

Bike Friendly Business Accreditation Program



Aims

- To create an accreditation program for tourism facing businesses in Tasmania to leverage the cycle tourism market. Businesses will complete a declaration stating they are bike friendly which demonstrates a united and welcome approach to cycle tourists.
- To create a community of like-minded businesses who all work together to share knowledge and promote/refer each other to cycle tourists.
- To create a brand that resonates with cyclists and immediately generates a feeling of confidence and reassurance that a business carrying this identifiable logo will treat cycle tourists with warmth and provide a level of assistance to their varying needs.

The Story of Bike Friendly Accreditation

Tasmania will be the first state in Australia to develop a Bike Friendly Business community. Doing so helps businesses understand the importance of Tasmania's growing cycle tourism industry.

This stems from the Department of State Growth's recent "Cycle Tourism strategic action plan to 2010" highlighting the need to provide the right experience for cyclists.

Tourism Northern Tasmania is leading the way in marketing cycle tourism, recognised nationally by winning bronze at the 2015 Australian Tourism Awards for its #RideNorthTas campaign.

TNT have also commissioned a Northern Tasmanian cycling strategy which delves even further into providing the 'right experience' – one of the recommendations in the capacity building section suggests "a cycle friendly service accreditation program supported by workshops and mentoring for businesses and event organisers".

Therefore, this program is a direct action of both the RTO and State governments cycling strategies.

Tassie is a great place to role this program out. Ideally the accreditation program will become a nationwide module on all the states quality assured programs.

This also paves the way for businesses to take some pride in being one of the first to sign up to something Tasmanian developed.

Why would my business want to get involved?

With cyclist numbers increasing and profiling telling us that cycle tourists actually look and behave a lot like other highly sought after tourists, there is a massive opportunity for businesses to put in a little effort to tap into this potentially lucrative market.

The cycling industry, while niche, and still in its infancy is gaining traction rapidly in Tasmania, and has already made significant social and economic impacts on towns such as Derby in Tasmania's north east.

The Tasmanian Visitor Survey of interstate and international visitors to Tasmania shows that while overall numbers are modest, there is a trend of significant growth in the number of visitors to Tasmania that participate in cycling activities:

- ▲ the number of visitors who participated in cycling while on their visit was 8160 in 2013 and was up to 27,460 in 2016. In 2016 there was a 16% increase on 2015.
- ▲ the number of visitors who participated in mountain biking while on their visit was reported at 3593 in 2013 and rose to 20,020 in 2016 - a 51.1% increase from 2015.

While there is no expectation that any business would be required to focus wholly and solely on the cycle tourist, becoming accredited as a bike friendly business will give a potential customer greater reason to be interested in your business if you display the bike-friendly logo proving your understanding of the needs of cycle tourists.

Who is a cycle tourist?

The demographic of a cycle tourist is not that simple to define – cycle tourists are a diverse, unique mix of people.

There are several different types of cycling too – we roughly break them into four categories:

1. Mountain bikers
2. Road cyclists
3. Touring cyclists
4. Recreational cyclists

Each of these groups has their own distinct characteristics, and set of needs to be understood by businesses.

We will delve into more detail about the typical cycle tourist in the workshops and online modules.

Role of a Bike Friendly Business (BFB) program

By becoming a member of the community/program, businesses are demonstrating that they welcome cycle tourists into their business. It doesn't necessarily mean that they can

provide all the services of a specialised provider such as a bike shop, but it demonstrates a willingness to visitors that the business will provide assistance to a cyclist.

By building a community of businesses that are prepared to declare a commitment to welcoming cycle tourists, we will ensure the visitor experience is a positive and memorable one.

It's essential that businesses take the time to get to know each other. The system will work best if a business can refer others. For example: every accredited bike friendly business must know where cycle tourists can get their bike serviced, buy spare parts and where to get trail information in their local area.

Participants in the BFB program will demonstrate their willingness to support cycle tourists by committing to provide consistent, exceptional customer service.

This includes:

- Offering a warm welcome to cyclists
- Assurance to cyclists that they will be assisted with their needs
- Keeping abreast of cycling news and developments that affect their area
- Knowledge of local trails and events

Building business knowledge

Accredited bike-friendly businesses will be offered training in the form of a group workshop or an online module for self-learning.

- **Workshops**

These will be specifically focussed on teaching businesses what it takes to be cycle friendly.

Content includes:

1. Knowledge of trails/events
2. Understanding of cyclist needs
3. Bike repairs
4. Storage

Workshops will be packaged with networking functions or with other tourism-related workshops held on the same day and communicated via TICT and included in their calendar.

- **Online module**

This will use similar material to the group workshop, the idea being that businesses that can't attend a workshop would instead undertake an online course in their own time.

Building the business community

From a business point of view, there is value in knowing your neighbours, and when you have something in common to bring you together there is strength in the support networks developed by participation in a program like this.

Holding workshops that become networking functions is one way to strengthen ties between like-minded businesses. Workshops provide a number of important functions:

1. The opportunity for businesses to share knowledge and experiences of their dealings with cycle tourists
2. A chance to ask questions and seek clarification
3. Building knowledge of each other for the purpose of business referral
4. An understanding of what each business offers will trickle down to the consumer who will feel supported and part of the community too.

Participating in this program does not carry with it the expectation that a business must be able to fix a broken derailleur, for example. It's about businesses taking the time to develop understanding of cyclists needs; building their knowledge about the available resources; knowing the right person/business who can help; and offering a warm smile and encouraging words at all times.

About the program

Administration

This program will be administered by the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania (TICT). In much the same way the Rainbow program is also administered by TICT, the BFB will be offered to accredited tourism businesses who have already undertaken a quality assurance check.

Who can become a Bike Friendly Business?

The BFB will be an opt-in program for any tourism accredited businesses that feels they meet the criteria outlined in the BFB program and wishes to target cycle tourists.

Non-accredited members

It is likely that non-accredited businesses may also wish to participate in this program, such as cafes, galleries, petrol stations, corner stores etc. It is recognised that these periphery businesses add value and depth to a cyclists' experience in Tasmania, however, at this stage, the program does not yet cater for non-accredited businesses.

Accreditation process

Applications for membership will be via an online submission. The process requires businesses to clarify how they demonstrate they are a Bike Friendly business.

Once a submission has been deemed successful by TICT assessors, the applicant will receive a formal confirmation email from TICT together with a digital logo that can thenceforth be used by the business to promote their membership in the program.

Cost to apply

This is a FREE program for accredited tourism businesses.

Difficulty

This program is unlikely to receive support from businesses and will therefore not get the traction it needs IF it is onerous or expensive to participate. It's important that if we create a cycle friendly program making cyclists welcome, we should also ensure it is 'businesses welcome' too. That means making it accessible for all businesses who show an interest in the cycle tourism market. It should not be elitist or intimidating for non-cyclists and there should be no expectation that business owners must be keen cyclists or bike mechanics to be a member.

This program has been designed to be simple, efficient and accessible for all tourism accredited businesses. This will be achieved by:

- Offering assistance with the submission process
- Ensuring businesses are kept in the loop with regard to training opportunities
- Offering networking opportunities whenever possible

Applying for accreditation

The aim of the program is to give consumers confidence that a business displaying a Bike Friendly Business logo inherently wants to help cyclists and will treat them with respect and understanding.

Criteria

To apply for Bike Friendly Business Accreditation, your business must be tourism accredited.

To then successfully gain Bike Friendly business accreditation, owners are required to complete a statement declaring they are a Bike Friendly Business which will be displayed in their place of business.

This statement is part of a simple three-part process that business must complete to apply for accreditation.

The THREE sections in the process include:

1. Selection of appropriate business category
2. Meet 5 criteria
3. Sign the declaration

1. Business Categories

Businesses must select ONE of the following categories that best describes their business:

- Accommodation
- Camping
- Eat and Drink
- Attraction
- Information
- Bike Shop
- Tour/transport operator
- Retail/shopping

2. Criteria

Businesses must tick at least 5 of the following proof points to support their declaration. While only 5 are required for a successful submission, business may tick as many of the following statements that apply to their business:

Knowledge and welcome – demonstrate your understanding of the needs of cyclists

- Front of house staff are aware of the needs of cyclists and can confidently assist cycle tourists with information or help
- Front of house staff are aware of the local cycling trails
- We stock books and brochures outlining trails
- Staff/owners are keen cyclists
- We have undertaken or have a willingness to undertake training/attend cycle friendly workshops

Water Refills

- Water bottles can be filled up in guest rooms
- Staff will fill water bottles upon request
- Water jug is supplied for self-service
- Tap that is accessible and permitted for cyclists to self-service

Storage

- We supply bike racks out of the front of the building
- We supply bike hooks to hang bikes safely
- We supply floor mats for customers to store their bikes in their rooms
- We offer a locked room for bike storage
- We have a secure garage available for bike storage

Repair and maintenance

- We have a bicycle repair kit (*minimum items are required, see below)
- We have extra tools available such as cable cutters, spare cables etc.
- We have a complimentary, dedicated self-service area
- We have a member of staff that can provide limited mechanical assistance
- We employ a paid bike mechanic
- We offer a tap and hose outside that can be used for bike washing
- We offer a dedicated cleaning area for bikes

***A repair kit can be purchased from bike stores or online.**

It is recommended that it include the following:

- floor pump
- tyre levers
- patch kit
- allen key set
- spoke key
- chain tool
- pedal spanner
- bike screw driver set
- torx key

Packaged kits are available for around \$60-\$100 that include all these items and even more.

3. Declaration

I, _____, declare that my business,
_____, demonstrates a commitment to
serving cycle tourists.

I declare that my business will build and maintain a reasonable level of knowledge about cycling facilities and organisations, trails, on-road cycling routes and cycling events, so as to provide up-to-date information and recommendations about places to ride in our local region.

I am aware of the needs of travelling cyclists, in particular bike storage, security and maintenance, and understand my role in providing a valuable service to cycle tourists who are not familiar with the area and need support and assistance.

Signed.....Date:.....

By signing and returning this declaration, businesses are publicly announcing their intention to be Bike Friendly. This statement will need to be printed and displayed in a public place in the business premises.

Identifying business features

Once accreditation has been approved, businesses can select from a range of icons to indicate to potential cycle tourists what the business offers.

How the icons will be used

1. Business select FOUR icons that best represent their business offering to cycle tourists
2. These icons will be provided to the business via email in digital format for promotional purposes
3. Icons can then be used on a promotional bike-friendly website, assisting in customer search

Being held accountable

An accreditation program is a means to hold businesses to account. A business displaying the bike friendly accreditation program logo must then deliver on the promise of being cycle friendly.

In the instance of a poor customer experience, negative feedback will be followed up by program administrators, TICT, and if deemed appropriate, they will have the authority to remove cycle friendly accreditation from a business.

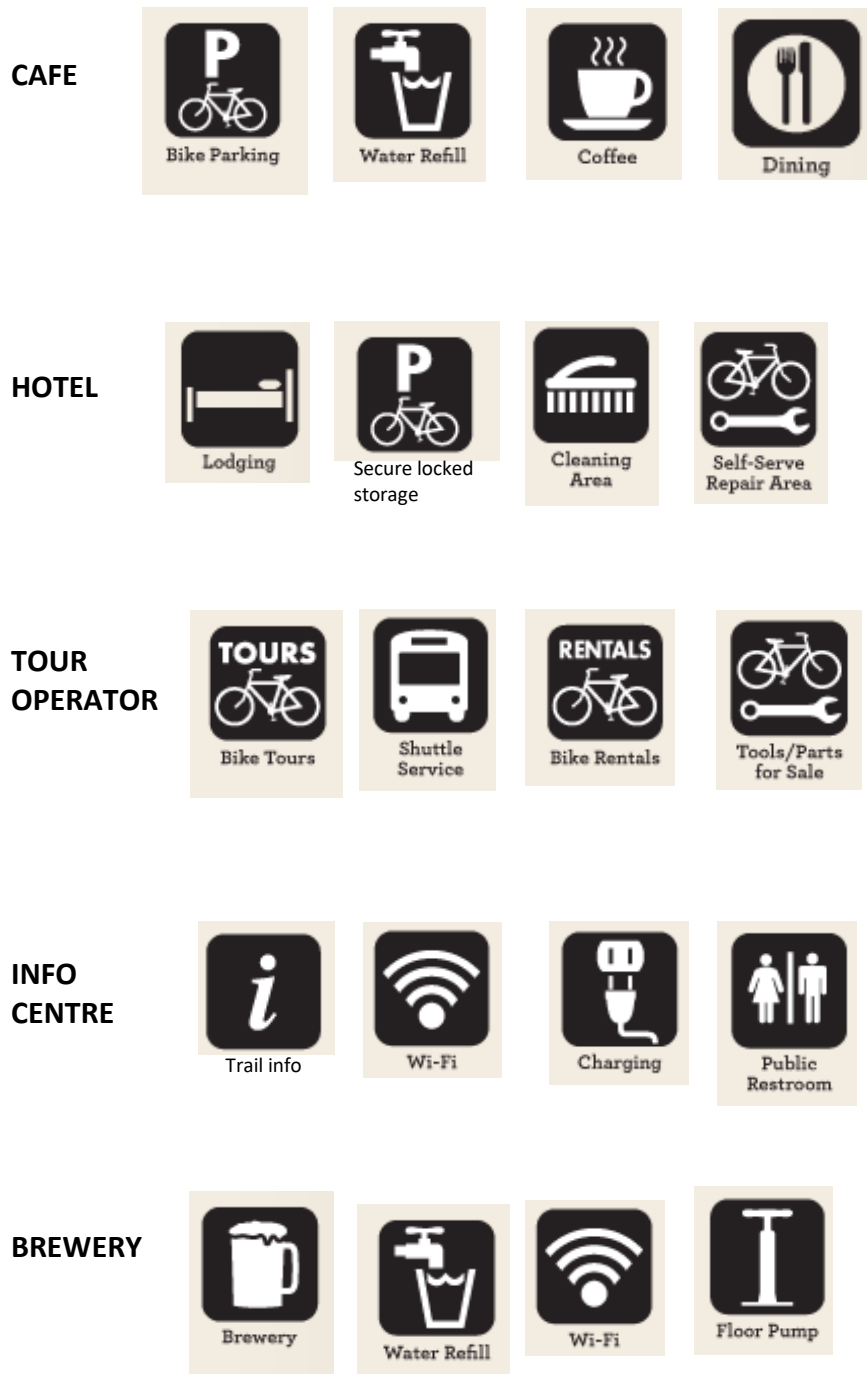


Extra icons not in this graphic (but can be added to this program) include:

- Courtesy tools
- Trail Info
- Secure locked storage

NOTE: the above icons are examples only, Tasmania's bike friendly accreditation program will have its own identifiable icons that are currently being designed.

Examples of how the four icons might be used to best represent a business:



Selecting the top four icons that best suit the business allows each business to promote their own strengths/points of difference to the cycle tourist.

Realising that many businesses require more than 4 icons to tell the true picture of their offering, the remaining icons can be found on their listing on the website.

MARKETING

Making the most of your accreditation

Business can promote their membership of the program by:

- Displaying a bike friendly business logo in the form of a window decal on their premises
- Adding this logo in digital form to online presence
- Being listed on a consumer facing website
- Social media profiling
- Being included in itineraries for visiting media/influencers
- Being invited to networking functions
- Being offered free training opportunities
- Being invited to join a private FB group to generate discussion

Submit your application

- Your completed submission must be submitted to info@tict.com.au
- As soon as your application is processed you will be forwarded your 'Bike Friendly Business' Starter Kit – including decal stickers and certificate.
- You will be invited to a workshop in coming months on the cycle tourism market to Tasmania.