Submission to the Draft Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy 2026

Submitted by East Coast Tasmania Tourism

Introduction

East Coast Tasmania Tourism (ECTT) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy.

As the Regional Tourism Organisation representing Tasmania's East Coast, ECTT works closely with tourism operators, local government, industry, community organisations and government agencies to grow a visitor economy that delivers lasting economic, environmental and social benefits.

Tourism is one of Tasmania's most significant economic drivers, particularly in regional areas where it supports local businesses, creates employment opportunities, encourages private investment and strengthens community resilience. However, future economic growth cannot simply be measured by increased visitation or new developments. It must be built on healthy communities, protected natural assets and infrastructure that benefits both residents and visitors.

The East Coast demonstrates that sustainable destination development is not an alternative to economic growth. It is the foundation of it.

Support for the Draft Strategy

East Coast Tasmania Tourism supports the Strategy's focus on unlocking private investment, activating regional economies, strengthening infrastructure, building workforce capability and improving coordination across government.

These priorities strongly align with the work already being undertaken across Tasmania's East Coast.

However, we believe the Strategy should place greater emphasis on implementation. Tasmania has invested considerable resources into developing regional plans and strategies. The next stage must focus on delivering those plans through coordinated investment and strong regional partnerships.

Investment in destination stewardship, environmental resilience and visitor infrastructure should be recognised as economic investment rather than tourism expenditure. These investments improve productivity, encourage private investment, create jobs and strengthen regional communities.

From Planning to Delivery

The East Coast is well positioned to contribute to Tasmania's economic diversification because much of the strategic planning has already been completed.

Through significant investment by the Tasmanian Government and in partnership with local government, industry and the community, East Coast Tasmania Tourism has led the development of several major strategic projects that are now ready to progress into implementation.

The East Coast Positive Impact Plan establishes a destination stewardship framework that places community values, environmental protection and economic prosperity at the centre of tourism development. Developed through extensive community engagement, the Plan provides a practical roadmap for investment that enriches the visitor economy while strengthening the places and communities that make the East Coast unique. It was developed alongside the Bay of Fires Master Plan and the Triabunna Tomorrow Project to ensure a coordinated approach to regional development.

The Triabunna Tomorrow Marine Precinct Infrastructure Blueprint provides a clear and prioritised pathway for investment in one of Tasmania's most significant regional marine precincts. The Blueprint identifies infrastructure that will improve safety, increase marine capacity, support commercial operators, strengthen Triabunna's role as the gateway to Maria Island and deliver year-round economic opportunities for the region. The priority projects have been identified and are ready to progress through business case development and investment.

The Bay of Fires Master Plan similarly provides a strategic framework for one of Tasmania's most iconic visitor destinations and presents significant opportunities to unlock sustainable tourism investment while protecting the environmental values that make the region internationally recognised.

Collectively, these projects represent years of planning, collaboration and community engagement. They are investment-ready opportunities capable of delivering immediate economic benefits while protecting the natural assets that underpin Tasmania's visitor economy.

The State's focus should now shift from developing new strategies to funding and delivering the projects that have already been identified.

Sustainable Destination Development

Tasmania's greatest competitive advantage is its natural environment, authentic communities and distinctive regional experiences.

Protecting these assets while enabling carefully planned growth should be recognised as a central principle of economic diversification.

Across the East Coast we are already experiencing increasing pressure on roads, visitor facilities, public amenities, telecommunications, workforce housing, walking tracks, coastal environments and community infrastructure.

Continued economic growth depends on investing in the infrastructure that supports both residents and visitors while protecting the very places that attract people to Tasmania.

Destination stewardship should therefore be recognised as a core economic development function.

Invest Where Growth Occurs

Regional communities generate significant economic value for Tasmania through tourism, agriculture, aquaculture and food production. Yet many regions continue to experience infrastructure deficits that limit future growth.

Investment should be prioritised in enabling infrastructure including road upgrades, digital connectivity, public amenities, visitor infrastructure, environmental restoration, workforce housing and marine infrastructure.

These investments improve productivity, unlock private investment, strengthen regional liveability and create greater confidence for businesses considering long-term investment.

Importantly, investment should support projects that have already completed strategic planning and community consultation, enabling government funding to deliver immediate regional outcomes.

Strengthen Regional Tourism Organisations

Regional Tourism Organisations play a unique role within Tasmania's economic development landscape.

They connect State Government priorities with local communities, coordinate regional partnerships, facilitate private investment, attract external funding and ensure projects are delivered in ways that reflect local priorities.

The East Coast Positive Impact Plan demonstrates what Regional Tourism Organisations can achieve when appropriately resourced. East Coast Tasmania Tourism has brought together community, industry, local government and State Government to develop a shared vision and a pipeline of projects that are ready for implementation.

Despite this increasingly important role, Regional Tourism Organisations continue to operate with limited and uncertain funding. Recent reductions in State funding risk diminishing the very organisations responsible for delivering many of the outcomes sought through this Strategy.

If the Tasmanian Government is serious about place-based economic development, greater investment in Regional Tourism Organisations should be viewed as investment in delivery rather than administration.

Without adequately resourced regional organisations, many of the Strategy's objectives will remain aspirations rather than measurable outcomes.

Long-term funding certainty would enable Regional Tourism Organisations to retain skilled staff, leverage additional investment, coordinate complex regional projects and continue delivering meaningful economic, environmental and social outcomes across Tasmania's regions.

Encourage Private Investment

Private investment will play a critical role in Tasmania's future economic success.

Government can support this by providing long-term planning certainty, investing in enabling infrastructure before private investment occurs, streamlining planning and approval processes and supporting projects that align with community values and environmental sustainability.

The strongest investments are those that create year-round employment, support local supply chains, encourage innovation and strengthen regional resilience.

Government investment should also be used strategically to leverage private sector investment in projects that have already demonstrated strong community support and regional benefit.

Recognise Tourism as an Economic Enabler

Tourism should not be viewed as a standalone industry.

It supports agriculture, aquaculture, food and beverage production, transport, retail, arts, events, manufacturing and professional services. It encourages regional investment, improves infrastructure, supports local businesses and creates opportunities for population growth and workforce attraction.

Investment in sustainable tourism delivers economic outcomes across multiple sectors while enhancing Tasmania's reputation as a premium destination.

Economic diversification and tourism development are therefore closely connected.

Recommendations

East Coast Tasmania Tourism recommends that the final Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy:

1. Recognise sustainable destination development and destination stewardship as core economic development priorities.
2. Prioritise investment in regional projects that have already completed strategic planning and community consultation.
3. Commit funding to implementation of investment-ready projects including the East Coast Positive Impact Plan initiatives, the Triabunna Tomorrow Marine Precinct Infrastructure Blueprint and the Bay of Fires Master Plan.
4. Increase investment in enabling infrastructure including transport, telecommunications, workforce housing, public amenities, environmental restoration and marine infrastructure.
5. Increase long-term investment and funding certainty for Regional Tourism Organisations to enable the delivery of strategic regional projects, destination stewardship and coordinated economic development outcomes.

6. Improve coordination across government agencies to streamline investment pathways and reduce duplication.
7. Support private investment through enabling infrastructure, planning certainty and efficient approval processes.
8. Develop performance measures that assess environmental resilience, community wellbeing, regional liveability and economic outcomes alongside traditional economic indicators.

Conclusion

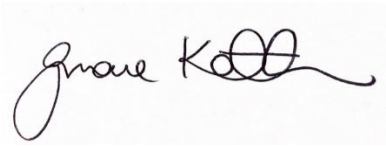
The East Coast has demonstrated what successful regional collaboration looks like.

We have undertaken the research, engaged our communities, developed evidence-based strategies and identified practical, investment-ready projects that align strongly with the objectives of the Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy.

The opportunity now is not to commission further planning, but to deliver.

By investing in implementation, empowering Regional Tourism Organisations and partnering with regions that are ready to act, the Tasmanian Government can accelerate economic diversification while strengthening the communities and natural environments that make Tasmania unique.

East Coast Tasmania Tourism looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Tasmanian Government to deliver sustainable economic growth, resilient regional communities and lasting prosperity for Tasmania.



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