



# TICT 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION PLATFORM

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## **ABOUT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL TASMANIA**

The 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. Our current 24-member board includes representatives of accommodation and hospitality operators; visitor attractions, experiences and tour operators; transport operators, airlines and airports, Tasmania's four Regional Tourism Organisations, and tourism-related industry associations.

This policy platform has been developed following consultation with the representative Board, and the four Regional Tourism Organisations.

## **THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT**

The Visitor Economy's contribution to the broader Tasmanian economy is critical and in a slowing economic environment, investing in ensuring visitors continue to travel to our island and spend in our regional communities is essential to supporting Tasmanian jobs. The return to the State's economy from the tourism industry is significant:

- One in eight Tasmanians are employed in the visitor economy. That's 13% of all jobs.
- For every dollar spent in the visitor economy, another 83 cents is spent in the broader Tasmanian economy.
- Tasmania has some of the most heavily reliant regions in the country. For example, 55.3% east coast jobs depend on tourism.

*State Tourism Satellite Accounts, 2022-23.*

However, if our visitor economy is to continue working hard for the State's prosperity and supporting regional jobs, we must continue to invest to remain competitive. This is critical in the current economic conditions. The cost of doing business is increasing and consumers are having to make difficult choices about their discretionary spend.

## **2030 VISION STATEMENT**

In August 2023, the TICT joined the Tasmanian Premier in releasing the 2030 Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy. This Strategy is designed to be the guiding document for the visitor economy's development up until 2030 and is the product of the unique and enduring partnership that is T21. Importantly, this Strategy is backed by a 3-year action plan. This Strategy works in close connection with the Australian Government's THRIVE 2030 Strategy with complementary aims and objectives.

## **ABOUT THIS PLATFORM**

The TICT is calling for candidates at the next federal election to support broader policy focus areas that we believe will help our industry and the broader community in coming years. Specific projects have been identified that link to the principles. We would welcome an opportunity to provide further information on any of the projects below, if required.

## **POLICY FOCUS AREAS**

1. Cost of doing business
2. Workforce, migration and visas
3. Access and aviation
4. Maintaining Tasmania's heritage
5. Events support and festival infrastructure
6. Invest in regional visitor economy infrastructure.

## **SPECIFIC PROJECTS & INITIATIVES**

### ***1. COST OF DOING BUSINESS – BUSINESS INSURANCE***

The cost of doing business and increasing business costs is consistently rated in the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania's quarterly survey of business sentiment as the most significant issue affecting businesses in Tasmania. Key to that is the cost and accessibility of business insurance.

The TICT believes that the only way to address this issue is for urgent work between the State and Federal Governments to review the insurance industry and its practises as they relate to the tourism industry, especially operators working within adventure/high risk areas and those in fire/flood prone areas.

A national solution is required to ensure accessible and affordable public liability and property insurance for operators in this category. While the inability to access and afford insurance is being felt across the country, the issue is particularly critical for Tasmania as this product represents the state's competitive strength – that being nature-tourism experiences.

**REQUESTED COMMITMENT:** The TICT is calling for an election commitment to be made to urgently find solutions and work nationally to address the issue of insurance access and affordability for tourism operators.

### ***2. WORKFORCE, MIGRATION AND VISAS***

#### ***Postcode anomalies***

The east and west coasts of Tasmania are two of the most tourism-dependent regional economies in Australia. These regions in particular, rely on working holiday maker visa holders in their second and third years to not only supplement local workforce but in the case of Cradle Mountain, be a primary workforce due to transport and access issues on the Mountain.

TICT is calling on the next Federal Government to urgently amend the postcode anomalies that prevent Cradle Mountain and a number of locations in the East from employing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year working holiday maker visa holders due to those destinations not being classified as remote.

**REQUESTED COMMITMENT:** Commit to rectifying post code anomalies for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year WHM visa holders in two Tasmanian regions.

#### Worker accommodation solutions for east coast

The lack of availability of suitable workers accommodation is a critical barrier to regional operators being able to source an appropriately skilled workforce and invest in expanding their businesses. This is especially the case on the East Coast of Tasmania which is one of the most heavily reliant regions on tourism in the country.

Both the TICT and East Coast Regional Tourism call on the Federal Government to fund a piece of work that provides solutions and recommendations to overcome the current regulatory and other barriers to the development of worker accommodation along the east coast.

### **3. ACCESS AND AVIATION**

#### Maintaining and supporting Tasmania's international aviation gateway

As Tasmania continues to pursue its vision for direct international flights to Asia, it is the TICT's view that the Australian Border Force facilities at the Hobart Airport remain fit-for-purpose and will work well for Code E operations until at least 2029. This is a common-sense, no-cost approach to unlocking Tasmania's tourism sector growth in international markets.

#### Launceston Airport 2035 Redevelopment

Launceston Airport is Tasmania's gateway for northern Tasmania and a critical enabler of tourism into the state. Funding is sought from the Federal Government to be invested across multiple key projects culminating in the Arrivals Hall expansion. In partnership with the Federal Government, Launceston Airport will invest a total of \$100 million into upgrading the airport precinct over the next five years. This will include projects critical to the visitor economy including \$55 million in the terminal precinct, and \$45 million into the Southern Apron precinct.

### **4. MAINTAINING TASMANIA'S HERITAGE – CRITICAL WORKS FOR PORT ARTHUR PENITENTIARY**

As custodian of three of the 11 sites which comprise the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Properties and Nationally Listed sites, the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority is responsible for managing the site. The site is of national and international significance and an important demand driver for the Tasman Peninsula.

Recent assessments have identified critical and significant work is required to save the Penitentiary from further ruin. While future continuous conservation works are required in the longer term, there is a need for extraordinary works to the Clock Tower to be undertaken to ensure it remains the iconic centrepiece for the historic site.

## **5. EVENT SUPPORT AND FESTIVAL SUSTAINABILITY**

In recent years, Tasmania has seen major festivals and events facing significant challenges. Festivals are an effective and brand aligned way of delivering benefits to the entire Tasmanian economy. Off -season events have the greatest potential to support the visitor economy during the quieter months, however peak season events also assist with regional dispersal and contribute to increasing length of stay, average spend and return visitation.

The TICT is therefore calling for a festivals and events sustainability strategy, allowing eligible festivals and events to secure funding from the Australian Government to ensure their future sustainability. It is noted that festivals and events are facing challenging circumstances across the country and this program would need to be nationwide and open to eligible festivals which can demonstrate significant visitation and cultural contribution to their regions and communities.

## **6. INVEST IN REGIONAL VISITOR ECONOMY INFRASTRUCTURE**

### *Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Masterplan*

Cradle Mountain is an internationally iconic, UNESCO-listed destination that deserves to attract the same priority, attention and investment as other significant treasures such as the Great Barrier Reef and Kakadu. We must act urgently to deliver on the Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Masterplan in its totality.

With numbers now approaching 300,000 people per year, and forecast to continue to grow, we must act for its future protection and long-term sustainability. A cableway, similar to those used to manage visitation in numerous world heritage areas internationally, has been identified as the preferred sustainable transport solution.

A cableway in the Cradle Valley zone, from the Visitor Centre to Dove Lake car park will improve visitor accessibility as well as minimising environmental impact and providing a long-term sustainable transport solution.

Unfortunately, the previous commitment from the Federal Government for \$30 million towards this project was withdrawn in 2023. Therefore, the TICT calls on the future Federal Government to commit to working urgently with the Tasmanian Government on a pathway to realise the project and commit the required funding to do so.

### *West Coast Wilderness Railway (WCWR)*

WCWR is a key driver of visitation to the West Coast. On average, 27 per cent of interstate holiday visitors who visit the west coast region go to the WCWR. However, given this is a challenging rail type, it requires significantly increased levels of maintenance and infrastructure investment. Unfortunately, in recent years the Railway has had to close a significant and stunning middle portion and to date, it has not been able to fully reopened.

The TICT is calling on the next Federal Government to assist the Tasmanian Government with critical maintenance required to enable the Railway to be re-opened in full according to the National Safety Regulator's recommendations.

The maintenance ask required to enable the entire track to be fully reopened requires a partnership with the Federal Government.

### Revitalisation of the Huon and Far South

#### **Tahune Airwalk:**

The 2019 bushfires in Southern Tasmania decimated visitation numbers to the far south region. Since then, visitation to the Tahune Airwalk, a major demand-generating experience for the Huon and Far South has not fully recovered. This has noticeable flow-on impacts for visitation to the rest of the region. Tahune requires strategic reinvention to ensure its viability and relevance if it is to grow visitor numbers to the Huon region. Therefore, funding is sought to support the outcomes of a strategic review of the attraction currently underway and/or to assist the site to transition off extremely expensive and unsustainable diesel electricity generation and implement a carbon friendly, solar and battery alternative which espouses Tasmania's clean green image.

#### **Transformer:**

In response to the 2019 bushfires, the Tasmanian Government committed \$2.7 million towards an iconic art installation for the Ida Bay reserve – Transformer. Planning approvals for the project have now all been received, the project is fully costed, shovel ready and has strong community support. By attracting 35,000 visitors annually, Transformer will inject \$10 million into the local economy each year, directly creating 29 full-time jobs and unlocking further growth opportunities for local businesses in hospitality, retail and tourism, in addition to bolstering the visitation to the Tahune Airwalk. It is difficult to underestimate the significant positive impact of having a Dark Lab-inspired installation in the far south of Tasmania and the economic benefit this will bring for the surrounding tourism offerings and regional economy. Support is sought to ensure the project can finally become a reality and be completed in the next term of Government.

### East Coast Drive upgrades and improvements

Tasmania's stunning east coast drive is as critical to Tasmania's visitor economy as the Midlands Highway and deserves the same attention and priority. The TICT supports the identification of key risk areas along the drive for urgent funding, especially as the state prepares for increased motorhome and caravan traffic to be delivered through the new Spirit of Tasmania ferries. These priorities will be identified through the Tasman Highway Corridor Strategy and State and Federal Governments must work together to deliver expedited upgrades and improvements.

### Investing in key demand drivers for the north - Cataract Gorge

Accessible tourism is a key deliverable in Tasmania's 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy and access all visitors to our icons is a key element. Cataract Gorge is the 5th most visited place in Tasmania with its natural beauty and proximity to Launceston CBD key. Its topography can be challenging, and accessibility for all visitors is critical. A review and upgrade of pathways and key accessibility infrastructure is required to ensure this wonderful tourism attraction can be enjoyed by visitors and locals alike regardless of their mobility.

### *Business Events Infrastructure*

A key driver of visitation across Launceston and the North is events, and particularly Business Events. This visitor segment offers potential year-round opportunity in driving demand across winter and shoulder seasons. With a current body of work underway to explore the infrastructure needed in the city to be competitive in the business event space, funding support is sought to assist with delivering any infrastructure recommendations in a timely manner to leverage the potential this market presents.

### *Future-proofing Derby in North East Tasmania*

Destination Derby is a Community Master Planning Project that will see Dorset Council undertake a comprehensive master planning exercise to plan for the destination's future. This will result in the development of an overarching Community Plan which will focus on sustainable growth and development of the area while preserving the area's character and history and ensuring that services and infrastructure continue to meet the demands of residents and visitors, and that Derby remains a world class destination for mountain biking for decades to come.