

Flinders Island

Destination Action Plan 2020-2022

October 2020

Acknowledgements

The development of the Flinders Island Destination Plan has been facilitated by Visit Northern Tasmania (VNT) with the support of the Department of State Growth and in partnership with Flinders Island Business Inc (FIBI) 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/Coordinator

Chris Griffin, CEO – Tourism Northern Tasmania

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Destination Action Plan Review participants (October 2020)

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Those participants with a * beside their name are representatives of FIBI

Introduction

Visit 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.

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.

The most recent review of the Destination Action Plan has been undertaken during the covid-19 global pandemic. Flinders Island's visitor economy during the pandemic has fared well in comparison to many other destinations and visitor numbers are on the increase. This increase however has placed extra strain on existing infrastructure and people of the island to meet this demand. Community sentiment towards the impacts of increased visitor numbers has roused recent discussions within the community around how to manage future growth (potential cap on numbers/visitor levy) and visitor expectations (marketing of the island) as well as the generation of benefits that the future visitor could bring to the islands (regenerative/generosity tourism).

The Visitor Economy

Indicator of Performance	Financial Year End 2019	Growth Comparison vs 2014 period
Visitor Numbers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday • Business/Working¹ • Visiting Friends & Relatives • Other (eg Absentee Landowners)¹ 	7,514 37% 42% 17% 4%	+32%
Visitor Nights ²	38,410	+11%
Average length of stay ²	5.6 nights	
Average spend per visitor ²	\$795 ³	
Visitor Expenditure ²	\$6.0million ³ (\$9.2million inc airfares)	+2%*

Although comparisons are possible from the previous surveyed period of 2014, caution must be used when interpreting these given variations in survey methodology. Any future indicator of performance should be on financial years and not calendar years to provide realistic and checkable results.

¹ The % estimates are taken from figures from one week sampling (244 passengers) in March 2019, and assuming the numbers for non-holiday passengers are fairly constant. eg Locals, Businesses & Interstate property owners coming and going. The rest of the data was collected from 1,058 passengers representing 2,050 individuals for the financial year. The total number of passengers leaving was 11,060.

² Visitor Expenditure varies depends on the type of visitor. These effects the length of stay, where group/person is staying, size of group, car hire per group or whether part of an organized tour. Noting the difference between the length of stay for Business visitors (4 days), Holiday (5 days) and Family/Friends (7 days). Persons staying with family and friends also spend less.

³ This is based on the following averages per person spent \$349 (Accommodation), \$182 (Car hire/fuel), \$251 (Food costs), Tour costs (\$14) and Airfares (\$435) on their trip.

Noting that the increase is largely due to a large proportion of visitors from the business and construction workers, which has occurred over the last 3 years eg Telstra, Hydro Tas, Airport runway, Taswater...

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. Located in Bass Strait and 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 1000 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.

Objectives

The common objective for tourism is:

1. To create opportunities for visitors to connect and contribute to the community and environment for the duration of their stay – “To be Islanders” *Contribute socially, environmentally, and economically.

Our collective strengths

Generational knowledge and islander pride	Islands among islands	Beaches, coastlines, mountains and mist	We work with the weather Its mild... yet wild
Intensely passionate community	Hunter/Gatherer lifestyle We live by the seasons	Diverse recreational activities	Connected community
The Quiet – solitude and space	Not a lot of choice, but everything you need	Co-operative and innovative Agricultural industry	Supportive and safe community, with a shared sense of responsibility
Wildlife / Birdlife unique to the Strait	Ancient and modern cultural traditions	Rich Dark History	Resourceful (cos we have no Bunnings)

VISION FOR THE FUTURE – 10 YEARS TIME

Visitors positively contribute to the Furneaux Islands - socially, environmentally and economically	Community embraces the visitor economy	Flinders Trails – 10 Great Short Walks	Safe Harbour Port - Lady Barron
Visitor Integration / Interpretation Centre A place to explore the diversity of our natural environment from marine life to the night skies	Our islands are self-sufficient, with regular supply and access of quality local produce	On island processing for our islands produce – ie meat, seafood	Sound environmental and innovative Waste Management
Upgraded road network with increased percentage of State Government owned roads	Quality facilities and public infrastructure for visitors and the community	Geographical indications (GI) registration for provenance branding of island produce	A clear pathway for current and future young people to succeed here, in an “island way”

Our Challenges

Fear of change and loss of our island lifestyle	Balance the economics of tourism with the well-being of our environment and community	Balancing the freedom “to do anything” with a need to protect our special places through reasonable restrictions	Youth leave to build their futures elsewhere
Housing availability for new and existing residents	Navigating the ‘COVID effect’ of travel and tourism on the island	Managing environmental impacts of campervan visitation	Freight logistics of living on an island
Managing visitor expectations and post-visitation feedback	Balance the fine line between nurturing the environment VS sensitive development	Awareness of our ‘carrying capacity’ and scale of supply/demand	An ageing population
Limited skilled staff on our islands	Chase meaning – not growth	Acceptance of “tourism” by residents	Waste Management including waste water logistics

Our Opportunities

Invite visitors to learn to be one of us for a day, a week, a lifetime, to experience our “Islanders Way” of life	Generosity / Voluntourism	Our older population can share wisdom, life experience and an historical perspective of island life	Effective collaboration between stakeholders
Encourage the right people with the right skill sets to our islands - those able to work remotely and still travel if needed	Our islands are a place to restore, reset and recharge	Personal experiences with community hosts	Market authentic and genuine island experiences
Local Employment Agency – to attract and develop a skilled and entrepreneurial workforce	Writers/Artists in residence programs	Appropriate outer islands experience / development	Utilise technology to disseminate visitor information
Sharing of our unique and diverse Furneaux Islands culture	Soft adventure experiences	Encourage visitation throughout the entire year	Waste streams generating energy
Integrate our youth into an Islander “Youth Enterprise Program”			

Success Factors

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.

Characteristics	Rating	Comments
1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing	7	Flinders Island Business Inc. (FIBI)
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development	6	Visit Northern Tasmania (VNT)
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	Responsible	Priorities
1. Publish visitor information brochure	FIBI/Council	H - ongoing
2. Update Flinders Island website	FIBI	H - ongoing
3. Publish promotional material for island events	FIBI/Council	H – ongoing
4. Work with influencers and ambassadors of Flinders Island to generate awareness and excitement for our target audiences as well as growing local business	FIBI	H – ongoing
5. Host visiting journalists to showcase a wide range of island experiences	FIBI	H – ongoing
6. Seek to resource the professional coordination of Flinders Island social media marketing. Develop a Targeted Digital Plan including website review, research social media target audiences and identify app	FIBI	H – ongoing
7. Establish an ongoing visitor survey and accommodation monitoring program to gain insights from visitors and measure visitor satisfaction	FIBI/Council	H – ongoing
8. Identify Way finding signage	FIBI/Council	H - ongoing

Priority 2:

Support sustainable indigenous tourism development in the Furneaux Group

Actions	Responsibility	Priorities
1. Maintain respectful support for local aboriginal enterprises	FIBI/Aboriginal communities	H - ongoing

Priority 3: Improve visitor access to services, experiences and produce to meet demand

Actions	Responsible	Priorities
1. Support accessibility of food and drink across the island, examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Café in the north process, consolidate and reinvigorate • Promote mobile coffee/food van services • Assess existing market offerings and explore options to compliment or add 	Private sector to lead	M - Ongoing
2. Support the development of local produce	FIBI/Council	H – Year 1
3. Enable opportunities for training and support of the business community	FIBI/Council	H – Ongoing
4. Continue supporting community cultural festivals such as the Ferneaux Islands Festival, Flinders Flicks and community driven events	Council/FIBI/Arts organisations / FIAAI	
5. Investigate impact of camping/campervans on the island and suggest management measures including information packs, waste disposal.	Council/FIBI/PWS	M – Ongoing
6. Explore the branding of Flinders product so that the provenance is recognized	Council/FIBI	H – Year 1

Priority 4:

Increase the availability of housing on the island for lease and sale

Actions	Responsibility	Priorities
1. 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 	FIBI	M – Ongoing
2. Promote incentives for building new housing, and buying property including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting groups of investors to underwrite new developments 	FIBI/Council	M – Ongoing
3. Build on housing report and look at possible actions based on the outcomes.	FIBI/Council	M – Ongoing
4. Parks to maintain 3 Great Short Walks and develop and progress those remaining from the agreed list of 10	PWS/FIBI	M - Ongoing

Priority 5:

Optimising education, skills and services on the island

Actions	Responsibility	Priorities
1. Develop youth pathways to future career opportunities on the island, through tailored vocational training in Year 10 – 12	Flinders School/Council/FIBI	H – Ongoing
2. Audit the skills of islanders in all business sectors. Explore creating an employment and training business on island	Council/ FIBI	H – Ongoing
3. Identify gaps in the island’s skilled staff pool and ways to fill these gaps through training islanders and attracting skilled workforce. Discuss adult education with High school to address skills shortages.	School	M – Ongoing
4. Investigate how contracted services such as gardening, cleaning, laundry etc. for tourism businesses can be operated sustainably.	FIBI	H – Ongoing
5. Investigate leadership development opportunities.	FIBI	H – Year 1

Priority 6:

Attract the right investment for the island

Actions	Responsibility	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 the safe harbour project (Burbury Plan) at Lady Barron • Maintain current PWS services and trails for access and service standards • Identify roads with high visitor use such as Walkers Hill 	FIBI/ Council limited to strategic plan and priority projects	H – Ongoing
2. Create criteria for suitable sustainable commercial development and appropriate locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review past investment and land use studies 	FIBI/Council yes as per planning scheme	M – 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 • Contact Office of the Co-ordinator General re. Mortgage insurance and guarantee arrangements with Government. 	FIBI/Council limited to strategic plan and planning scheme	M – Year 2-3
4. Establish an investor broker role to source and then connect appropriate investors with the island.	FIBI	M – Year 2
5. Raise funds to create investment funding between investor and bank.	FIBI	M – Year 2

6. Investigate ways for seafood to be caught, processed and sold on and off island, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing a fishing game process business• Licensing an entity or operator to fish and sell the catch on island• Providing a subsidy for commercial producers to supply locally vs export market• Investigate and promote new opportunities emerging in aquaculture such as shellfish and seaweed• Explore cold storage for freight options	FIBI/Council	H – Year 1
7. Continue to work on and implement the population project	FIBI/VNT	H - Year 1

Priority 7:

Support sustainability of tourism on the Island

Actions	Responsibility	Priorities
1. Investigate making FI 'single use plastic free' including exploring potential funding to facilitate the initiative.	Council/FIBI	H
2. Investigate road safety initiatives, including wildlife protection on the island	FIBI	M
3. Investigate what tourism, based on sustainable principles and values, means in practice for Flinders Island	FIBI/Council	M