



FLINDERS ISLAND

Destination Action Plan 2016-2019

March 2017

Acknowledgments

The development of the Flinders Island Destination Plan has been facilitated by Tourism Northern Tasmania (TNT) with the support of the Department of State Growth and in partnership with Flinders Island Tourism & Business Inc (FITBI) and Flinders Council.

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 Flinders Island and to establish achievable affordable priorities that if delivered would increase Flinders Island competitiveness.

Specifically, we would like to thank the individuals that participated in the plan development process:

Facilitator

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Flinders Island Destination Action Plan Leadership Group

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The Leadership Group self-nominated and *indicates a commitment to an on-going role. New members will also be welcomed.

Introduction

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



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.

The visitor economy

Indicator of performance	Year end January 2014	Growth comparison vs 2008-2009 period
Visitor numbers	5,692	+24%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Holiday ▪ Business/working ▪ Visiting friends and relatives ▪ Other 	<p>36%</p> <p>31%</p> <p>26%</p> <p>7%</p>	
Visitor nights	34,500	+28%
Average length of stay	6 nights	
Average spend per visitor	\$546	
Visitor expenditure	\$3.1 million (\$5.1 million including airfares)	+2%*

*Although comparisons are possible from the previous surveyed period of 2008-09, caution must be used when interpreting these given variations in survey methodology.

Additional insights include:

- Over 96% of visitors were from Australia with the remainder from Overseas. Residents of mainland Tasmania accounted for 53% of all visitors, then those from Victoria at 21%, and NSW at 13%.
- 36% of all visitors to Flinders Island only were first time visitors, but the majority of holiday visitors (55%) were first time visitors.

The majority of visitors (73%) stated they would return to Flinders Island within the next two years.



Statistics and general description of Flinders Island

Flinders Island within the Furneaux Group is known as a place to escape to – an inspiring world of sparkling beaches, rugged ranges, abundant wildlife and flora and clear sapphire waters.

It is a 'complete nature based destination' that is different to any other island in Australia. With a temperate maritime climate throughout the year, Flinders Island has much to offer with activities such as walking trails, art, culture, history, boating, climbing, fishing, and local events.

Flinders Island is one of Australia's largest islands. It is located in Bass Strait and is approximately 60 kms from Cape Portland in Tasmania and from Wilson Promontory in Victoria. Whilst covering 1,333 square kms, Flinders Island is home to only 800 residents.

Being an island 'off an island' offers significant everyday barriers to residents and visitors and although serviced by a weekly sea freight and a regular passenger transport (RPT) service from Launceston and Essendon, the cost of travel and frequency of travel services from Essendon have created some difficulties for the Island community, restricting growth and potential investment. Flinders and King Islands are the most remote places in south-eastern Australia, listed by the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Area (ASGC-RA), and developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.



Our collective strengths



- Wombats and wildlife
- Pristine environment
- Skin diving, swimming
- Rugged weather and geology
- Walking, hiking, recreation
- Destination with a difference
- Safety, peace and quiet
- Niche, clean and green
- Being an island
- Natural values
- Essential oil production
- Island lifestyle and spirit
- Landscape
- Unique history
- Lack of pretension
- Arts and crafts
- Parks and reserves
- Adventurous
- Diversity and quality of produce
- 120 deserted beaches
- Unique characters e.g. 'Lettuce Lady', 'John the Juggler'
- Events – Furneaux and Running Festivals, Music in the Vines
- Interesting people visit interesting places
- Celebration destination (weddings, big birthdays etc.)
- Contained total experience
- Indigenous history and culture
- Hunter gatherer community
- Rat race escapism
- Remoteness, isolation
- Crayfish and crawfishing
- Fishing, hunting and shooting
- Easily accessible
- Family friendly
- 52 islands
- Solitude, space and silence
- Farming community
- Escape/disruption/diversity
- Relatively inexpensive
- Undeveloped
- Time warp
- Birds – Ramsar (wetlands) site
- Sailing
- Rock-climbing
- Water producer.



Vision for the future – 10 years time

- Clean here, polluted there
- Quality world-class nature based
- Improved facilities – swipe card fuel; amenities well cared for
- Café in the north
- A population of 1,200
- Unique island – community pride
- Strengths unchanged – better facilities
- Events and attractions – wider marketing
- Well organised, cohesive community
- Significant increased visitors
- Full range of accommodation – boutique to high-end
- Lady Barron – maritime display
- Pristine, peaceful escape
- Friendly people, place the core
- Larger accommodation and facilities – for groups, conferences etc.
- Safe harbour – Lady Barron
- Quality produce – crayfish
- Guided nature/adventure based tourism and infrastructure
- Renowned food destination – chefs for hire
- Flinders Trail
- Unspoilt landscape
- Not lost its character
- Better access to technology – on demand
- Unique strengths
- Fabulous visitor centre
- Food availability, better access to it – world class product, enabling infrastructure
- Re-planning walks to be more user-friendly
- Education and training = visitor satisfaction
- Memorable, undamaged
- Palana Road - sealed
- Airport upgraded
- Leadership education at school/RTO – specific to the Island.



Our challenges

- Snake-skin shoe investment
- Airport
- Support to PWS on the Island
- Marketing of activities/opportunities
- Protecting environment
- Safe harbour
- Limited skilled staff
- Access to finance for development
- Cleaning staff support services
- 'Not in my backyard' (NIMBY)
- Car hire availability
- Scale of ability to supply demand
- Accessibility of services
- Accommodation availability
- Staff housing/rentals hard to find
- Population decline
- Airfares and schedules
- Youth pathways to jobs
- Airbnb confusion
- Unsuitable/sustainable development
- Cheaper destinations
- People not talking about us
- Providing for diverse adventure visitor
- Becoming like everywhere else
- Winter season 'service'
- Crowded market
- No fresh fish
- Telecommunications, black spots
- Mixed cost housing (staff and others)
- Maintenance of essential services
- Limited supply of quality trades
- Roads – unsealed
- Passenger friendly ferry
- Brand management/damage.



Our opportunities



- Marketing plan
- Weddings market
- Arts trail
- Laundry service – commercial/hospital
- Adventure experiences
- Café in the north
- Skills training, skills audit
- Wombat Interpretation Centre
- Agricultural experiences
- Cheese making
- Sea and land focussed skills transfer – traditional practices preserved
- Indigenous tourism experiences, Wyballena, Flinders Island Aboriginal Association Incorporated (FIAAI)
- Wildlife including maritime
- Daily fishing experience
- Outer islands experience development/basic and luxury
- Geo-trail (QR scans narrative)
- Contract labour firm 'jobs pool'
- High-end sustainable tourism development
- Small cruise ships
- Writer in residence
- Food hub – Island produce, kitchen facilities and shop
- More walking trails
- Events coordinator and event attraction
- Better use of internet for awareness
- Planetarium – night skies
- More access to food across the Island
- Visitor welcome person and planning – concierge service
- Better internet access points
- Accommodation service providers – more info on renters
- Fish and game processing and sales
- Technology hub
- Personal shopper service/hampers
- Swipe card petrol station
- Investor and incentive service, and buying housing. 'Match-making' service – interview service
- Marketing the Island as privileged access.

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 Flinders Island 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 Flinders Island.

Success factors

Characteristics	Rating	Comments
1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing.	7	Flinders Island Tourism & Business Inc (FITBI)
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development.	6	Tourism Northern Tasmania (TNT)
3. Local government support.	6	Flinders Council
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations.	7	
5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans.	5	
6. Consistent visitor service excellence.	6	
7. Research driven cooperative marketing.	7	
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand.	6	
9. Risk management plans in place.	7	
10. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	6	

Action Plan implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for Flinders Island 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. Regardless, a new plan will be prepared in three years.



PRIORITY 1

Marketing Flinders Island effectively

Actions

Responsibilities

Priorities

1. Publish visitor information brochure.	FITBI	High – Year 1
2. Publish Flinders Island website.	FITBI	High – Year 1
3. Design and erect airport signage.	FITBI	High – Year 1
4. Publish promotional material for Island events	FITBI	High – Year 1
5. Work with influencers and ambassadors of Flinders Island to generate awareness and excitement for our target audiences.	FITBI	High – Year 1
6. Host visiting journalists to showcase a wide range of Island experiences.	FITBI	High – Year 1
7. Seek to resource the professional coordination of Flinders Island social media marketing.	FITBI	High – Year 1
8. Establish an ongoing visitor survey and accommodation monitoring program to gain insights from visitors and measure visitor satisfaction.	FITBI	High – Year 1

PRIORITY 2

Support sustainable indigenous tourism development in the Furneaux Group

Actions

1. Consult with the Flinders Island Aboriginal Association Inc, Cape Barren Aboriginal Association and other relevant organisations to support tourism related projects that align with the Flinders Island Destination Action Plan.

Responsibilities

FITBI/Council

Priorities

High – Year 1-3



PRIORITY 3

Improve visitor access to services, experiences and produce to meet demand

Actions	Responsibilities	Priorities
1. Establish a visitor welcome service at the airport with local volunteers acting as ambassadors to help in planning people's stay on the Island.	FITBI	High – Year 1
2. Support the development of an island hub that offers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to Island produce and producers (meet the maker) ▪ Kitchen facilities and cooking school ▪ A retail shop providing food and beverage hampers and goods ▪ Chefs for hire ▪ Visitor go-to point. 	Private sector to lead	Medium – Year 2
3. Encourage the accessibility of food and drink across the Island, examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Café in the north ▪ Mobile coffee/food van services ▪ Farmer markets. 	Private sector to lead	Medium – Year 1-2
4. Support the introduction of after-hours facility for fuel.	Council	Low – Year 3
5. Lobby for the introduction of public WiFi services at visitor hotspots across the Island.	Council	High – Year 1
6. Continue to expand and improve current community cultural festivals such as the Furneaux Festival and others.	Council/FITBI/Arts organisations	High – Year 1

PRIORITY 4**Increase the availability of housing on the Island for lease and sale****Actions**

	Responsibilities	Priorities
1. Undertake an audit of property for sale on the Island and review previous studies for land use.	Council	High – Year 1
2. Identify barriers for properties being made available for lease.	FITBI/Council	High – Year 1
3. Investigate the potential for a property management service to ‘match-make’ potential tenants with property owners, examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rent-to-buy schemes ▪ Rent while on market. 	FITBI	Medium – Year 2
4. Investigate incentives for building new housing, and buying property including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attracting groups of investors to underwrite new developments. 	FITBI/Council	Medium – Year 2-3



PRIORITY 5

Optimising education, skills and services on the Island

Actions

1. Develop youth pathways to future career opportunities on the Island, through tailored vocational training in Year 10-12.
2. Audit the skills of islanders and facilities available, including trades, professions, arts, crafts and culture to enable mentoring and to identify job opportunities.
3. Identify gaps in the Island's skilled staff pool and ways to fill these gaps through training islanders and attracting skilled workforce.
4. Investigate how contracted services such as gardening, cleaning, laundry etc. for tourism businesses can be operated sustainably.

Responsibilities

Priorities

1. Develop youth pathways to future career opportunities on the Island, through tailored vocational training in Year 10-12.	Flinders School	High – Year 1-3
2. Audit the skills of islanders and facilities available, including trades, professions, arts, crafts and culture to enable mentoring and to identify job opportunities.	Council – community services	High – Year 1
3. Identify gaps in the Island's skilled staff pool and ways to fill these gaps through training islanders and attracting skilled workforce.	Council	Medium – Year 2
4. Investigate how contracted services such as gardening, cleaning, laundry etc. for tourism businesses can be operated sustainably.	FITBI/Council CDO	High – Year 1

PRIORITY 6**Attract the right investment for the Island**

Actions	Responsibilities	Priorities
1. Lobby for key enabling visitor infrastructure such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sealing of roads critical to the Island's economic development, safety and visitor industries ▪ Upgrade of the Flinders Island airport ▪ Development of a safe harbour at Lady Barron ▪ Upgrading telecommunications infrastructure ▪ Upgrading PWS services and trails. 	FITBI/Council	High – Year 1
2. Create criteria for suitable sustainable commercial development and appropriate locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review past investment and land use studies. 	Council/FITBI	Medium – Year 2
3. Provide incentives to mitigate financial and physical barriers for commercial development on the Island, examples of barriers include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mortgage insurance premiums ▪ Bank loan restrictions ▪ Protracted construction time frames and costs. 	Council	Medium – Year 2-3
4. Establish an investor broker role to source and then connect appropriate investors with the Island.	FITBI	Medium – Year 2
5. Investigate ways for seafood to be caught, processed and sold on the island, solutions to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing a fishing game process business ▪ Licensing an entity or operator to fish and sell the catch on the island ▪ Providing a subsidy for commercial producers to supply locally vs export market. 	FITBI/Council	High – Year 1
6. Establish a wombat interpretation centre that allows visitors a hands-on experience supporting the environmental values of the Island.	PWS/FITBI	Medium – Year 2