

GREATER ESK TOURISM (GET)/FINGAL VALLEY

Destination Action Plan 2017-2019

June 2017





Acknowledgments

The development of the Greater Esk Tourism/Fingal Valley Destination Plan has been facilitated by Tourism Northern Tasmania and East Coast Tourism with the support of the Department of State Growth.

The process brought together representatives from all stakeholder groups that benefit from the visitor economy; local government, state government agencies, industry and the community, to develop a plan. This Plan seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities facing the Fingal Valley and to establish achievable affordable priorities that if delivered would increase the competitiveness of the destination.

Facilitator

Chris Griffin, CEO, Tourism Northern Tasmania

Supported by

Ruth Dowty, CEO, East Coast Tourism

Coordinator

Gillian Miles, Industry Liaison, Tourism Northern Tasmania

Destination Action Plan Group

Gary Barnes – Fingal Valley Neighbourhood House

John Brown – General Manager, Break O'Day Council

Craig Bean – Bean There Cafe

Kathy Bean – Bean There Café

Danny Casella – Toad Hall St Mary's

Lorraine Dare – Artist, St Mary's

*Liz Dean – Mt Elephant Fudge

Fiona Dewar – Northern Midlands Council

*Janet Drummond – Break O'Day councillor,

Stables Market & Op Shop

*Stan Ellerm – Tasmanian Hikes

Justin Fahey – Avoca Museum & Visitor Information Centre

Jeanette Gilbert – GET Treasurer

David Gilbert – GET Member

Keith Hefford – Aladdin's Cave

Terry Jacobson – Cow Shed, Avoca

*Mary Knowles – Northern Midlands Council & GET Secretary

Barbara Longue – Vortex Healing Centre

Ian Summers – Cranks & Tinkerers Museum

*Peter Troode – Addlestone House B & B, GET Chair

Dalija Wells – Avoca Museum & Visitor Information Centre

*** Names marked with an asterisk have agreed to take an ongoing role as the DAP Leadership Group.**

Images used within this document are courtesy of Tourism Tasmania, Break O'Day Council, Tourism Northern Tasmania, Brian Dullaghan, Paddy Pallin, Rob Burnett, Dan Fellow.



Introduction

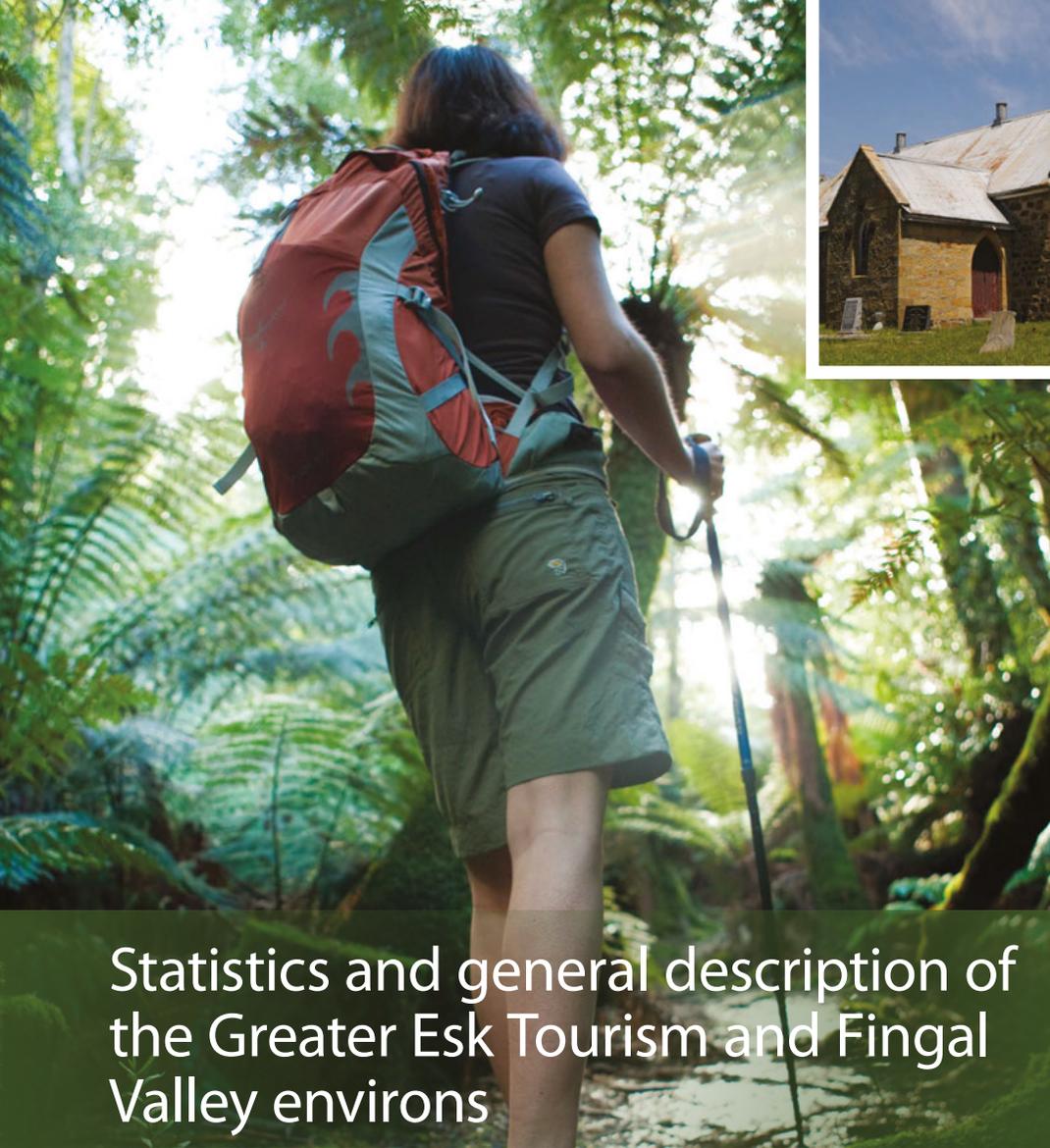
Tourism Northern Tasmania and the East Coast Regional Tourism Organisation are supporting the Destination Action Plan process for the Greater Esk Tourism/Fingal Valley in recognition of the potential of the region, and to build on the key pillars of the Northern Tasmanian and East Coast Tourism Destination Management Plans.

The Destination Action Plans are an implementation initiative of the Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-2020 (T21): Priority #4: Building capability, capacity and community.

A core strategy is to recognise that visitors to the region are primarily attracted to destinations and experiences. Therefore the development, marketing and management of the region's destinations are pivotal to the success of the whole region.

The Destination Action Plan for the Greater Esk Tourism/Fingal Valley identifies priority strategies and actions which if implemented over three years will enhance competitiveness of the destination as a primary visitor destination of the region. These strategies will also facilitate regional collaboration and cooperation.

The Plan has been prepared by a facilitated workshop process involving business and community representatives who considered and reached consensus on tourism development, marketing and management opportunities and challenges. The group then identified and agreed on the key priorities and actions that would make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the visitor economy and experience.



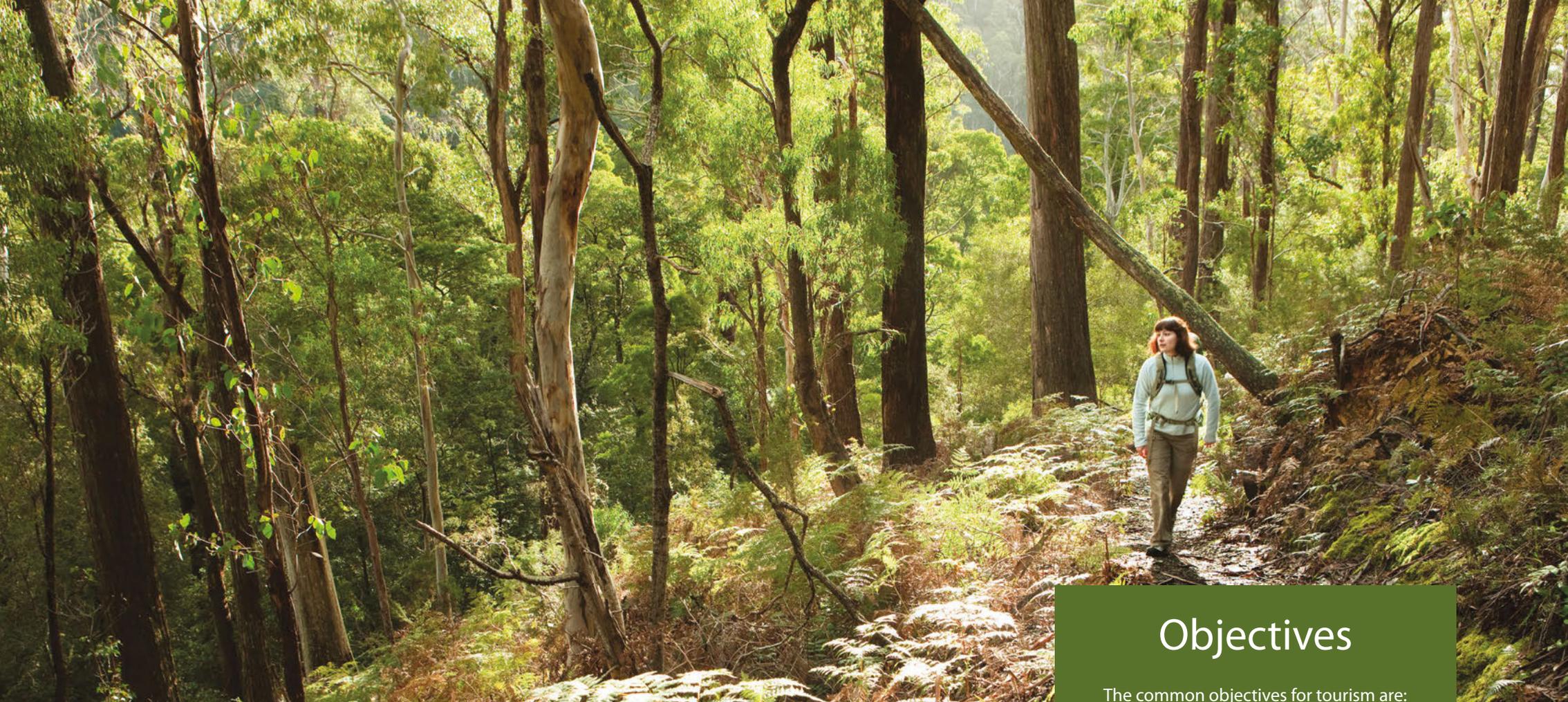
Statistics and general description of the Greater Esk Tourism and Fingal Valley environs

The Fingal Valley and its surrounds are steeped in history and feature majestic mountains, national parks, waterfalls, rain forests, nature walks, rivers, scenic farmland and snowfields.

Mountain climbing, bushwalking, fishing and 4 wheel driving are just a few of the adventures that you can experience. There is a great range of unique cafés, arts, crafts, galleries, collectables, museums and country hospitality.

The Fingal Valley stretches from Conara through to St Marys, linking Tasmania's Heritage Highway with its sunny East Coast, and is bounded by Ben Lomond National Park to the north and the St Pauls Valley to the south.

The Fingal Valley includes the towns of Avoca, Fingal, and St Marys and the smaller villages of Rossarden, Royal George, Mangana, Fingal, Mathinna, Upper Esk and Cornwall.



The visitor economy

Visitor activity by township (TVS data Y/E Dec 2016)

Town	Passed through	Stopped and looked around	Stayed overnight/ average no. of nights	Total visitors
St Marys	50,909	32,756 (+10.9%)	9,730 (+38.4%)	93,395 (+14.5%)

Source: TVS data Y/E 2016

Objectives

The common objectives for tourism are:

1. To maximise visitor satisfaction
2. To increase visitor expenditure
3. To increase visitor length of stay
4. To increase visitor numbers
5. To increase visitor dispersal (geographic and seasonal).



Our collective strengths



- Avoca Museum & Information Centre
- Free camping
- Galleries
- Evercreech Forest Reserve & Falls
- St Patricks Head walking track
- History, Family History
- Specialised shops
- South Sister Lookout
- Cranks & Tinkerers Museum
- Warm atmosphere/venues
- Food and coffee, St Marys Bakery

- Drives
- Esk Valley Highway
- Ben Lomond
- Tiers
- Meadstone, Hardings, Meetus and Mathinna Falls
- Parks at Fingal
- Bushwalking
- St Marys op shop
- Labyrinth walk
- St Marys shopping – diversity

- Community character/unique characters
- Boutique Accommodation – B&B
- Train stations – restored Queen Anne style
- Nature experience, wildlife, birds
- Car show
- Fingal Valley Festival
- Markets
- Local music scene at the pub
- Golf club
- Trout fishing.



Vision for the future – 10 years time

- Train Hobart to Fingal
- Seasonal opportunities
- Developed walking/cycling trails, tracks & access trails
- Events & festivals
- Shopping & food to die for
- New generations attracted to area
- Vibrant and diverse community
- Dog friendly accommodation
- Iconic for artists to capture
- Cycling on old railway track
- Rural lifestyle and appeals
- Art installations to stop visitors
- Photo 'framing' at special locations
- Historic walks around Fingal
- Five Peaks walk
- Schools and services maintained
- Craft Brewery
- Character of community
- Confidence visitors will be safe (on trails etc)
- History of towns and stops
- Horse racing – more meets
- Best place in Tasmania
- Vibrant arts scene
- Technology/connection to enable enterprises.



Our challenges

- Lack of employment opportunities
- Attracting visitors all year round
- Lack of vision for stop and stay
- Infrastructure investment
 - streetscapes, roads, tracks to waterfalls
- Consistent/updated visitor information
- Lack of money for the valley
- Red tape – councils, state government regulation
 - for new businesses
- Negative elements in the community
- TasRail – access to rail
- Upgrading facilities
- Limited accommodation at peak times
- Lack of training & inspiration for new businesses and people
- Competing priorities between places/towns
- Keeping young people in the region
- Planning scheme – vs sustainable development
 - natural & community values
- Lack of exposure in marketing
- Signage for amenities
- Low resources/volunteers time-poor, aging population
- Perception of viability of starting a business
- Opening hours post 5pm/low season
- Multi-agency confusion
- Brave leadership.



Our opportunities

- Steam train – annual event
- Low cost housing to increase population
- Encourage support from politicians
- Wilderness destination – walking and hiking
- Destination toilet! Long Drop
- Artists attracted to the valley/haven
- Uber drivers to provide public transport
- Annual calendar of events- all year round
- Expand accommodation – slow down visitors
- Water based adventure tourism
- Town and streetscape renewal
- Community uniting vision – sharing it – leading it
- Heritage building interpretation/signage
- Crowd funded/sponsored street, building renewal ‘street of the week’
- Running festival – bikes, walk, passes
- Promote history of towns
- Direct visitors off main road
- Evercrech promoted
- Trail upgrades
- Bike lanes.



Success factors

DIAGNOSTIC RATING

Characteristics	Rating	Comments
1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing.	7	
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development.	6	
3. Local Government support.	6	
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations.	6	
5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans.	5	
6. Consistent visitor service excellence.	7	
7. Research driven cooperative marketing.	4	
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand.	5	
9. Risk management plans in place.	6	
10. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	7	

A photograph of a clear, shallow stream flowing through a dense tropical forest. The water is crystal clear, revealing numerous large, smooth rocks covered in vibrant green moss. The banks are lined with lush green ferns and other tropical vegetation. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect on the water and rocks. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Action Plan implementation

The priority actions have been assigned a KPI priority rating as a guide. These ratings are:

- | | |
|--------|-------------------------|
| HIGH | within the first year |
| MEDIUM | within one to two years |
| LOW | within three years. |



PRIORITY 1

Access and quality of trails and reserves

Actions	Responsibilities	Priorities
1. Identify target audiences so we can create compelling points of difference and focus on appeals.	PWS & Councils	High
2. Review all trails and access roads and signage, and upgrades needed particularly Rossarden Road – mobility & accessibility review (e.g. St Patricks Head; Loo with a View).	DAP group	High
3. Prioritise signature experiences – nature based (current and new).	RTO's & DAP group	High



PRIORITY 2

Celebrate and share our stories of the Fingal Valley

Actions	Responsibilities	Priorities
1. Identify audiences and how to talk to them.	RTO's & DAP	High
2. Collate the stories of our places – match to audience appeals.	DAP, GET, RTO's	High
3. Professionally narrate key stories and share through marketing.	DAP & GET	High
4. App based navigation around towns – local and relevant content.	DAP & Councils	Medium



PRIORITY 3

Connection between community and visitors

Actions	Responsibilities	Priorities
1. Work with the schools and clubs to find ways to engage students and families in events etc.	DAP & School Assoc	High
2. Support new business start-ups.	Council	Medium
3. Create ways to make people stop – toilets, signage, selfie opportunities, street upgrades.	GET	High
4. Work with Councils and tourism bodies to extend and better use welcome signage - amenities, what's on etc.	Councils, GET, RTO's	Medium
5. Community communication plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Newsletters, local paper, Facebook pages ▪ Launch the DAP! 	DAP	High