



# TOURISM in Tasmania

EDITORS

***Can-Seng Ooi***  
*and*  
***Anne Hardy***

# TOURISM

Moving forward together

*Can-Seng Ooi and Anne Hardy*

Tourism contributes about 5% towards Tasmania's economy. Tourism is not just about visitor numbers, showcasing our nature, revenues and hotels. Tourism is part of Tasmanian society.

This collection of chapters presents a picture of tourism in Tasmania in its glory as well as its warts. It does not address all aspects of tourism in Tasmania but there is plenty of material here to further the tourism conversation, and to start new ones.

Contributors to this volume are mainly researchers at UTAS who are affiliated with TRENd. Our first goal with this book was to engage with the industry and the community and broaden current debates by bringing recent research into the debate. We are all concerned with the sustainability of the industry. As scholars, we have taken a step back to evaluate the situation in Tasmania. Our academic distance offers the opportunity for longer-term assessment, acknowledging various interests and agendas of diverse groups and reflecting on scenarios.

A further goal of this book was to provide a range of academic perspectives to the public. In academia, debates often anchor what we do. We often challenge each other and disagree with each other. But robust debate and academic freedom underpins

what we do at UTAS; it is accepted and indeed expected that people have differing perspectives. Consequently, we have not tried to have a cohesive viewpoint. Rather we aim to present the diversity in opinions that exist amongst tourism researchers at UTAS. Together we present and celebrate the good, the bad and the ugly of tourism.

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While this collection presents differing viewpoints, there are also many synergies within this book. It is widely agreed that tourism brings about many benefits – jobs, revenue, infrastructural improvement, liveliness, new facilities. Many Tasmanians are also travellers ourselves: a better-connected island benefits us. Many chapters here show the business potential of tourism, whether in wine, heritage, culture, wilderness, film or the warm character of Tasmanians. There are many things that we can be proud of and want to share with our guests. Tourism is also a resource that can benefit the community, such as making attractions into learning destinations for children.

Along with the benefits of tourism, there are also negative impacts. Within this book, issues such as housing affordability, overcrowding, loss of environmental and heritage value, and job polarisation are tackled. We argue that addressing these issues is essential



*Photo by Can-Seng Ooi*

Figure 1. Visitors who could not resist themselves on Maria Island: An ugly side of tourism.

*Photo by Joe Shemesh, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service*



Figure 2. A Discovery Ranger with happy visitors at Davonport.

if tourism is to be more sustainable. Other issues are raised in this book, such as the fact that Tasmanians are cognisant that tourism is not just businesses, increasing visitor numbers and more infrastructure. If a large portion of the community is not getting the benefits of tourism, or is perceiving tourism as more inconvenient than worthwhile, they will not be welcoming towards visitors. Neither will they support tourism projects. Developing a social compact with the community is necessary for the industry to succeed.

There will be sacrifices and trade-offs in tourism. It is not a nice message to suggest that short-term sacrifices are necessary for long-term goals. Not everyone will welcome the idea that we might demand larger tourism businesses plough their gains into the community. Lessons have shown that a comprehensive whole-of-community and whole-of-industry approach is the best way forward in bringing benefits to all.

Tourism is part of Tasmania. Individual visitors come and go but as a group, they are part of the society. They use our public spaces, visit our attractions, eat at our restaurants, stay in our hotels and homes, and buy things. It is not 'them' and 'us'. Tasmania is attractive to us and to many visitors because it is a progressive and warm-hearted society. Let us not forget why we love Tasmania – it is the nature, the towns, the food, the air, the water, the cultural life, and most importantly, the Tasmanians.

We have an optimistic view of tourism in Tasmania.

*Photo by Peter Topliss*



Figure 3. How not to love Tasmania?  
A raw, barren and stunning view of the  
Mount Murchison area.

Besides good tourism numbers, we have healthy – and often heated – discussions in the community on tourism development. Policies are in place to address housing affordability challenges and traffic congestion. UTAS has reviewed its tourism offerings and aims to produce graduates who can grab future opportunities in the industry. A longer-term tourism plan for the state is also being devised.



We are familiar with the democratic process of consultation and consensus-building. Society changes. And in Tasmania, tourism is contributing to that change. It will be a problem if members of the community are not interested in the future direction of the state. It is by being together that we will bring the state forward. We hope that this book will bring about more engagement.