

# CEO Commentary

## Tasmanian Tourism Snapshot for the year ending September 2019



The latest visitation results have been released and show the state is continuing to attract visitors who are spending more and contributing to a successful and sustainable visitor economy.

The latest Tasmanian Visitor Survey (TVS) numbers show that we welcomed 1.32 million visitors in the year ending September 2019. These visitors continue to contribute record expenditure in our economy with spending increasing by 5 per cent to \$2.53 billion.

The key domestic markets of Victoria, NSW and Queensland continue to provide the greatest numbers of visitors to the state with visitors from WA increasing by 11 per cent in the year to September. The boost in the WA market may be attributed to the direct flights between Hobart and Perth which has increased travel options and capacity into the state.

The TVS reports on visitation from interstate travellers to Tasmania with the southern and northern regions remaining steady. There was a 3 per cent decline in the North West and West Coast and visitation figures for the East Coast show a decrease in interstate visitation of 8 per cent. One reason we believe might explain the decline in the east is that the region experienced a drop in interstate and international visitation in the Jan-Mar 2019 quarter. However, the National Visitor Survey data for that same time period shows strong intrastate overnight trips, meaning Tasmanians holidaying at home may have had an impact on capacity into the region. Since then, the east coast has recorded a consistent rate of visitation, indicating that the decline may be softening.

Overall visitation to the state for the year remained steady at 2 per cent, and pleasingly visitation in the September 2019 quarter was the highest ever recorded for that quarter with visitor expenditure during that quarter also up 9 per cent.

Interstate holiday visitors also increased by 14 per cent to 79,700 for the September 2019 quarter. This is a record number of holiday visitors for a traditionally quiet quarter. The Tourism Tasmania team has been working hard to deliver marketing programs that encourage shoulder season travel, so it's pleasing to see that our programs may be positively impacting growth in this quarter.

Earlier this week, TRA published the latest Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts 2017-18, which are produced nationally to measure the regional impact of tourism. It showed that tourism consumption in Tasmania totalled \$4.4 billion, up 10 per cent with southern Tasmania contributing \$2.4 billion of the total and regional Tasmania (the aggregate of all tourism regions except Southern Tasmania)

contributing the remaining \$2.0 billion. Tourism consumption is measured as the total value of tourism goods and services consumed by domestic and international visitors. It's encouraging to see the data backing up what we believe is happening anecdotally on the ground, with our visitors contributing to our regional economies.

In October this year, we launched the new Tasmania - Come Down for Air brand platform and supporting campaign in key domestic markets. We know modern city life is full of stress with constant trigger moments with long commutes, constant connectivity, high living costs, crowds, noise pollution, smog and grime. Our mainland neighbours living under this pressure are looking for better ways to live and for holidays that allow them to connect with nature, themselves and their loved ones.

Our new brand has been developed to offer these audiences with an authentic antidote to the stresses of modern life and to let them know that Tasmania can offer a unique perspective on life and a down-to-earth version of luxury.

Destination marketing is becoming increasingly competitive as each state and territory vies for their share of the travelling public. There is no denying that Tasmania is becoming a more expensive destination to holiday with accommodation pressures in Hobart and average airfares increasing in line with the rest of the Australian domestic market.

This means that we need to work together to ensure that the brand promise is delivered through high quality visitor experiences and brand-aligned messaging.

In early 2020, Tourism Tasmania will be offering a brand toolkit and brand workshops around the state to help operators learn how they can leverage value from the platform in their own businesses and connect with travellers who are looking for deeper connections and to share our way of life.

Lastly, I would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas, a happy and safe New Year and a fantastic summer season.

Warm regards

**John Fitzgerald**  
**CEO, Tourism Tasmania**

**11 December 2019**