



MEDIA RELEASE

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Launceston convention facilities

Investing in convention facilities in Launceston – either upgrading existing facilities or developing a purpose-built convention facility – would lead to multi-million-dollar economic benefits for the northern region, a study has found.

The report, prepared for Visit Northern Tasmania by consultants Right Angle, identified three scenarios:

- Maintain the status quo.
- Upgrade existing facilities.
- Develop a new purpose-built convention facility.

Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania CEO, Amy Hills, said the report highlights incredible opportunities for Launceston.

“The report shows that there is huge demand for holding conferences and other events in Launceston,” Ms Hills said.

“It’s imperative now that we have a clear strategy to seize on the opportunities and help build on Launceston’s appeal as an event destination.

“Conferences have the ability to help smooth out peaks and troughs in demand and ensure that there is a steady pipeline of work for our tourism and hospitality sector businesses and their employees.

“We also know that conference delegates tend to stay for an extra few days and explore the region around the conference location. More conferences in Launceston will mean more visitors at different times of the year exploring the north-east, the east coast or the Meander Valley.

“TICT is calling on both sides of federal politics to commit to investing in northern Tasmania’s future by investing in conference facilities.”

Business Events Tasmania CEO Marnie Craig said while scenario one would deliver marginal growth returning business event numbers to pre-Covid levels (about 20 events per annum), scenarios two and three were preferred.

“The take-out message is that some action is required to encourage new hotel development in Launceston that will unlock economic growth in the business events market and in the broader event and sports-related tourism space,” she said.

Under scenario two, the number of events per annum was expected to increase to 27, attracting on average 198 attendees per conference with an economic impact of \$19.2 million per annum.

The number of events under scenario three would increase to 36 with an average size of 220 attendees equating to an annual business events economic impact of \$28.5 million.

Ms Craig said she believed some minor improvements or modernisation works to existing facilities in Launceston would realise the benefits under scenario two in the short to medium-term, while implementing scenario three was a longer-term solution, but both need to be considered.

“The importance of conferences and business events to the Tasmanian visitor and general economy should not be underestimated,” she said.

“They have far-reaching benefits for restaurants, retailers, entertainers and transport.”

Ms Craig said there was no singular response that would deliver improved outcomes for the region.

“Many of the recommendations in the report require a collaborative, coordinated and cohesive approach between government, industry and the private sector,” she said.

The report noted that Launceston had lost business event and meeting market share since before Covid while Tasmania overall had seen a net increase in events held.

It said the majority of reasons for this related to the availability, size and quality of venues that hosted business events, but there were also limitations created by the current state of critical infrastructure, the volume of hotel stock, availability and timing of direct flights from capital cities and availability of ground transport.

The report recommended that if purpose-built conference facilities were developed in Launceston that they should form part of a multi-purpose facility that could cater for between 500 to 550 people.

“This would be in-line with the majority of business events held in Tasmania and interstate,” it said.

The report noted that some international events would find Launceston an appealing destination and attracting those events would be about aligning with Launceston and northern Tasmania's key industries such as green energy, maritime / Antarctic research and defence vehicles manufacture.

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