

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a long, patterned, teal and gold dress, stands on a stage with her arms outstretched. She is positioned in front of a large, ornate, domed ceiling with multiple chandeliers. The lighting is dramatic, with blue and red tones. The background shows the architectural details of the dome and the stage floor.

COOL SEASON STRATEGY

Northern Tasmania

2024 - 2027

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Australian Musical Theatre Festival | Princess Theatre Launceston
Image: Cameron Jones





INTRODUCTION

Visit Northern Tasmania Cool Season Strategy outlines priorities for Visit Northern Tasmania (VNT) with respect to the Cool Season for the next three years. To foster collaboration and advocacy VNT leads the Cool Season Collective, a consultative group that supports of VNT's direction to create a robust and diverse events calendar.



agriCULTURED |
Kanamaluka/Tamar River Journey
Photography credit: Ness Vanderburgh

The Cool Season is defined by driving events into low demand periods with a primary focus on April to September which offers opportunity for constructive collaboration with Tourism Tasmania's Off Season marketing campaign that is focussed on driving visitation during the period 1 May to 31 August.

Visit Northern Tasmania spearheads the Cool Season Collective, fostering partnerships with government bodies, industries, and destination stakeholders. Together, the aim is to pinpoint, attract, cultivate, and highlight appropriate events for Northern Tasmania, in line with the Tasmanian Government Events Strategy 2023-2027. This initiative remains adaptable, responding to the event strategies outlined by the City of Launceston and the West Tamar Council.

EVENTS IN NORTHERN TASMANIA

Events play an imperative role in the economic, social, and cultural development of our region. A lively regional events calendar provides an opportunity for bringing communities together, celebrating our region's unique positioning, fostering a shared sense of place, and promoting a desirable place to live, work and visit.

In line with the 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy, developed jointly by the Tasmanian Government and industry, and the 2023-2027 Tasmanian Government Events Strategy, the Cool Season Strategy should aim to align with the new set of priorities for shaping our future events landscape. Action on economic and business event development, promoting the brand value of Tasmania as well as social impacts such as climate change, sustainable events, greater acknowledgement and collaboration with the Tasmanian Aboriginal People, and a greater focus on accessibility and inclusivity will be incorporated.



Visit Northern Tasmania will manage development of the Northern Events and Festivals Infrastructure Strategy in collaboration with Events Tasmania. Exploring the needs of the sector so that we can forecast opportunities for growth, as well as support events that will attract visitors to our state. Research and insights that identify the challenges and opportunities for holding events in Launceston (and/or the surrounding regions) as well as an infrastructure audit will be key focus points.

The Cool Season Strategic initiative for Northern Tasmania focusses on event bids for sporting, special interest, and major events suitable to be secured during the cool season with the aim to increase visitation to the region. In addition to prospecting for new events, the Collective works to identify existing events that offer suitable growth opportunities and/or potential stimulus for the economy and positive social impact for the community. Retention of existing events and support to our existing events as a key focal point.

Events are important economic drivers, promoting the brand value of Tasmania as well as positive social impact for the community. A strong events calendar does this by:

- delivering economic benefits through increased visitation and visitor dispersal
- driving economic development, tourism, and positive social impact

- creating positive outcomes in the community
- highlighting best practice in sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity
- building brand awareness and alignment with the Tasmanian brand.

The Cool Season Strategy is designed to be adaptive and to connect with industry, to inspire growth and to maintain success through time with changing trends, funding, and priorities.

This Cool Season Strategy is subject to existing partnerships, regional capacity and capabilities, infrastructure, and resources, including access, accommodation, transport, public infrastructure, venues, and precincts.

Cool Season Collective Members

- City of Launceston
- West Tamar Council
- Business Events Tasmania
- Events Tasmania
- Launceston Central Marketing
- Launceston Airport
- Stadiums Tasmania
- Tasmanian Hospitality Association (new addition)

And as required on an invitation basis, other regional stakeholders may be called upon to participate, such as Tourism Tasmania and Brand Tasmania.



EVENT INVESTMENT



Solstice in the Square | George Town
Photography credit: Melanie Kate

Visit Northern Tasmania works closely with and prospects for sporting, special interest, and major events, aimed at providing a healthy and vibrant annual program that complements the business events calendar, and delivers positive results to the visitor economy. We do this by acting as an advocate and conduit between State Government and the events community.

Tailored initiatives aimed at fostering event attraction and growth primarily originate from sources such as Events Tasmania, City of Launceston, West Tamar Council, Business Events Tasmania, and similar entities. Visit Northern Tasmania will actively engage with stakeholders to facilitate communication and identify grant prospects.

Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement

Effective communication and collaboration with stakeholders are integral to our approach. Visit Northern Tasmania will proactively engage with local councils, event organisers, tourism operators, and the broader community to identify opportunities for event growth and development.

Facilitating Grant Opportunities

Visit Northern Tasmania acts as a proactive advocate and conduit between State Government and the events community. We advocate for Northern Tasmania's events to receive equitable support, ensuring that funding criteria and guidelines consider the return on investment (ROI) and broader economic benefits. Through on-going communication with Events Tasmania, we seek to understand allocated funding commitments, identify supported events, and strategies on optimising funding utilisation.

Events offer a range of positive benefits to the City of Launceston and the surrounding northern region, fostering community pride, sparking creativity, and enhancing our city's profile as a desirable place to live, visit, and invest. To support these benefits, the City of Launceston provides funding through its Event Sponsorship Program, which aligns with the City's Events Strategy. As the City drafts its new events strategy, this evolving framework will enable the Cool Season Strategy to be adaptive and responsive, with annual measures outlined in the collective action plan. This approach ensures that events deliver substantial community, social, cultural, tourism, and economic benefits to the Launceston community and beyond.



Hawthorn vs Collingwood UTAS Stadium Launceston
Image courtesy of Hawthorn Football Club



Tasmanian Craft Fair
Photography credit: Melanie Kate Creative

Addressing Funding Barriers and Maximising Opportunities

Recognising the challenges event organisers face in securing funding, Visit Northern Tasmania actively addresses barriers by providing guidance on funding application processes and advocating for streamlined procedures. We continuously analyse funding opportunities and adjust our strategy to capitalise on emerging prospects, ensuring that Northern Tasmania remains a vibrant destination for winter events.

We actively seek clear communication from Events Tasmania regarding supported events and funding availability, which helps us prospect for future opportunities. By reviewing Events Tasmania's action plan and evaluating event profiles that align with future bid activities, we can refine our approach. We also aim to understand the rationale behind funding decisions, including why certain events may not have been funded, to better inform our strategies. Additionally, we continuously review and update funding guidelines to ensure they meet current needs, ensuring that Northern Tasmania remains a vibrant and appealing destination for winter events.

Protecting and Highlighting Excellence

Visit Northern Tasmania emphasises the protection and promotion of our region's strengths through evidence based – advocacy. By highlighting successful case studies and demonstrating the positive impacts of supported events, we aim to secure ongoing support and recognition for Northern Tasmania's exceptional events portfolio. This approach ensures that our events not only thrive but also contribute meaningfully to the local economy, community spirit and the Tasmanian brand.



Wilderfeast | Flinders Island
Courtesy of Flinders Council, Erita Hall Committee & Furneaux Community Arts



KEY DIRECTIONS

COOL SEASON EVENTS STRATEGY

Cool Season Collective – Pillars

1

Economic

Contribute to the Northern Tasmanian economy.

2

Brand

Raise the profile of Northern Tasmania as an event destination.

3

Positive Impact

Sustainable, accessible, and inclusive events.

4

Social

Contribute to our sense of people and place through a diverse events calendar.

SUMMARY OF COOL SEASON COLLECTIVE CORE ACTIONS



- Prospect for new events with a focus on events for the cool season period (April to September) and other periods identified as having low demand (ad-hoc).
- Enable conversion of prospects to become confirmed events by connecting them with sources of funding, primarily Events Tasmania and applicable Councils; connect event organisers with local operators and suppliers; support event marketing with destination content; raise awareness of the events to media, consumers, and industry via VNT's regular communication channels.
- Influence and educate event organisers to avoid date clashes. Educate event organisers on the guidelines for eligibility for funding opportunities and understand barriers to which the industry may face.
- Advocate to relevant State Government and Councils for adequate budget allocation for the purpose of event attraction.
- Collect and report on market intelligence for the purpose of identifying trends and for use to support advocacy for infrastructure and service offering improvements as required to develop the region's capacity and appeal to host events.
- Partner with relevant agencies to deliver training, upskilling, group consultation and other activity to strengthen and develop the event industry in Northern Tasmania.
- Connect event industry stakeholders with up-to-date resources pertaining to accessibility, inclusion, waste management, digital marketing and other relevant tools developed by industry leading organisations and government agencies.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
Hawthorn Football Club	Airline Access
VNT has a dedicated BDM -Events	Limitation of venue capacity (gala dinners 350+)
Cool Season Collective Group	Lack of upgrade to some sporting facilities to meet code required for national or international championships
What's on Launceston and Northern Tasmania	Inadequate number of beds for large groups
Multiple funding sources	Limited public transport options
Good air access from Eastern seaboard	Reliability and seasonality of hire car fleets
Proximity to Devonport (Spirit of Tasmania)	Reduced trading hours by some retailers
UNESCO City of Gastronomy	Lack of availability of football grounds between seasons
Strong relationship with stakeholders	Late release of football fixture (AFL)
Past event success eg: Special Olympics; Highland Dancing; Drilldance Championship	Inflexibility of AFL and Supercars to flex dates to avoid event clashes
Diverse Cool Season calendar of annual events eg: AMTF, AFL, Tassie Scallop Fiesta, agriCULTURED, Agfest	Cost to travel to/from Tasmania by sea when towing or bringing long vehicles; high cost of freight.
Pipeline of future Events	Constraint of availability for over height vehicles (via sea)
Supercars	Spirit of Tasmania ships dry dock during August - reduced capacity
	Impact of adverse weather on airline 'on-time' and schedules (fog)
	National event scheduling constraints (AFL, Supercars)

Opportunities	Threats
Funding	Change of government or levels of funding
What's On Launceston & Northern Tasmania	Pandemic or other natural disaster
Devils Football Team	Global economy
JackJumpers Basketball	Changes to flight schedules
Stadiums Tasmania	Perception of winter months
New Spirit of Tasmania ships (larger)	Failure by govt/council/others to invest in upgrades to infrastructure
Developing new direct flights	Loss of any long-standing annual events
Investment to infrastructure	Devils Football Team (Reserves)
Collaboration with Tasmanian Aboriginal community	
New hotels in 2025	
Pipeline of future events	
Leveraging existing relationships from past events	
WOM from existing events	
Loss of Dark MOFO (south)	
To enhance existing events	



Inveresk
Photography credit: Ness Vanderburgh

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EXCERPT: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS EXTRACTED FROM VNT COOL SEASON STRATEGY (3 YEAR) PERFORMANCE REPORT.

2020 - 2021 YEAR 1: COVID-19 Pandemic

- Retained eight major events that have been postponed to a future date.
- Secured one new special interest event to be held in November 2021.
- Hosted seven major sporting events in the first half of 2021.
- Designed a regional events guide in partnership with Northern Councils.
- VNT continued initiatives to support the events community including:
- COVID Gold Standard program.
- Event community Facebook group.
- Events community networker and information session with Events Tasmania & City of Launceston.

2021-2022 YEAR 2: Covid 19 Pandemic - transition

- Retained 6 major events that were postponed due to pandemic.
- Secured two new events: Highland Dancing Champion of Champions; Australian National Gravel Championships.
- Hosted 11 events.
- 6 events were cancelled due to impact of Covid-19 which resulted in changes to calendar schedules.
- 3-year funding was secured for agriCULTURED with inaugural event held in August 2021.
- Applied for and secured funding to develop and deliver the pilot program for ZWET (Zero Waste Events Tasmania)
- 14 events supported for funding (includes existing and new events).
- Late 2021 several sporting codes relocated matches to Launceston due to lockdowns in mainland states.

2022 -2023 YEAR 3: Affected by lingering impacts from Covid-19 Pandemic

- Flow on effects of Covid-19 were felt in first half of 2022 with many events unable to be realised.
- 7 events were hosted.
- Special Olympics National Games saw approximately 3,000 attendees (event had been postponed due to Covid-19)
- Visit Northern Tasmania in partnership with Events Tasmania delivered industry capability workshops: Zero Waste Events; Accessible Tourism; Consultation Workshop.
- Specialist support was provided to Australian Musical Theatre Festival and agriCULTURED.
- Prospecting for 2024 and beyond continued with contact made to over 100 potential events and 4 future events secured.
- Visit Northern Tasmania took the lead in marketing the reimagined Longford Motorama
- Northern Tasmania was promoted to car clubs at Motorclassica in Melbourne (October 2022) with 3 car club rallies secured for the region.
- Several events were supported with destination marketing – landing pages.
- Partnership marketing with Hawthorn Football Club continued.



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