

# East Coast Tasmania Tourism

## REGIONAL PRIORITY

## PROJECTS

### 2022 - 2025

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Executive Summary	4
Key Priority Projects	6
1. East Coast Master Plan	7
2. Staff Shortages	8
3. Experience Infrastructure	9
4. Innovative Solutions	10
5. Project Officer	11

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

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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.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Traditional land and seas of the Palawa Aboriginal people, East Coast Tasmania covers over 6,000 square kilometres of land. From the unique Irapuna/Bay of Fires in the north, along 220 kilometres of stunning coastline past Freycinet National Park to Triabunna and the iconic Maria Island in the south.

The region is entirely within the federal electorate of Lyons and falls across two Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- The Break O’Day Council (BODC) in the north – 6,346 residents
- Glamorgan Spring Bay Council (GSBC) in the south – 4,440 residents

For the past decade, tourism businesses large and small, industry organisations, volunteers and the three tiers of government have worked extremely hard to build a viable visitor economy.

As a consequence, the economy of the East Coast as a whole has benefited. There has been significant jobs growth. There has been capital brought into the region and consumer spending at a local level, combined with consumer spending through visitors, has lifted local businesses. New businesses have been attracted to the East Coast because of the visitor economy.

The East Coast of Tasmania as a region is a critical part of the image Tasmania projects to the world - imagine a Tasmanian tourism campaign without Freycinet or the Bay of Fires.

It is a critical contributor to the Tasmanian economy\*\* - imagine the hit to that economy without a robust, go-ahead East Coast Tourism industry.

The East Coast region is the sixth most dependent region on the visitor economy in Australia. Tourism is a significant contributor to the region, with the food and beverage sectors, including cafes and restaurants, as the top employer for both LGAs providing approx. 24% of all jobs. This is followed by air, water and other transport at 16% and then accommodation at 12%.

Following on from the bushfires over the Australian summer of 2019-20, the COVID-19 pandemic is having damaging and long-lasting impacts on tourism.

*\*\*East Coast commentary (RTSA data, financial year 2019-20)*

- *The East Coast ranked first overall in the comparative importance of tourism across Tasmania’s regions. The tourism industry contributed an estimated \$197.6 million (was \$151.8 million) to the East Coast’s regional economy.*
- *The East Coast ranked fourth in overall industry size; supplying 7.0 (was 6.0 per cent) per cent of the state-wide direct contribution to tourism GRP (\$124.2 million) (was \$95.3 million).*
- *On the East Coast, 2,213 (was 1,755) people were directly employed in the tourism industry and 821 (was 630) were employed indirectly, with a total employment impact of 3,034 (was 2,385) people.*

The East Coast of Tasmania is home to significant Tasmania tourism icons, but sadly the investment to support the local infrastructure and communities has not kept up with the visitor experience expectations.

We are all faced with the current financial and viability challenges triggered by the pandemic – individuals, households, small and medium enterprises, large corporates, whole communities and the three tiers of government. They are challenges we are all grappling with, therefore they are challenges we must work together to address.

The tourism industry on the East Coast needs to know that its contribution to the economy, to government rates and taxes, to employment, to the wellbeing of the East Coast region is acknowledged, and that it matters. The industry needs to feel confident to aspire again, to know that those who benefited from its success will have its back through this unprecedented time, so it can come back, as strong and vibrant as ever.

We have collated in order of priority, our Regional Priority Projects as identified by key stakeholders of the region through our Destination Management Plan (DMP) process in 2021.

Key Drivers, Enablers and Influencers were identified in the DMP process that should be considered as we move forward:

- Economic and social disruption
- Increasing competition for domestic tourism
- Generational shifts
- Environmental sustainability
- Social licence for tourism
- Experiential and local

To return tourism on the East Coast to a healthy state, there will be considerable support required but integral to that recovery is the support to develop the Regional Priority Projects included in this document.

The Regional Priority Projects proposal is a combined investment of \$62,550,000 over 3 years.

This combined investment includes total costs associated with a Project Officer contracted by East Coast Tasmania Tourism for 3 years, or for the life of the projects.



# KEY PRIORITY PROJECTS

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# 1. EAST COAST MASTER PLAN

ECTT have spoken with the Office of Coordinator General (OCG), as well as the two General Managers from member councils of the ECTT RTO, and we are all in agreement on the following:

- The current funding of \$50,000 will not deliver a full Master Plan
- There have been many reports into the East Coast region on a number of subjects over the years
- Existing funding, while a welcome start, will not achieve what is actually required

**PHASE 1 (existing funding)** - An ECTT proposed plan for the existing funds of \$50,000 is outlined (briefly) below:

1. Engage a consultant to assist
2. Conduct a review of all the publications, reviews and reports for the region (including those that may not be widely circulated, respecting confidentiality) that have occurred over the last 5-10 years to mine these for information and put together an overall assessment
3. Outline the requirements of an East Coast Master Plan in consultation with major stakeholders (is this wide – roads, sewage, accommodation, housing, protected areas, new product, health, schools etc OR is this narrow – tourism touch points only?) What are the priorities? How long are we planning for? Does a Master Plan sit above all other planning documents and decisions? How do we all connect with each other best on the coast? What is required to preserve that? To capitalise on our assets?
4. Conduct a gap analysis – what key information (studies, reports, reviews) is missing and what are the associated costs?

**PHASE 2 (new funding)** - To ensure that East Coast Tasmania delivers on expectations for both communities and visitors, it is important that a Master Plan is designed for the next 10 years that meets the demands associated with projected population and visitor growth.

## PROJECT COST:

Total project cost of \$300,000 over three years.

PROJECT: East Coast Masterplan		Expenditure (\$AU)		
Amount	Initiative	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
\$50,000	Initial Report	\$50,000* (Phase 1 - existing funding)		
\$110,000	Developing Master Plan Framework	\$110,000		
\$40,000	Community & Stakeholder Engagement		\$40,000	
\$150,000	Delivery of Master Plan			\$150,000
<b>\$300,000</b>		<b>\$110,000</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>

## 2. STAFF SHORTAGES

The lack of housing or accommodation for staff within tourism and hospitality businesses is a chief concern for the tourism industry on the East Coast. As such we call for a commitment to a report into the use of Crown Land on the East Coast for construction of staff housing with a view to identify at least, the three best locations to release land. The report should also identify the barriers for developers to invest and provide options for the government to consider to remove these. For example, to further encourage the investment in these uncertain times an interest free government loan scheme for developers or public private partnerships with \$:\$ grants could be considered.

Coupled with the provision above, we also seek commitment to expenditure within the local government areas of GSBC and BODC for development of new and upgrade of existing essential infrastructure required to assist with staff housing essential services (sewerage, water, roads, electricity, internet) in the locations identified.

It is hoped that the identification of land and the commitment to fund essential services will encourage investors to develop staff accommodation hubs on the East Coast of Tasmania.

The above addresses a long term solution, however the need for staff accommodation is an immediate and pressing issue. To assist with this, we suggest that a reimbursement is given upon proof of long term rental to provide rate relief for individual housing – so that home investment owners on the East Coast are encouraged to provide long term rental options to tourism and hospitality staff rather than using their investments for short term accommodation.

### PROJECT COST:

Total project cost of \$8,600,000 over three years.

PROJECT: Staff Shortages		Expenditure (\$AU)		
Amount	Initiative	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
\$1,500,000	Rates relief	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
\$100,000	Report	\$100,000		
\$3,000,000	Development of essential infrastructure	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
\$4,000,000	Co-investment grants	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,000,000
<b>\$8,600,000</b>		<b>\$3,100,000</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>



### 3. EXPERIENCE INFRASTRUCTURE

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The tourism industry on the East Coast of Tasmania believes that a mix of both new experiences and quality existing infrastructure are best placed to attract visitors and provide products that are innovative, safe and in keeping with the promise of touring in the region. New experiences should align to experiences that are in train or planned for within the region.

To that end, the construction of a cycle / walk (multi-purpose) pathway along the Great Eastern Drive would provide a new cycling / walking experience and also an alternative travel option for the East Coast. Extending this pathway would link the towns on the East Coast, as well as providing a further experience for visitors and assist with road safety, health and wellbeing for locals and visitors alike. Some progress has already been made with pathways underway to Binalong Bay and Akaroa from St Helens. Scamander to Beaumaris is also complete. This would enhance the overall experience for visitors through increased participation in cycling and walking along our spectacular coastline, and will lead to increased visitor nights in our region.

The Great Eastern Drive requires main road upgrades, hardened shoulders, further pull out points, more passing lanes, better internet connectivity and mobile phone reception, and EV charging stations. We fully support RACT's bid of \$500 million over the next 10 years to upgrade the Tasman Highway (Great Eastern Drive) to be a 3-star rated road.

#### PROJECT COST:

Total project cost of \$50,300,000 over three years.

PROJECT: Experience Infrastructure		Expenditure (\$AU)		
Amount	Initiative	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
\$50,000,000	Cycle / Walk Pathway Construction	\$20,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000
\$300,000	EV Charging Stations (fast charging)	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
<b>\$50,300,000</b>		<b>\$20,100m</b>	<b>\$15,100m</b>	<b>\$15,100m</b>

## 4. INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

In order to both appeal to our visitors as an eco-tourism destination and to assist our industry to better meet their aspirations of zero emissions, a grant for tourism and hospitality industry businesses to implement innovative solutions towards the circular economy is required. The small grant (up to \$50,000 - \$: for a total of \$100,000 investment per business ) would enable small businesses to upgrade to a hybrid or electric vehicle or install a battery based solar electric system.

These solutions will also assist COVID-19 hit businesses to realise ongoing savings associated with innovation.

With the loss of Visitor Information Centres on the East Coast, it is vital to the tourism industry and associated businesses that information is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in a primary location in each town. This can be delivered through Visitor Information Boards featuring touch screen technology, as well as an upgrade to existing visitor information boards.

Finally, a story-telling mechanism via the East Coast Tasmania Tourism app and augmented reality (AR) that gives people a feeling of cohesiveness as they travel along the roadways could assist our visitors to understand the region's diversity of culture, history, and values. This could be in the form of artistic installations and so could also be a source of income for local artists.

### PROJECT COST:

Total project cost of \$2,750,000 over three years.

PROJECT: Innovative Solutions		Expenditure (\$AU)		
Amount	Initiative	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
\$2,500,000	Circular economy based recovery solutions	\$750,000	\$1,000,000	\$750,000
\$100,000	Visitor Information Boards and Touch Screens x 7	\$50,000	\$50,000	
\$150,000	Artistic story-telling via ECTT App	\$30,000	\$120,000	
<b>\$2,750,000</b>		<b>\$830,000</b>	<b>\$1,170,000</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>

## 5. PROJECT OFFICER

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The above projects will require coordination and a project officer for the ECTT for the following 3 years or for the life of the projects. The budget takes into account oncosts associated with this position.

### PROJECT COST:

Total project cost of \$600,000 over three years.

PROJECT: Project Coordination		Expenditure (\$AU)		
Amount	Initiative	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
\$600,000	Projects Officer for ECTT	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
<b>\$600,000</b>		<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>



**east coast tasmania**

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