



BICHENO

Destination Action Plan 2017–2019

August 2017



Acknowledgments

The development of the Bicheno Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by David Reed through 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 Bicheno in tourism terms.

Specifically we would like to thank the individuals that participated in the plan development process:

Facilitator

David Reed

Destination Action Plan workshop attendees

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Introduction

Does size matter?

The definition of a town or a village is interesting – and what does Bicheno wish to be known as? Does an ‘East Coast fishing village’ descriptor evoke friendliness and a slower pace than an ‘East Coast surfing town’ which may imply it has a range of varied/essential services.

Wikipedia suggests:

- A **town** is a human settlement larger than a **village** but smaller than a city. The size **definition** for what constitutes a ‘**town**’ varies considerably in different parts of the world.
- Town – a town has a population of 1,000 to 20,000.
- Village – a village is a human settlement or community that is larger than a hamlet but, smaller than a town. A village generally does not have many services, most likely a church or only a small shop or post office. The population of a village varies however, the average population can range from hundreds to thousands.

The group decided Bicheno should be known as a seaside village.

This planning process recognises that visitors to the region are attracted by the stunning drive as well as the various experiences up and down the coast and so what Bicheno offers is going to become pivotal to its long term success as a tourism destination.

The Destination Action Plan for Bicheno identifies the priority strategies and actions that, if implemented, will enhance the competitiveness of Bicheno as a sustainable visitor destination.

The Plan has been prepared with input from business and community representatives who considered and reached consensus on the opportunities and challenges facing Bicheno and agreed the key priorities and actions that would make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the visitor experience and the visitor economy.



The visitor economy

‘Tasmania’s East Coast is the 6th most tourism dependent region in Australia.’

Source: Tourism Research Australia.

Recent visitation figures to the State, demonstrate that there is double digit growth to the region and this has been going on for three consecutive years.

Growth in tourism 2013 – 2016:

Interstate/International

- Tasmania + 19.62% (1,033,508)
- East Coast + 33.22% (352,675)

Tasmanians

- Tasmania + 11% (1,266,000 overnight trips)
- East Coast + 16% (209,000 overnight trips)

Objectives

The common objectives for tourism are:

1. To increase visitor numbers
2. To increase visitor length of stay
3. To increase visitor expenditure
4. To increase visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally)
5. To increase visitor satisfaction.



THE COLLECTIVE IDEAS ON BICHENO'S STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Our collective strengths

- Location – central: equidistant from north and south along the Great Eastern Drive, close to wineries, Wineglass Bay and Douglas Apsley National Park
- Bicheno's weather – micro climate
- The Penguins and Devils – great night time activities
- Family friendly destination
- The only 'ocean-side' destination on the East Coast – all other towns/villages are located on a bay
- The ocean attractions – surfing, fishing, diving, beaches, whales, coffee club swim, walking.



THE COLLECTIVE IDEAS ON BICHENO'S STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES CONT.

Collective challenges and opportunities

- Opportunity to create increased awareness of winter diving
- Walkway between the Gulch and the Blowhole
- An equivalent of some of the winery food offerings for evening dining experiences – current options are great, but with more dining available in the evening we can create a significant competitive advantage and become the location of choice for overnight visitors
- Events: Rockpool, Bicheno Food and Wine Festival, Festival of Voices and Devil of a Swim are all hero events – need to ensure their growth and their sustainability. Stand up paddle board championships will be another drawcard. Need to foster/grow other events off season
- Need public transport – taxi or Uber
- More mid level accommodation of high standard
- Bicheno Triangle Project
- A reduction in the speed zone to 30kph in the centre of the village through signage, surfacing and chicanes
- Become super pedestrian friendly
- Investment in infrastructure for further growth and the inaction on existing assets like Silver Sands = lost opportunities
- Seasonality – must feature winter for sustainability
- Lack of staff accommodation becoming critical
- Use of vacant land for pop up businesses (evening outdoor cinema in the summer)
- Develop the outdoor public spaces, the arts and cultural attractions and connect them all with great walkways
- Focus on the maritime activities of whales and seals
- Garner local support so the industry is highly valued and that every interaction involves a smile
- Productive tourism leadership group
- Businesses opening later in the day during June/July to coincide with school holiday visitation
- Plot seasonal opening hours among businesses to ensure facilities are available to visitors
- Bike users on the walking tracks.



In priority order (ranked most to least)

The workshop participants voted on all the elements that had been discussed and determined that the following were the top priority:

1. Bicheno to become super pedestrian friendly by connecting the existing foreshore walks through to the Gulch and then a boardwalk to the Blow Hole. These walks would connect The Bicheno Triangle to all sides of the village, and with a lowering of the speed limit through Bicheno, walkers of all ages will be safely linked from their accommodation to all the attractions and businesses. This could incorporate interpreted themes (maritime and history) throughout the walks, and a cultural hub in the Triangle. This project would also need to acknowledge and accommodate the growing number of cyclists in and around the town.
2. Become the overnight choice for visitors and create a significant competitive advantage by being the only location on the coast with a number and variety of evening dining options to compliment the great existing offerings.
3. In equal ranking:
 - a. Address the staff accommodation shortage
 - b. Event development and management, particularly in the winter months.

Also mentioned as worthy of attention were public transport, good quality mid level accommodation and ocean based activities.



A draft Vision

The story needs to be on everyone's lips, that Bicheno is super pedestrian friendly – the walks take in the beaches, the village, the Gulch and the Blow Hole. It is renowned for its universal access to all the attractions, events and businesses.

Bicheno has a wide range of activities and services around the Village hub – the Triangle, but Bicheno is also a centre for visitors to discover the three W's – Wildlife, Wineries and Wineglass. A minimum 2-day stay is essential to enjoy all that Bicheno has to offer – both day and night.

Bicheno tourism is a vibrant, year round, sustainable industry – highly valued by the local community and ranked Number 1 by visitors and travel professionals alike.



Some proposals for a plan, from the collective assessment of priorities for Bicheno

The Primary Focus – Theme 1

Reimagining the pedestrian traffic flows/walkways in and around Bicheno to connect the existing Diamond Island to Waubs Beach established foreshore walk with the Gulch and the Blow Hole via the Village Centre Triangle project.

Given the village may soon have a new Triangle in its centre, a cultural and historical perspective can add value and interest to the walks through themed interpretation (whether digitally or through signage). The Triangle becomes the village 'hub' – but to fully realise its potential, a slowing of the traffic on the adjacent highway seems essential to both improve pedestrian access and safety concurrently.

The destination is very family friendly – it has day and night time activities and hosts well known events on the Tasmanian calendar so connecting accommodation around the village with its hub makes eminently good sense.

There is a high level of talent in the village to articulate, design and plan the walkways, gain community and local government endorsement and identify the organisation that can seek the grant funding and drive the project implementation.

The usage of the walkways by an ever-increasing number of cyclists that are visiting Bicheno needs to also be acknowledged and accommodated.

Secondary Focus – Theme 2

Develop a prospectus for potential restaurant operators – detailing the number of rooms and therefore the number of potential clients.

(Note: Very important to ensure the existing food and beverage operators understand that this is about complimenting the existing food options – the messages must be about offering a range and choice to the consumer at a level that equals the winery food offerings during the day. Discuss the draft prospectus with them prior to any distribution).

Tertiary Focus – Theme 3

Reach out to the event managers of Rockpool and Bicheno Food and Wine Festival to seek their advice on succession planning. Develop concepts and incubate new potential winter events for Bicheno.

Identify target land that meets Local Government zoning for high density residential living that is not prime real estate close to town – suitable for staff accommodation development.



DIAGNOSTIC RATING

Industry research has established that the following factors are usually essential to a highly successful tourism destination. The workshop participants considered these factors relative to Bicheno, and scored the elements as per the following chart.

A focus on improvement of all these factors will contribute to the competitive growth and sustainability of the visitor economy of Bicheno.

Success factors

Characteristics	Rating
1. Strong local organisations that have a focus on visitor servicing.	6.6
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development.	8.0
3. Local Government support.	7.85
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations.	7.6
5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local plans.	4.85
6. Consistent visitor service excellence, infrastructure and products.	4.37
7. Research driven cooperative marketing.	6.0
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand.	7.22
9. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	7.57
10. Excellent communications.	6.83

It is noteworthy that Bicheno as a destination is going pretty well – and that the missing links /below par elements, are:

1. The strategy for the future; and
2. The development of infrastructure/products

Both of those elements are addressed within this Destination Action Plan.

So, given the relative success of the other elements, Bicheno has a very good potential to realise a good level of success within this Plan.



Action Plan implementation

The Action Plan will outline priorities and actions as a guide to collaboratively and cooperatively implementing the Plan. To facilitate this, an Implementation Leadership Group of representatives needs to be formed.

This group will identify the activities that will need to be undertaken to achieve the objectives and enlist the support of the appropriate people, resources and organisations to progress the implementation of the Plan quickly.