

Submission to the Tasmanian Government consultation process into
Tourism Master Plan for the Tasmanian Wilderness
World Heritage Area (TWWHA)

Tourism Industry Council Tasmania
July 2019

The logo for the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania (TICT) is a white, rounded trapezoidal shape with the letters 'TICT' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font centered inside it.

TICT

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Tourism Industry Council Tasmania (TICT) welcomes the opportunity to formally contribute to the development of a Tourism Master Plan for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA).

Acknowledgments

As a reflection of the tourism industry's recognition of the deep and complex history of this island and its wilderness, Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, its directors, members and employees, wish to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) and the other lands upon which our industry operates.

TICT also acknowledge those Tasmanians, past, present, and future, who have joined with the Tasmanian Aboriginal communities in their custodianship of the Tasmanian Wilderness.

To the Aboriginal peoples, the conservation movement, governments, our fellow tourism operators, and members of the Tasmanian community, who have campaigned, fought, advanced and achieved the protection and ongoing conservation of this extraordinary natural environment and cultural heritage – thank you for what you have done to ensure the conservation and recognition of these special places as World Heritage for generations to come, inspiring visitors from around the world.

As an industry we seek to not only recognise, but also celebrate and add to the work and passion of past and present custodians and conservationists in the preservation and presentation of the TWWHA.

The tourism industry believes all Tasmanians share responsibility for the ongoing management, conservation and presentation of this Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, and we believe this Tourism Master Plan provides an opportunity to contribute to this ongoing process.

Tourism Industry Council Tasmania

Tourism Industry Council Tasmania (TICT) is the peak body that represents and acts for the Tasmanian tourism industry. The Council is a not-for-profit and non-partisan organisation that promotes the value of tourism in the Tasmanian community. TICT provides a strategic direction and united voice for the sustainable development and growth of the Tasmanian tourism industry and in advocating policy on behalf of the industry.

TICT has a large, representative based board, bringing together various industry sectors. This includes representatives of accommodation and hospitality operators; visitor attractions, experiences and tour operators; transport operators, ports, and tourism-related industry associations.

TICT partners with the Tasmanian Government on the dual industry-government strategies guiding the growth of tourism and the visitor economy in Tasmania;

- *T21 – The Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-20*
- *Parks 21: Joint Action Plan for Tourism in Protected Areas in Tasmania 2015-20*

Tourism in the TWWHA:

Tourism is the major industry operating and generating income in the TWWHA; equally the TWWHA, and the Tasmanian wilderness more generally, underpins the Tasmanian tourism industry – directly supporting around 10% of tourism businesses in the state, contributing to the development of

regional tourism hubs around the TWWHA, and an influential factor in the success of the wider industry through brand and visitor appeal.

As the peak body representing the Tasmanian tourism industry and a key stakeholder in the TWWHA, Tourism Industry Council Tasmania welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage (TWWHA) Management Plan 2014

There are over 200 tourism businesses with a lease or a license to operate in Tasmania's reserve system. Approximately half of these businesses already operate in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. These businesses are generally small, boutique and labour intensive; offering a wide variety of interpretation and experiences each year to hundreds of thousands of visitors of different backgrounds and abilities, including guided walks, canyoning, caving, rafting, kayaking, mountain biking, cruises and charters, food and drink, scenic flights, wilderness accommodation, wildlife watching, fishing, personalised and coach tours.

In addition, hundreds of tourism businesses operating outside the TWWHA also promote and benefit from the wilderness and its visitor appeal, providing complementary experiences, accommodation, hospitality and transport to those visitors who have come to Tasmania to see, enjoy and learn about the TWWHA and other wilderness areas in the state.

The economic value of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, from the impact of visitor spending alone, was last measured in 2007 and estimated then at \$721.8 million – supporting approximately 5,300 jobs in the state. Tourism Tasmania research has also shown that 'wilderness' is integral to Tasmania's brand and appeal as a total tourism destination: 'wilderness' is the greatest trigger to influence intention to visit Tasmania, and respondents across market segments consistently rank 'wilderness' as having the highest appeal and being a uniquely Tasmanian experience.

Tasmania's regional economies, especially the West Coast, are some of the most tourism dependent communities in Australia. It is in these areas, bordering the TWWHA, that the wilderness is often the most important asset and driver for tourism, and where nature-based tourism has the most potential to contribute to local social and economic development.

Tourism activities and services, carried out in a sustainable manner, are also compatible with and complementary to conservation aims. Indeed, in many cases, tourism has been an essential factor in successful conservation outcomes in Tasmania.

Ultimately, most tourism operators that work in the Tasmanian wilderness do so because they value our special places, and they share these places with visitors in order to protect them.

Successful nature-based tourism businesses have provided and continue to offer a viable alternative to unsustainable economic uses of our wilderness areas and assist in arguments for their protection, not least through their continued investment in marketing and promotion of the Tasmanian wilderness.

Furthermore, through sustainable tourism experiences and high-quality interpretation, visitors and the community can come to learn and reaffirm the intrinsic value of our wilderness, and appreciate and advocate for its protections.

Tourism businesses in the TWWHA also provide more tangible conservation support through the

lease and license fees paid to the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service, worth a significant proportion of the Service's annual budget, with a number also voluntarily raising additional funds and donations for the Service and other conservation bodies. Many Tasmanian nature-based tourism businesses also work collaboratively with the Parks and Wildlife Service to manage and monitor wilderness areas and visitor impacts, and actively participate in hands-on conservation and **rehabilitation projects**.

Reimagining Tourism in the TWWHA Project:

In 2014, TICT joined with the Tasmanian Government through the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service and Tourism Tasmania, to undertake the landmark *'Reimagining Tourism in the TWWHA'* Project.

The purpose of this project was to establish an agreed vision for the future growth of tourism within the TWWHA and agreed priorities to sustainably grow tourism in the TWWHA. This agreed vision formed the basis of the tourism industry's input into the development of the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan 2017*,

From TICT's perspectives, the principles and priorities identified and agreed to as part of that project continue to be highly relevant and should shape the development of this new Tourism Master Plan for the TWWHA. This includes the vision that was agreed to:

"To deliver the most contemporary Wilderness World Heritage experience, offering shared, life changing moments."

We believe the focus for the future of tourism in the TWWHA is on growing the value of the place at a low volume, in line with seven priority objectives for tourism operators to engage with – assisting to reposition the TWWHA as a tourism destination and deliver reimagined, extraordinary, visitor experiences.

Making our customers heroes: responding to customers' needs, wants, and desires to form attractive, contemporary, wilderness experiences

Providing personal, hands on experiences: promoting environmental values in this unique region, from up-close and hands-on adventure experiences to voluntourism and educational opportunities

Embracing the tourism-conservation partnership: positioning the TWWHA as a premier conservation destination, providing excellence in interpretation and storytelling around the World Heritage values, history and protection

Sharing Aboriginal stories and heritage: actively engaging and conversing with Aboriginal peoples, so that visitors can better appreciate the connection to country and the cultural values of this region

Giving experience providers confidence in new opportunities: zoning changes, ensuring security of tenure for tourism operators, and improving access, to encourage innovative ecotourism opportunities

Delivering world's best practice that is measurable: ensuring a reputation for, and delivery of, quality experiences and best practice environmental sustainability through mandatory accreditation, stronger leasing and licensing conditions, and reference to globally relevant performance standards

Embracing new markets and communication channels: building a destination brand, targeting niche markets, using storytelling, linked to a brand strategy and events

TWWHA Management Plan:

TICT welcomes the intent of the new TWWHA Management Plan to progress many of these objectives through recognising the critical role tourism has in the conservation, management and presentation of the TWWHA.

The Tasmanian tourism industry has longstanding concerns about the restrictive and prohibitive approach adopted in previous management plans for the TWWHA, and this dated approach to tourism in protected areas has constrained the capacity of the industry to fully realise the potential of this area for the Tasmanian community and visitors from around the world. Tourism operators also held longstanding concerns about the complexity, and difficulty in interpreting, the prescriptions of the current plan that affect their business operations.

In this context TICT welcomed key principles underpinning the new TWWHA Management Plan:

- The more contemporary and balanced approach to managing and presenting both the natural and cultural values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.
- The greater recognition, capacity and opportunity it provides for sustainable, commercial tourism operations and their role within the TWWHA, along with the clearer, more practical and reader friendly composition and formatting of the plan
- The recognition of the importance of, the need to coherently plan for, presentation of the area's World Heritage values – and the greater attention given to Aboriginal cultural values and their presentation.
- The simplified language and guiding principles on permitted activities.

We also welcomed several practical measures proposed in the new plan to support improved presentation of the area; including updating of the *Interpretation Framework 2007*, which will enhance the effective public provision of quality interpretation and communications regarding the TWWHA.

Tourism Master Plan

TICT sees the development of a Tourism Master Plan for the TWWHA as an opportunity to progress, prioritise and resource strategic outcomes from the new Management Plan, and the 'Reimagining Project', and generally strategically plan the ongoing growth of tourism within the TWWHA.

The plan is another opportunity for the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service, tourism operators and other stakeholders to adopt a more strategic, shared approach to best-practice visitor management and successful marketing of the TWWHA as a destination.

TICT urges that the significant body of work already undertaken by government and industry regarding the strategic future of tourism in the TWWHA should be utilised and incorporated into the Tourism Master Plan development process, including *T21 – The Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-20*, *Parks 21 Joint Action Plan for Tourism 2015-20*, and the *Reimagining Tourism in the TWWHA EcoTourism Investment Proposal 2014*.

In line with our Parks 21 Agreement with the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service, TICT is particularly interested in how tourism and management can better support one another in both conservation and presentation activities. We are optimistic about the inclusion of these considerations in the Tourism Master Plan process.

TICT is concerned by the sheer number and complexity of elements proposed by the plan over such a diverse and large property as the TWWHA.

We appreciate Tourism Master Plans are in place and accepted best-practice for most World Heritage Sites throughout the World with significant tourism value. We note, however, that most World Heritage Sites are specific destinations with clear destination nodes.

The TWWHA is a very large and complex landscape with multiple destination nodes and highly diverse cultural and natural values. We see absolute merit in a specific Tourism Master Plan being developed for sites like Cradle Mountain, or Mt Field, or the Overland Track, for example, to consider, manage and plan for future visitor activity and needs of those sites where visitation and tourism activity within the TWWHA is concentrated. The model of the Tourism Master Plan for World-Heritage Listed Kakadu provides an example of this approach.

Developing practical and focussed Tourism Plans for individual National Parks within the TWWHA, destination nodes, or Customer Service Zones, as they are defined within the TWWHA Management Plan, seems a far more sensible and pragmatic approach than applying a holistic Tourism Master Plan across the whole, vast TWWHA. Nevertheless, we understand the requirement of IUCN in this regard, and appreciate the expectations on Government.

In this context, TICT notes the process outlined for guiding the development of this TWWHA Tourism Master Plan and that several specific elements have been foreshadowed as required to be considered in the plan.

To expediate the consultation process, TICT offers the following general comments on each of the matters identified, as representative of the tourism industry's position:

Element	TICT Response
Protection of Natural and Cultural Values.	<p>TICT believes the TWWHA Management Plan, as the statutory document, must remain the principal prescriptive document in guiding land use management measures for the protection, presentation and conservation of the natural and cultural values within the TWWHA.</p> <p>It is critical this proposed Tourism Master Plan is consistent with the Management Plan, and only seeks to apply the provisions and principals of the Management Plan in a practical sense as it relates to tourism activity within the TWWHA.</p> <p>The Master plan must not seek to establish another or contradictory layer of expectation and management principles on tourism operators and service providers operating within the TWWHA.</p> <p>If it is determined through this consultation process to develop the TWWHA Tourism Master Plan major additional standards, protections or management practices are required in relation to tourism-related activities within the TWWHA, these should be applied through amendments to the Management Plan.</p>
Development of a coherent marketing strategy for the	The TWWHA is fundamental to the destination marketing brand for Tasmania, and this is reflected in the current marketing strategies for the State.

<p>TWWHA that integrates promotion of the areas and its values with other state-wide and regional strategies.</p>	<p>TICT would not support the development of a stand-alone marketing plan for the TWWHA. Rather we recommend marketing of the TWWHA and destination nodes and experiences within it are elevated and incorporated into the marketing of the State and regions within the State.</p> <p>As the destination marketing organisation for Tasmania, Tourism Tasmania must lead this process with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS).</p> <p>As an experience operator itself, PWS, does have a responsibility to effectively market the products and services it operates within the TWWHA.</p>
<p>Examination of current and future visitor expectations, including demand analysis.</p>	<p>Tourism Tasmania is responsible for visitor demand forecasting for the State of Tasmania and engages specialist demand forecasters for this purpose. This process is currently being undertaken in the context of developing a new <i>T21 – Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy</i> with an outlook to the years 2025 and 2030.</p> <p>Any demand forecasting for the TWWHA must reflect and be based upon the work currently being undertaken by Tourism Tasmania.</p> <p>PWS should apply these demand forecasts with their own internal visitor modelling to determine likely future visitor trends. This will greatly assist with infrastructure planning, product development and general destination planning.</p>
<p>Aboriginal cultural presentation</p>	<p>TICT strongly advocates for Aboriginal cultural presentation within the TWWHA to be prioritised as an outcome from this Tourism Master Plan.</p> <p>We believe this should include appropriate recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage into interpretation and presentation of the TWWHA, facilitating and supporting new Aboriginal Tourism experiences and ventures within the TWWHA, and dual naming of sites within the TWWHA.</p>
<p>Natural values presentation and conservation partnerships</p>	<p>We would suggest nearly all tourism operators working within the TWWHA are actively engaged in their own conservation activities relevant to their business or contribute to broader conservation activities with PWS and other bodies.</p> <p>We believe the existing initiatives, such as the Green Guardians program for example, should be recognised, prioritised and resourced through this Tourism Master Plan, rather than pursuing new opportunities. We believe a pragmatic approach should be adopted in this regard through picking up and elevating existing programs that work, and recognising those operators already active in these areas, rather than proposing major new initiatives.</p> <p>We also support further training and support for tourism operators wanting to enhance their understanding and engagement in natural conservation activities, through further workshop-based training on interpretation and presentation of the nature conservation values</p>
<p>Historic Heritage</p>	<p>We interpret this as reference to modern, post-colonial history of the</p>

	<p>TWWHA. We would suggest this is a second layer priority from the Master Plan.</p> <p>We believe the immediate priority should be enhancing the knowledge and engagement of all stakeholders in the natural conservation values of the TWWHA, while supporting the Aboriginal community to enhance their presentation and representation of the TWWHA.</p>
Prioritisation of investment in facilitates and experiences.	<p>We believe the opportunities from the Master Plan around investment priorities should be an agreed framework for determining and prioritising public investment opportunities within the TWWHA (such as visitor facilities, track upgrades and new visitor experiences), while providing certainty and clear guidelines for private operators.</p> <p>The approach undertaken by the Tasmanian Government in relation to the Cradle Mountain Master Plan, and the Tourism Infrastructure in Parks Fund is a pragmatic and outcome-driven approach to identifying both major and small public infrastructure priorities within the TWWHA. Master planning of infrastructure and visitor needs for specific high visitation sites within the TWWHA (such as Cradle, Mt Field, Cockle Creek), should be encouraged and prioritised from the Master Plan.</p> <p>We do not believe it is the role of this Tourism Master Plan to get into detail in identifying and prescribing potential private investment opportunities within the TWWHA. This strategy of directing the investment market has failed in the past in relation to the TWWHA and other strategic sites, and we see not constructive outcomes achieved from adopting this approach again.</p>
Social Inclusion	<p>TICT would support the prioritisation from this Tourism Master Plan a policy and framework by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service to expand inclusive and accessible tourism opportunities within the TWWHA.</p> <p>This should start with PWS own infrastructure and ensuring existing Parks assets are established or upgraded with inclusive tourism at the core of design, while providing advice to private operators on best practice outcomes.</p>
Sustainable Use	<p>TICT generally supports the adoption of a 'no trace' policy for all tourism within the TWWHA in relation to waste, resource-use and infrastructure, and the robust enforcement of sustainable tourism practices on all commercial and public tourism operators licensed within the TWWHA.</p> <p>Specific measures on individual operators should be considered on a case-by-case basis as part of the Reserve Activity Assessment process for new activities, and/or the lease and licensing process for existing operators.</p> <p>We do not see it practical to impose additional guidelines or frameworks on operators through the Tourism Master Plan.</p>
Interpretation	<p>TICT supports PWS continuing to take a lead role in constantly reviewing and sharing best-practice interpretation outcomes with tourism operators working within their TWWHA, along with operators with businesses directly</p>

	<p>associated with the TWWHA.</p> <p>An outcome of this Master Plan could be the expansion and elevation of the successful Parks BOOST workshops approach TICT has delivered with PWS for operators working within the TWWHA to gain access to specialist interpretation advice and information.</p> <p>This should be expanded to include more in-depth training and professional development opportunities for commercial tourism operators and their staff, the opportunity for the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to elevate cultural elements in interpretation, and the introduction of TWWHA presentation values within the vocational tourism and hospitality training delivered within Tasmania.</p> <p>Ultimately Parks is best placed to be the lead authority to show leadership and direction in this space.</p>
Commercial Opportunities	<p>As stated, the Management Plan is the authority on the nature, planning and design of commercial tourism opportunities within the TWWHA. This new Master Plan should facilitate and direct those principles in a practical and relevant way.</p> <p>We do not believe it's practical or the role of this management plan to speculate or seek to identify what commercial opportunities should or should not be pursued within the TWWHA. The Management Plan should set the rules on what can be done and where with the TWWHA. Tourism operators will respond to those roles based on their own business concepts and innovation.</p> <p>PWS should be encouraged to pursue appropriate opportunities to establish and operate new experiences and services themselves within the TWWHA.</p>
Opportunities for management support through tourism	<p>As stated earlier, all tourism operators within the TWWHA are engaged in one way or the other in management activities, either through their own business activity, or simply having a presence on the ground in some remote areas of the State. This should be recognised, encouraged and supported through the Tourism Master Plan.</p> <p>Some operators invest significantly in management and conservation activities in partnership with PWS. This should be at the core of the commercial-conservation partnership for tourism in the TWWHA. We believe recognising, elevating and encouraging the replication of existing partnerships is a better investment of resources than seeking to establish whole new initiatives.</p>
Strategic data collection and analysis	<p>In our experience, PWS do an excellent job in relation to generating, tracking and analysing key data sources for visitor activity within its nature reserve areas, as do Tourism Tasmania in relation to visitor information for the State as a whole.</p> <p>There are opportunities to bring more of this work together to provide additional information and insights on visitor activity within the State, along</p>

	with engaging external agencies such as the University of Tasmania and commercial data sources.
Access	<p>This is an area of considerable contention in relation to the TWWHA. Access is a critical factor in enabling and managing visitor activity within the TWWHA. It is an area of immense sensitivity for all users of the TWWHA:</p> <p>TICT proposes the following principles represented within the Management Plan should be reflected through the Tourism Master Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads. We strongly support the new TWWHA Management Plan provision that no new roads will be established within the TWWHA itself to specifically facilitate additional tourism activity or any tourism-related development. • Cruise Ships Cruise ship access to the TWWHA should be limited to small, exploratory Cruise ships only. There should be no large cruise ships permitted within the TWWHA, or areas directly related to the TWWHA (i.e. Strahan). • Air Air access (including Commercial Landings) to the TWWHA is essential to facilitate human activity within remote areas. We believe the net-gain of air access over other forms of transport – roads – is far better for management values, however air access must itself be carefully managed. Regulation and management of air access to the TWWHA is problematic for government and PWS. We propose as an outcome from this Master Plan, a <i>Fly Neighbourly Policy</i> and <i>Tourism Aviation Access Charter</i> be developed for Propeller and Helicopter access within and across the TWWHA. This framework should be developed in consultation with operators, PWS and other stakeholders and expediated directly from the launch of the Tourism Master Plan. TICT would support this framework being mandatory in all future leases and licenses for tourism operators working within the TWWHA. This could be achieved through directly incorporating the policy into the CVS licensing process, or through industry self-regulation through our own Accreditation program. • Sustainable Transport Options We recommend the Cradle Mountain Master Plan proposal for a low rise and low impact Cable Way access into Dove Lake be identified as priority measure from the Tourism Master Plan • Walking Walking will always be the dominant form of transport most visitors

	<p>to the TWWHA use. This should be identified in the Master Plan and continue to be recognised as the most impactful way visitors experience the TWWHA.</p>
Staff and operator training and accreditation	<p>TICT has long supported compulsory tourism accreditation for all operators working within the TWWHA. This should be fundamental to the industry compliance and enforcement of quality assurance expectation, standards and business practices for all commercial operators working within the TWWHA.</p>
Recreation opportunities and a recreation demand analysis	<p>We again express concern about any proposal for this Master Plan to proactively seek to identify and prescribe specific new commercial tourism operators for the private sector.</p> <p>As part of the infrastructure planning process for individual sites within the TWWHA, PWS should be encouraged to consider opportunities for its own investment and service delivery with its own assets.</p>
Strategic partnerships	<p>To ensure it is relevant and applicable to all stakeholders, this Tourism Master Plan must fit within the existing framework of tourism strategies and planning within Tasmania, including the <i>T21 – Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy Frameworks, Parks 21</i>, Destination Management and Action Plans, and local council tourism strategies and outcomes.</p>