



ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023





Photo: Lusy Productions | Mount Roland, North West



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CHAIR REPORT



Just over four years ago, West by North West (WxNW) was created with one simple mission – to help create stronger communities through sustainable tourism. I was honoured to have been appointed at that time as the inaugural Chairman.

In those early days we were blessed to be able to draw together a diverse, highly skilled and passionate Board of Directors, all unpaid volunteers but all sharing a common passion for our region. Whilst there have been some changes at a Board level, this commitment has not varied.

We were most fortunate at that time with Tom Wootton agreeing to be our CEO. Under his leadership we set about the tasks in front of us with clear direction from the Board and with Tom’s work ethic to build relationships and get things done. Tom left us earlier this year to pursue goals of his own. On behalf of all Directors, we sincerely thank Tom and wish him every success. In Tom’s successor, we have managed to continue this determination and our new CEO, Gabriella Conti, who has demonstrated in recent months what an asset she is for both WxNW and the tourism industry in our State.

The past year has been one of challenges with WxNW playing a leading role; projects such as including the development of Dismal Swamp, assistance in relation to the impacts of the temporary closure West Coast Wilderness Railway, the new ferries, the Tasting Trail, further development of agritourism and mountain biking. On top of this, a new Grant Deed was successfully negotiated with Tourism Tasmania delivering financial security for WxNW.

At the AGM I will be stepping down as Chairman. On a personal note, I would like to thank Directors, both past and present for their wisdom support and friendship, both this past year and over my entire term. Our staff, Gabriella, Sarah and Meg are not only the nicest people to work with, their personal efforts and pride in what they do are a major asset to the industry and the region. Whether they are dealing with a small family businesses, or and international corporation, their commitment and support is equal and unwavering.

I know that I leave WxNW in capable hands and I will continue to watch its progress with interest. The great, late American author, PJ O’Rourke said that “you can’t get rid of poverty by giving people money.” Equally we can’t get all we want in regional tourism by always asking Governments for financial support to solve our problems. It’s about equipping our industry with the skills they need, helping develop opportunities and providing a vision and leadership when required. In its short four years, WxNW has always done that and will continue to do so.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Chris Oldfield

CEO REPORT



It has been more than four years since WxNW was founded as an organisation, and we have come such a long way since we started. The past year has marked a significant leadership transition for WxNW, as our former CEO, Tom Wootton, stepped down from his role in February 2023, and I was appointed as the new CEO. A huge shout out to Tom Wootton for his exceptional leadership in establishing WxNW and bringing the organisation to its current stage of development.

As we embark on the next phase of WxNW's evolution, our primary focus is on advancing the maturity of the organisation. We have successfully established our presence within the Northwest, West Coast, and King Island regions. With this solid foundation in place, we are now in a position to concentrate our efforts on expanding and enhancing our offerings in these areas.

Our region occupies a distinctive position in contrast to the rest of the state. Currently, we are experiencing a significant surge in growth, which is poised to continue expanding in the years ahead. The introduction of the 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy in August could not have been better timed for our region, given its strong emphasis on creating a positive impact, being bold and making a meaningful contribution to our communities. Our goal is to ensure that tourism enriches our communities positively, and in pursuit of this objective, we are committed to attracting the right kind of travellers.

We take immense pride in the recent achievements of our region, winning all three of the Tassie Top Tourism Towns awards. Congratulations to Queenstown, Devonport, and Stanley. Additionally, Queenstown received gold at the Australia Top Tourism Town Awards this year, a remarkable feat!

The West Coast region had an eventful year, with the filming of the ABC TV series "Bay of Fires" in Zeehan, Queenstown, and Strahan. To offset the potential impacts of the temporary closure of the West Coast Wilderness Railway for critical maintenance, WxNW's pivotal collaboration with the Tasmanian Government secured a one-million-dollar, multi-pronged support package. This package included a travel incentive program, a business grant program, support for heritage strategic development, and marketing support for the industry. The creation of the West Coast Adventure Prospectus last year and the opening of Silver City MTB in January signify a strategic effort to increase tourism investment and economic growth in the region.

The North West region introduced two exciting new annual events this year, "Permission to Trespass" and the "Stanley & Tarkine Forage Festival". Both events offer a huge drawcard to our region and were positively received by locals and visitors. The Tasting Trail continues to punch above its weight, securing \$250,000 to support another three years of the TrailGraze event. WxNW has continued its participation in the steering committee for the Far North West project, advocating for funding to support the Tarkine Adventure Hub. We continue to forge a close partnership with TICT in championing a sustainable long-term plan for Cradle Mountain. This iconic landmark serves as the cornerstone in guiding visitor distribution throughout our region - it is therefore imperative that advocacy for the careful management of this iconic site is permanently on our radar to ensure its continued success.

We've been engaged in significant collaborative projects with King Island, encompassing the King Island strategy, signage project, and visitor data collection in partnership with Tourism Tasmania and the council. King Island challenges remain - limited accommodation and aviation access, but we anticipate exciting developments in the coming year, including new accommodation, events, tours, and a focus on wellness tourism; while supporting the existing golf market.

All these achievements would not be possible without our small yet dedicated team. A special thanks to Sarah Norton, whose passion and expertise in marketing and awareness have been invaluable. Together, we have supported our industry through networking events, dynamic product development projects, industry upskilling via training and workshops, and collaborations in support of the 2030 strategy. We also welcomed a new member to our team, Meg Hely, who has brought a positive and energising spirit! Meg has already made significant contributions, assisting with the TICT Ambassador Program modules, cruise familiarisations, ATDW training, and getting out and about meeting with industry.

We are all excited for the year 2024 and what it has in store for our region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Conti', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Gabriella Conti
Chief Executive Officer | WxNW

TOURISM TASMANIA REPORT



Regional tourism makes an important contribution to Tasmania and its people. It supports jobs and communities and allows us to share and celebrate our way of life. In Tasmania, we do things differently – and the west and north west regions offer experiences that are not only unique to Tasmania but are unique to the world.

As a proud born-and-raised Tasmanian, I am honoured to have taken on the role of Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Tasmania at the start 2023. I've spent many years working in tourism and hospitality across multiple continents, and I truly believe Tasmania's regions give us our competitive edge as a travel destination.

Over the past year, Tasmania's tourism sector has seen strong recovery with record setting visitation last winter, followed by the busiest summer in three years. By the year-ending June 2023, visitation to the west and north west region was up 63 percent from the previous year with a total of 561,000 visitors. Interstate travellers were our core visitors, but as confidence in international travel grows, along with cost-of-living pressures, we are starting to see the travel market normalising as expected.

As one of Tasmania's four regional tourism organisations, West by North West (WxNW) plays a crucial role in supporting the overall success of tourism in the state. Tourism Tasmania values our partnership with WxNW in helping to showcase the region and drive dispersal of visitors into tourism reliant communities. It was a pleasure to welcome Gabriella Conti to the role of CEO in February this year, and I commend her and the team on the work they've done to support industry operators and advocate for projects significant to the region.

Tourism in the West and North West aligns perfectly to what travellers around the world want, or in some cases, need: to get off the beaten track and connect with nature, people and self. Our marketing program has aimed to tap into this need, striving to make meaningful connections with travellers, while working strategically to capture audiences' attention and set our island state apart. WxNW played an integral role in showcasing experiences, stories and the unique beauty of the region throughout our marketing activity.

Tasmania's regional communities show resilience time and time again, and while we celebrate the successes of the past year it hasn't been without its challenges. The extended shutdown of one of the West Coast's major visitor drawcards in March has had a large impact on tourism operators and the region, and skills and workforce shortages remain a key issue. WxNW has been an important liaison between government and industry in addressing these issues and administering support, and their input into developing the positive impact vision and plan for Tasmania's 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy has been invaluable.

It's encouraging that even in the face of challenges, tourism in the region received national recognition with Strahan winning gold and Sheffield silver in Australia's Top Tourism Town awards for 2022. Tasmania's entries in the 2023 awards, are all the West and North West region, with Devonport, Stanley and Queenstown in the running. This is a true testament to the unique offerings within the West and North West, as well as the people who are the driving force behind the region's outstanding visitor experiences.

Looking back over my first six months at Tourism Tasmania, my trips to the West and North West region have been a standout, from driving across Lake Burbury in simultaneous sun and snow, hunting for truffles, presenting my first industry update in Strahan followed by Devonport, and most importantly getting to meet many operators face-to-face. Thank you to everyone I've met along the way who have given me a warm welcome and thank you again to Gabriella and the team for their support and achievements in 2022-23.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sarah Clark'.

Sarah Clark

Chief Executive Officer | Tourism Tasmania

OUR TEAM | 2022-2023



Christopher Oldfield
Chair
Business Consultant



Cyndia Hilliger
Deputy Chair
Co-Owner, accommodation
businesses in Wynyard



Clint Walker
Director
Owner, accommodation
businesses in Stanley and Burnie



Andrew Paynter
Director (and Chair of Audit + Risk)
Managing Director, NRMA Expeditions
*Stepped down July 2023



Alicia Peardon
Director
Owner, Ghost Rock Wines



Mark Anderson
Director
General Manager Phillip Island
Nature Parks



David Midson
Director (and council rep.)
General Manager, West Coast
Council



Steven Kons
Director (and councilor rep.)
*Stepped down July 2023



Simon McDermott
Director
Owner, McDermott's Coaches
Developer, Our Cradle



Georgie Gow
Director
Account Director, Pax Mondo



Gabirella Conti
CEO



Sarah Norton
Marketing + Industry
Support Manager



Meg Hely
Industry Support Coordinator

OUR TEAM | BOARD MEETINGS

Month	Location	Directors										In Attendance
		Chris Oldfield	Cyndia Hilliger	Clint Walker	Andrew Paynter	Alicia Peardon	Mark Anderson	Steve Kons	David Midson	Simon McDermott	Georgie Gow	
Oct-22	WxNW Offices, Burnie	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Not appointed	Tom Wootton (CEO) Gabriella Conti (Projects)
Dec-22	Novotel Hotel, Devonport	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Tom Wootton (CEO) Sarah Norton (Marketing)
Jan-23	WxNW Office, Burnie	Present	Present	Present	Present	Apology	Present	Apology	Present	Present	Present	Tom Wootton (CEO) Sarah Norton (Marketing) Gabriella Conti (Projects) Anya Celzner (Accountant) Anne Greentree (Presenter) John Perry (Presenter)
Mar-23	WxNW Office, Burnie	Present	Present	Apology	Present	Present	Present	Present	Apology	Present	Present	Gabriella Conti (CEO) Sarah Norton (Marketing) Robbie Dalton (Presenter)
Apr-23	WxNW Office, Burnie	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Apology	Present	Present	Present	Gabriella Conti (CEO) Sarah Norton (Marketing) Sarah Clark (Presenter) Lindene Cleary (Presenter)
May-23	Zoom	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Apology	Present	Present	Apology	Gabriella Conti (CEO) Sarah Norton (Marketing) Andrew Crane (Presenter) Natasha Stapleton (Presenter)
Jul-23	WxNW Office, Burnie	Present	Present	Present		Apology	Present		Present	Present	Present	Gabriella Conti (CEO) Sarah Norton (Marketing) Eamonn Seddon (Presenter) Justin McErlain (Accountant)
Aug-23	Zoom	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	Gabriella Conti (CEO) Sarah Norton (Marketing)



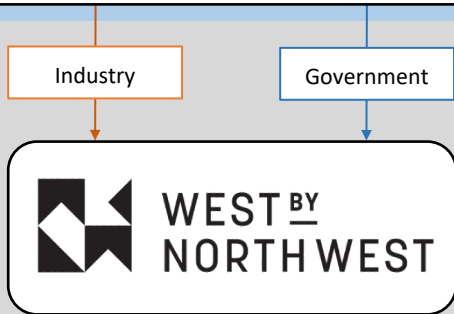
OUR STRATEGY

Our [Regional Tourism Strategy](#) provides four pillars, against which all our day-to-day operations are viewed. They provide us with clarity of purpose and inform our vision – which feeds back into the statewide 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy. We *self-impose* one KPI for each of our strategic pillars and report on those publicly. This year’s results are shown below.

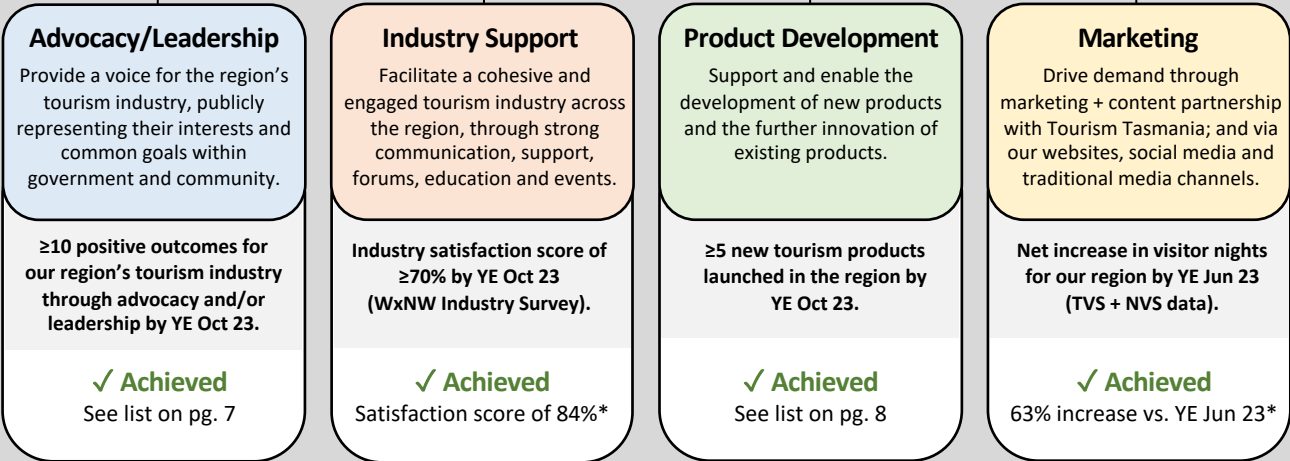
2030 VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY TASMANIA

The [T21](#) is the partnership between the Tasmanian Tourism Industry and the Tasmanian Government and sets the direction for the visitor economy through the [2030 Visitor Economy Strategy for Tasmania](#). T21 formally comprises the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania (TICT) and Tourism Hospitality Association (THA) on behalf of industry; and several government agencies and departments, including Tourism Tasmania as T21 Chair. It then reports to the Premier’s Visitor Economy Advisory Council (PVEAC). The four regional tourism organisations (RTOs) contribute to delivering the 2030 strategy.

STATE



REGIONAL



WxNW VISION
"Stronger communities across our region through a prosperous tourism industry."



LOCAL

*YE June 23 is the most recent visitor data for reporting on this KPI. Data does not include King Island.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Below is a summary overview of the past year, against each of our four strategic pillars and associated KPIs. It's been an extremely busy year, the below summary of which provides just a *small* taste of the work we've been doing.

ADVOCACY / LEADERSHIP

WxNW has continued to advocate strongly for our region's tourism industry. We see our role as crucial in bridging the gap between industry and government, ensuring that the challenges faced by our industry are heard.

We've achieved significant milestones, including securing \$12.5 million for Project Far North West redevelopment. We have locked in a position on the project steering committee, ensuring a laser focus on keeping this project on track.

Our continued advocacy for agritourism secured three years of state government funding to support the TrailGraze event; a critical component of the Tasting Trail. This funding not only ensures the continuity of a hugely popular event but contributes to and inspires the broader tourism landscape.

WxNW was first on the case to provide support to industry through the challenges of the temporary closure for urgent maintenance of the West Coast Wilderness Railway. In collaboration with TICT, we advocated to secure a one million dollar support package from the Tasmanian Government (comprising of three support sections, *refer to table*) for the West Coast.

We have ensured a resonant voice for pivotal industry matters within the media landscape and championed the importance of a robust and thriving industry through presentations to community and through council forums.

Our ongoing efforts are dedicated to advancing RVs, agritourism, accessible tourism, and emissions reduction. These are ongoing challenges that we will continue to strive towards.

KPI #1: ≥10 positive outcomes for our region's tourism industry through advocacy and/or leadership by YE Oct 23.

1. Secured three years of funding from the Tasmanian Government for "TrailGraze", Tasting Trail event.
2. Collaborated with both industry and government stakeholders to successfully launch the 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy; a pivotal milestone in our regional development efforts.
3. Advocated and achieved a one million dollar industry support package from the Tasmanian Government to offset potential impacts of the temporary closure of the West Coast Wilderness Railway for urgent maintenance. West Coast industry received three areas of funding;
 - A. Travel Incentive Program
 - B. Heritage strategy development
 - C. Support for tourism and hospitality businesses (Skills based initiatives such as grant writing and marketing.)
4. Secured additional funding to bolster marketing for the West Coast region, further strengthening the travel incentive program.
5. Locked in a seat on the steering committee for the redevelopment of Dismal Swamp, a critical element of the Project Far North West vision.
6. Advocated for action on the Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Master Plan with both State and Federal Governments.
7. Supported the cultivation of local regional tourism advocates through our active role in the development of localised content for the Ambassador Program modules.
8. Actively supported the THA Great Customer Experience program, to improve customer service skills and training in our region.
9. Collaborated with King Island Council to improve visitor-facing signage, thereby improving overall visitor experience.
10. Successfully secured ten thousand dollars from Events Tasmania to assist industry stakeholders in launching the "Permission to Trespass" event, as part of the OffSeason.

Kramer | Cape Wickham



YEAR IN REVIEW

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

We have fostered strong partnerships with our tourism operators, local councils, local tourism associations (LTAs), community groups, and individual operators within our region. Our commitment is to be a positive and proactive force within the industry and these partnerships are emblematic of our dedication to this pursuit.

Throughout the year we have been engaged in various initiatives, including one-on-one site visits, industry "get-to-know-your-neighbour" familiarisation programs, as well as participating in cruise and Tourism Tasmania public relations and famil initiatives. We prioritise being accessible and providing assistance to those who reach out, making a concerted effort to be on the road and actively engaged with our industry partners.

Our commitment to enhancing industry engagement has seen a significant increase in the number of industry events this year. These events have encompassed the King Island Tourism Forum, virtual cafés, celebrations, and industry pub nights. Additionally, we have worked with our industry bodies to promote various skills-based and industry workshops including; 2030 strategy industry input, Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) training, marketing, cruise tourism, and agritourism skills sessions.

We successfully delivered our third annual Regional Tourism Forum and cocktail party, which brought together 173 tourism operators and stakeholders. Notably, both events received exceptionally high satisfaction ratings of 95%.

One of the cornerstones of our success lies in our close collaboration with LTAs and council stakeholders. This collaborative approach is central to our mission of advancing regional tourism priorities, and it serves as the driving force behind a comprehensive 12-month action plan that unites us in pursuit of a shared vision. Other work with council stakeholders has included work with King Island council and KITI to finalise their tourism strategy and working alongside the Burnie City Council and cruise ship stakeholders including Tas Ports, Business Northwest, and a dedicated team of volunteers to facilitate the upcoming cruise ships to our region.

We remain steadfastly committed to supporting the next generation of the tourism industry. We have contributed to this objective through a program of school presentations, student mentoring programs in partnership with the Beacon Foundation, and through sponsorship of tourism and hospitality students to attend our Regional Tourism Forum.

KPI #2: Industry satisfaction score of $\geq 70\%$ by YE Oct 23 (WxNW Industry Survey).

In September this year, the survey result provided a sentiment score of **84%** from our tourism stakeholders.

A sincere thanks to our tourism industry colleagues who completed the survey and provided valuable and thoughtful feedback. It has significantly informed our outlook for next year.



YEAR IN REVIEW

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Without question our region is undergoing a transformative journey, positioning itself as a highly sought-after destination for visitors. At the heart of our mission is the gratifying endeavor of supporting this transformation through innovation and advancing product development throughout our region. In tandem, we wholeheartedly commit to nurturing the expansion and refinement of our existing offerings.

Our commitment to growth is evident in our proactive advocacy and resolute support for transformative projects within the region. Notably, the Dismal Swamp redevelopment has been made possible by a substantial Federal Government investment as part of Project Far Northwest. This project offers to breathe life into this existing, but tired natural asset, and not only promises to elevate the visitor experience but also holds the potential to attract a broader audience to explore our western regions for longer. Furthermore, we have been active in shaping the future of our region through our contributions to discussions supporting the development of the Next Iconic Walk on the West Coast and the Dove Lake Viewing Shelter, which opened in March 2023. The West Coast continues to build its reputation for quality Mountain Bike Trails (MTB), with an additional network, the Silver City, opened this year.

We have nurtured private investment in our region and are pleased to see so many exciting projects on the horizon, including the proposed development of Opulus Table Cape, a new luxury 5-star sustainable hotel on the edge of Table Cape; a new \$12 million hotel in Burnie, tours and wellness offerings in King Island. The West Coast region continues to gain significant investor attention due to the West Coast Tourism Prospectus.

KPI #3: ≥5 new tourism products launched in the region by YE Oct 23.

The list below provides 10 *new* products launched this year... but there are more!

1. Coastline Tours
2. House of Hargrave, produce
3. Plump Berries, produce
4. Dove Lake Viewing Shelter
5. Silver City MTB Trails
6. Permission to Trespass, event
7. Badgers View Farm stay, accommodation
8. Stanley & Tarkine Forage Festival, event
9. King Island Fresh, catering
10. Cradle Canyons, Dove Lake Kayaking



YEAR IN REVIEW

MARKETING

In light of the dynamic marketing landscape of the past year, our ongoing collaboration with Tourism Tasmania has played an essential role in promoting Tasmania and achieving success at WxNW. This partnership has been instrumental in various endeavours, including the development of the new Discover Tasmania website, the launch of the Discover Tasmania app, and the execution of campaigns such as "Come Down for Air" and "The Off Season." Additionally, we have served as the primary conduit for keeping Tourism Tasmania informed about developments in our region, encompassing new products, updates to existing offerings, and upcoming events.

Our dedicated team has undertaken a substantial workload this year, however, there is still much work on the horizon. Sarah and Meg have taken the lead in offering crucial marketing support to operators for the creation and maintenance of ATDW listings. Moreover, we've been collaborating closely with King Island Council on various initiatives, including the King Island visitor survey, King Island signage, and printed collateral.

We have successfully managed social media accounts for the North West region, King Island, and the West Coast, including dedicated accounts for West Coast MTB and the Tasting Trail. Additionally, our responsibilities have extended to actively managing destination websites for King Island, West Coast, North West, and the Tasting Trail.

We have led the charge on the marketing for the West Coast travel incentive program, collaborating closely with a range of stakeholders, including industry partners, creative agencies, Department of State Growth, West Coast Council, and Tourism Tasmania.

While the North West region continues to establish itself as Tasmania's foremost agritourism destination, our primary strategic focus remains on driving demand for the Tasting Trail. Over the past two years, our most effective marketing tool for promoting the Tasting Trail has proven to be the TrailGraze event. This event has garnered a robust audience across both traditional and social media platforms, significantly enhancing awareness of the Tasting Trail and its associated offerings throughout the North West region. We've forged valuable partnerships with PR agency Pax Mondo and Tourism Tasmania to leverage PR and media opportunities effectively.

KPI #4: Net increase in visitor nights for our region by YE Jun 23 (TVS + NVS data).

Our region has achieved a 63% increase in visitation between YE June 2022 to 2023.

Our region's share of nights in Tasmania has maintained share from 19.3% in YE Jun 22, to 18.7% in YE Jun 23.





 **WEST BY NORTH WEST**
REGIONAL TOURISM | TASMANIA