement-STRATEGY.pdf>



DELIVERABLES

The ECPIP would act as the lighthouse project for Tasmania, building on insights from the Islander Way on Flinders Island⁴ and identifying the priority investments and initiatives for tourism supported by the community and tourism industry based on the principles of positive impact tourism.

The proposed ECPIP seeks to deliver:

PRIORITY VISITORS

- Profiles and personas of East Coast priority visitors. A consumer study would identify travellers that are closely aligned with the destination we seek to develop

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- A detailed view of community sentiment towards tourism which could be gathered through discussions with local Councillors and through existing channels within Council Community Engagement Programs⁵
- Insights into tourism projects and programs supported by the community
- Tourism initiatives supported by the community that may not be on the radar today

PLACEMAKING STRATEGY

- Place Purpose
 - What do we wish for our place?
 - What is our shared purpose?
- Placemaking
 - Who is this place authentically?
 - What does this place want to become?

⁴ <https://www.islanderway.co>

⁵ <https://www.bodc.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Community-Engagement-STRATEGY.pdf>



- Place Keeping
 - What does our place need?
 - And how can tourism help serve that purpose?
- Place Sharing
 - What are the authentic stories of this place and its people?
- Decision Making Framework
 - A tourism decision-making framework for investors, Councils and PWS that embraces the Place Making Strategy and the principles of positive impact tourism
- Priority Projects
 - Alignment of past, existing or future planned projects as assessed through the new decision-making framework
 - Identification of new projects and investments, supported by the community and aligned with positive impact tourism principles
 - A community-centered and prioritised plan for positive impact investments for the East Coast of Tasmania.



RECOMMENDATIONS

This scoping work recommends:

1. In principle, adopting a regenerative approach to tourism planning on Tasmania's East Coast referred to as 'positive impact' tourism planning and initiatives
2. Structure the ECPIP to deliver a Place Brand and prioritised view of tourism initiatives and directions supported by the community and stakeholders
3. Validating the positive impact approach for acceptance with Councils, Parks and Wildlife, tourism associations, interest groups and select community members across the East Coast
4. Investing in a series of ongoing metrics to measure progress towards a positive impact destination
5. A review of the funding model, considering the high ratio of visitors to residents and the subsequent impacts on the destination being under funded
6. Establishing a governance structure that includes community members local Councils, PWS and representatives from T30, and the tourism industry
7. Activating the East Coast Positive Impact Tourism Plan through a pilot partnership within the T30 Visitor Economy Plan



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