

Chapter 12

TOURISM

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Chapter 12

TOURISM

Tourism has long been associated with Tasmania. The island State's unsurpassed beauty and variety of attractions make it the ideal place for rest and relaxation for both visitors and Tasmanians alike. Our heritage has always been an important drawcard, evident in the overwhelming interest in the 'Tall Ships' visit during Australia's Bicentennial year. However, our wilderness areas have also received much publicity and are playing an increasing role in luring holidayers to explore the unique attractions Tasmania has to offer.

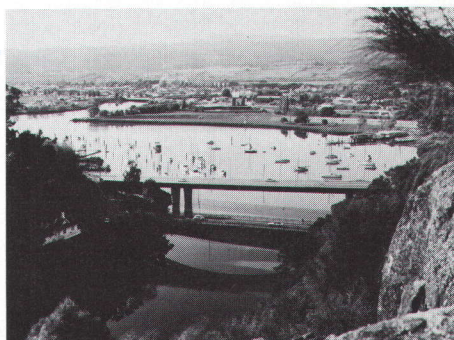
12.1 VISITORS

Over recent years tourism has become a significant contributor to the Tasmanian economy. During 1988 visitors to the State spent approximately \$308 million, generating employment for 18 000 people; more than nine per cent of the State's workforce.

In that year 681 500 passengers arrived in Tasmania from interstate and New Zealand of whom just under 60 per cent were visitors. This shows a marked improvement in comparison with recent years where the number of visitors

12.1 ESTIMATED PASSENGER ARRIVALS TO TASMANIA ('000)

Period	Passenger arrivals	Visitors
1978	557.2	317.3
1981	591.6	337.5
1984	580.5	315.5
1986	629.6	329.1
1988	681.5	406.6



In 1988 33.7 per cent of visitors to the State visited the Cataract Gorge in Launceston.

fluctuated between 315 500 and 329 100 or between 52 and 58 per cent of the total number of passengers arriving during the year.

The number of visitors arriving in Tasmania has increased 28 per cent since 1978 while passenger arrivals, which include Tasmanians returning to the State, have increased by 22.3 per cent over the same period.

Much of this increase occurred in the last two years. Since 1986 the number of visitors arriving has increased by 23.6 per cent while the total number of passenger arrivals rose by only 8.2 per cent.

Most of the visitors to the State have been Victorians although the proportion has dropped from 51 per cent in 1978 to 42 per cent in 1988.

12.2 ORIGIN OF VISITORS TO TASMANIA (%)

State/country of origin	1978	1984	1988
Victoria	51.3	45.0	41.8
NSW	20.7	24.2	21.0
ACT	3.2	3.5	3.9
SA and NT	8.5	8.0	7.0
Qld	7.4	7.3	8.1
WA	3.9	4.5	3.7
Europe	1.1	2.8	4.2
North America	1.1	2.3	6.0
New Zealand	1.4	1.5	2.6
Other overseas	1.3	0.7	1.7

This fall is partly compensated by increases in visitors from Queensland but the most significant compensating trend is the increase in the number of overseas visitors rising from just under five per cent in 1978 to 14.5 per cent in 1988. Of these, most are from Europe, North America and New Zealand.

Most visitors, around 70 per cent, come to Tasmania to holiday and about 20 per cent come for business reasons.

12.3 REASON FOR VISITING TASMANIA (%)

Reason	1978	1984	1988
Holiday -			
To meet friends or relatives	28.9	28.8	28.6
Fly/drive tour	n.a.	n.a.	19.7
Coach tour	5.9	5.9	6.8
Other holiday	36.3	34.5	16.2
Other -			
Sporting event	4.0	6.7	3.2
Convention	3.6	4.8	4.8
Business, other purpose	21.3	19.3	20.7

More holiday makers come to see friends and relatives than for any other reason. In 1988 an estimated 102 300 (almost 40 per cent) holiday visitors came to Tasmania for this reason. Another 98 400 (38 per cent of holiday visitors) came on self-driven tours.

Passenger Arrivals on the *Abel Tasman*

In July 1985 the *Abel Tasman* took over the Melbourne-Devonport passenger service from the *Empress of Australia*. From figures of arrivals during its first three full years of operation, it is apparent that the larger capacity ferry has achieved an increase in the total passenger traffic between Victoria and Tasmania.

12.4 PASSENGERS ARRIVING IN TASMANIA

Period	By air			Total
	Interstate	Zealand	By sea	
1981	520 601	9 762	61 336	591 699
1982	516 140	6 863	60 767	583 770
1983	493 075	7 004	63 587	563 666
1984	512 257	7 054	61 039	580 350
1985	550 045	8 419	69 113	627 577
1986	524 342	10 136	95 139	629 617
1987	526 517	9 446	88 343	624 306
1988	571 344	8 625	101 572	681 541

Source: Department of Tourism.

Because of the increase in ferry usage the State Government has decided to replace the *Abel Tasman* by the early 1990's with a much larger ship, capable of carrying 400 more passengers. The new ferry will pick up latent demand in peak periods and will cater for the budget traveller with deck chair facilities as well as plush cabins for those seeking luxury.

In the meantime, the *Abel Tasman* which celebrated its 1000th crossing in September 1988, continues to set new records for the Bass Strait run. In January 1989 it carried a record 22 022 passengers and 6198 vehicles, the highest number for any month since it began operating in July 1985. During the pilots' dispute the *Abel Tasman* arrived in Devonport on 8 September 1989 with a record 1100 passengers on board, the largest number of passengers to be brought into Tasmania on one crossing in the history of Bass Strait sea passenger services. During the financial year 1988-89 the *Abel Tasman* raised almost \$12.7 million in freight revenue and carried a total of 216 768 passengers and 55 294 vehicles between Devonport and Melbourne.

Well over a third of visitors include the Port Arthur penal settlement and Cataract Gorge on their itinerary; approximately a quarter go to Mt Wellington in Hobart, while the Gordon River,

Cradle Mountain, and Lake St Clair are all frequently visited. Cradle Mountain (up seven per cent since 1981) and Richmond Village (visited by 29 per cent of visitors in 1988) are attractions continually increasing their popularity.

Mt Wellington Lookout

A glass-fronted observation shelter was built on the pinnacle of Mt Wellington to provide a comfortable viewing platform for the estimated 250 000 people who make the trip to the summit each year.

Officially opened in December 1988, the fully enclosed shelter replaced an open observation site and provides a spectacular uninterrupted view of greater Hobart, the Derwent, Bruny Island and Storm Bay.

Until 1988 Port Arthur had consistently attracted about 50 per cent of all visitors. The drop in numbers to 38 per cent in 1988 is partly attributable to the introduction of entrance fees at the historic site in October 1987.

12.5 PLACES VISITED IN TASMANIA (%)

Places	1981	1988
Port Arthur historic site	51.2	38.1
Lake Pedder	18.4	11.0
Mt Field National Park	16.8	13.8
Mt Wellington	38.9	25.7
Mt Nelson look-out	19.5	14.0
Coles Bay/Freycinet Peninsula	13.1	12.5
Cataract Gorge	37.6	33.7
Central highlands/Great Lake area	13.0	9.9
Mole Creek caves	12.5	n.a.
Cradle Mountain	11.3	18.5
Lake St Clair	19.8	17.8
Gordon River	23.5	19.6
Richmond Village	n.a.	29.1
Maria Island National Park	n.a.	3.5
Bruny Island	n.a.	4.6
Lake Barrington	n.a.	6.9
Far south-west (Port Davey area)	n.a.	3.0

Among activities undertaken, sightseeing and touring, and visiting historic sights are still the most popular. The casinos attracted about 38 per cent of visitors while visiting museums and art galleries attracted a third of all visitors in 1988.

12.6 HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN TASMANIA (%)

Activity	1978	1984	1988
Visiting casinos	52.9	47.6	37.6
Bushwalking or climbing	27.2	24.1	16.3
Organised sport	6.5	4.9	3.7
Visiting historic sites	62.2	56.0	49.4
Sea fishing	7.4	5.7	3.5
Trout angling	5.0	3.5	3.2
Sightseeing and touring	68.7	61.4	54.8
Snow skiing	1.3	0.4	0.5
Canoeing or boating	5.5	6.4	4.3
Scenic flights	2.5	2.7	2.1
Day or half-day cruises	n.a.	n.a.	22.9
Walking tour/4WD	n.a.	n.a.	2.2
Caverneering/visiting caves	n.a.	n.a.	13.8
Visiting museums/art galleries	n.a.	n.a.	33.2

Most visitors stay with friends or relatives, although the percentage has declined. The offsetting change has been the increased occupancy of commercial holiday unit accommodation (up nearly seven per cent since 1981).

12.7 ACCOMMODATION USED BY VISITORS TO TASMANIA (%)

Accommodation	1978	1984	1988
Friends' or relatives' house	42.1	41.4	38.4
Hotel, motel or guesthouse with private facilities	27.8	27.0	26.8
Tent, hut, cabin, on-site caravan in camping area with amenities	6.5	5.8	4.4
Tent or hut in wilderness area or on other public land without amenities	2.2	2.6	3.9
Motorised camper	4.1	3.4	3.0
Commercial holiday unit	2.1	4.9	9.0
Towed caravan	1.2	2.1	1.5
School or residential college	2.4	2.8	3.3
Host farm/colonial	n.a.	n.a.	2.0
Youth hostel	n.a.	n.a.	2.3
Other	9.3	8.3	5.4

Colonial and host farm accommodation account for two per cent of all nights spent in Tasmania by visitors and are most popular with those on self-driven tours.

During 1988, holiday unit establishments continued to provide expansion in tourist accommodation. Both the number of units available and the number of accommodation nights provided, increased by over nine per cent while the rate of occupancy remained fairly constant.

In addition, caravan parks have increased the number of on-site cabins to cater for the demand for this type of accommodation. In 1981 there were 66 cabins in Tasmanian caravan parks. By December 1988 this number had nearly trebled to 176. During 1988 alone, the number of cabins rose 18 per cent from 149 to 176.

12.8 ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY, TASMANIA

Accommodation establishment	At December		
	1981	1987	1988
Hotel rooms with private facilities	2 603	3 063	3 137
Motel rooms	1 488	1 412	1 486
Holiday units	n.a.	686	748
Caravan park sites, cabins	4 850	5 803	5 967

This increase in capacity for all types of accommodation has contributed in part to the general decrease in occupancy rates in 1988.

12.9 ACCOMMODATION OCCUPANCY RATES, TASMANIA (%)

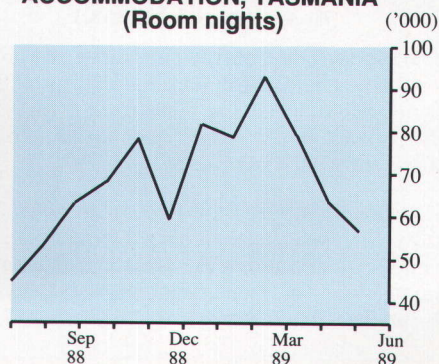
Year	Hotel, motel rooms	Holiday units	Caravan park sites
1983	48.0	58.4	22.7
1984	50.3	58.0	22.3
1985	54.6	61.5	21.7
1986	52.6	56.3	22.1
1987	50.0	52.9	20.6
1988	46.5	51.9	20.2

However, occupancy rates for 1989 have already shown vast improvement. During the March quarter the rate for holiday units increased by 19 per cent on the same period during 1988 while hotels, motels and guest houses, and caravan parks increased by six and 12 per cent respectively. The World Sheep and Wool Congress which attracted 1500 visitors to Tasmania added to the good season experienced by accommodation establishments.

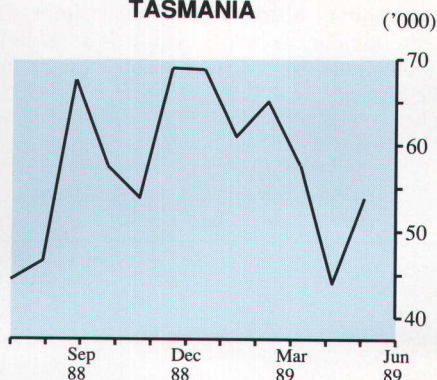
Occupancy rates for all types of accommodation establishments exhibit marked seasonality. The winter months of July, August and September have the lowest occupancy rates while January, February, March, have the highest rates.

Seasonality in occupancy reflects the pattern of passenger arrivals into the State, except in December when visitors arrive to spend Christmas with family and friends.

HOTEL, MOTEL, ETC. ACCOMMODATION, TASMANIA (Room nights)



PASSENGER ARRIVALS TASMANIA



Australian Tourism Awards 1988

The Rutherglen holiday complex at Hadspen near Launceston won the Specialist Accommodation sector of the Australian tourism awards which attracted a record 158 entries in 14 categories. Developed 10 years ago, Rutherglen features a sports centre, convention and dining facilities and a zoo. The accommodation is in the form of self-contained cabins and motel units.

Tanzi Lewis of the *Mercury* won an award in the Print Media Section and the Touchwood Gallery, in Stanley, received an honourable mention in the Tourist Shop and Souvenir Category.

National Tourism Week

Tourism week was celebrated in Tasmania on 15-25 June 1989 as part of a national program of activities designed to underline the importance of Australia's fastest growing industry at national, State and regional levels.

The activities which took place throughout the State were part of a major campaign, under the banner, 'Tourism - The Key to Australia's Future' which aimed to:

- Encourage consumers to holiday within Australia and in the case of Tasmanians, within their own State.
- Involve regional tourism interests in the positive benefits of developing tourism within their own area.
- Educate students about the value and the contribution made by tourism to the economy at all levels and the career opportunities offered by the industry.

In Tasmania the activities included a major Careers Expo for students, and open days by operators within the industry.

and Hobart, a service which has direct linkages for Tasmania to Tokyo, San Francisco and London. This provides additional potential tourist markets for the State and has been actively supported with joint advertising campaigns.



The first Qantas service linking Hobart with international connections began on 8 February 1989.

Photo: Qantas

12.2 NEW INITIATIVES IN TOURISM

Tasmania has continued to experience significant growth in its tourism industry and is well on the way to meet industry expectations for the 1990s.

Results from the Tasmanian Visitor Survey have shown an annual growth rate of over 13 per cent to the visitor market since 1986. The most noticeable increase was international visitor arrivals which rose by 102 per cent.

Tasmania has made significant inroads into the international markets particularly Japan and North America.

Negotiations have seen the successful introduction of a new Qantas flight between Sydney

*This article was prepared by Tourism Tasmania.

As a result, Tasmania can be promoted and sold as a truly international visitor destination as part of an overall Australia package for those visiting say Cairns or Sydney or flying direct from New Zealand.

A new initiative has been the appointment of a European tourism representative to promote the State in this market in anticipation that increasing interest from the United Kingdom, Germany and Scandinavian Countries will be generated. Market research has been essential to determining Tasmania's role in the international arena and, through a joint Commonwealth/State consultancy package, the Australian Tourist Commission is engaging consultants to review the USA, UK, European and Japanese markets. The results will provide positive directions for future marketing of the State in these markets.

Although the domestic travel sector was significantly affected by the attractions of Expo '88, Tasmania still held its own in the market place.

Major promotional campaigns in autumn and spring used the theme 'Tasmania - Naturally Different' with the Joe Cocker composition 'You Are So Beautiful'.

The campaigns were synonymous with the release of a new brochure range 'Tasmania's Temptation Holidays', a series of six individual holiday packages.

As part of an image change Tourism Tasmania was restructured to provide a marketing sales force in each of the Australian States. Improved marketing of conventions and servicing of travel agents has resulted, enabling the State to compete directly with our competitors.

Infrastructure development has continued to expand with the recently completed Launceston International Hotel

Launceston International Hotel

The \$44 million Launceston International Hotel, the first five-star hotel in the heart of the city, was opened in August 1989.

The eight-storey, 165-room hotel represents the city's largest private development in more than 50 years. The project took six years to plan and construct. The developer, Mr Robert Hosken, recognised that Tasmania had to establish international standard facilities to attract overseas visitors.

The hotel's restaurants, bars and function areas are expected to cater for the people of Launceston and Tasmania as well as overseas visitors.



Photo: Mercury

A number of new projects are in the planning stages including, the Safety Cove Retreat at Port Arthur (\$50 million), Island State Resort near

Hobart (\$100 million), Burnie International Hotel (\$9 million), Kabuki Motel and Japanese Restaurant, Swansea (\$1.5 million). Developers are conscious of the need to complete projects in harmony with the environment particularly where wilderness attractions are concerned.

Bass Strait has always served as a barrier to tourists visiting the State. However, with regular air services and the well established *Abel Tasman* car ferry, this obstacle has been overcome. On the horizon, new services are being considered with the replacement of the *Abel Tasman* for a larger vessel and the introduction of a new catamaran service.

New Bass Strait Ferry

A contract was signed to build a \$16 million high-speed Bass Strait ferry to connect George Town and Port Welshpool in Victoria.

The 350-passenger, 80-vehicle ferry, to be built by International Catamarans, is expected to be operating by late 1990.

The revolutionary 40-knot wave-piercing catamaran is expected to provide a \$35 million a year boost to the State's tourism industry with the service providing an extra 250 000 passenger seats annually into Tasmania.

The Strait crossing will be cut to 4 hours, leaving George Town at 8 am and arriving at Port Welshpool, two hours drive from Melbourne, before noon.

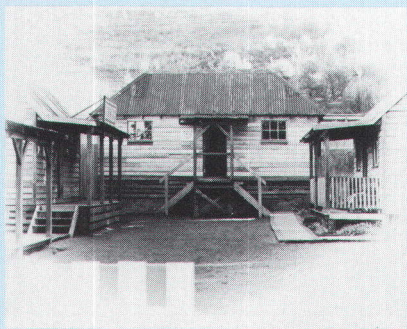
Fares are expected to be about half that of an economy air fare and motor vehicle costs are expected to be about 80 per cent of those charged by TT-Line on the *Abel Tasman*.

Tasmanian tourism has continued to grow through the eighties and will provide an attractive area for investment in new and improved infrastructure.

In October 1990 deregulation of the domestic airlines will see significant changes in the airline services to the State. Whilst there is variation in opinion as to how this will affect the operation of the tourism industry, the overall effect on the Australian network will be widespread.

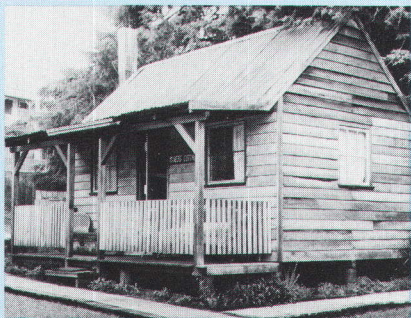
Derby Tin Mine Centre

The Derby Tin Mine Centre, at Derby in north eastern Tasmania is a museum and mining town re-creation. More than a century ago the area attracted adventurers and immigrants; some were drawn by the discovery of tin while others came to farm the rich land in the area. The discovery of tin sparked the growth of booming townships, many of which virtually faded back into the bush when the boom passed.



The Shanty Town.

At the Centre the old school houses the mining museum, and in the grounds are timber and corrugated iron buildings. Much of the material is original and gathered from the Derby district. There is a miner's cottage, a butcher's shop, general store, blacksmith's shop and a mine office.



Miner's Cottage. Photos: Derby Tin Mine Centre

The Centre captures the atmosphere of last century when thousands of people, many of them Chinese, came to the area to work the mines between 1876 and 1929. The first Chinese reached the district in 1879 and by 1900 Derby had a population of 3000. Today the population is less than 200.

12.3 COUNTRY AND COLONIAL ACCOMMODATION

12.3.1 Country Accommodation

(By Henry Brigden, Secretary of the Country Accommodation Association.)

Tasmania offers visitors a unique holiday experience, combining early history and architecture, natural scenic beauty and wilderness, together with four distinct seasons, each with its own attraction.

Not unnaturally, many first-time visitors try to experience most parts of Tasmania in a few days, staying briefly in different parts of the State. Fortunately, Tasmania offers a range of accommodation choices, which makes such a holiday both possible and successful.

An ever increasing number of visitors has discovered a truly unique range of alternative accommodation throughout the State, which includes a wide range of colonial and historic homes and cottages, many close to either Hobart or Launceston, together with a wide range of holiday accommodation on country properties, host farms and small rural guest houses, spread throughout the State.

This accommodation can be broadly classified as being either in-house, somewhat similar to the now well known English Bed and Breakfast establishments, or as being self-contained, sometimes with meals being available, or possibly also self-catering. These self-contained units vary from being part of the main homestead to being separate cottages or units possibly some distance from the home.

At June 1989, there were approximately 80 such properties in Tasmania licensed to accommodate a small number of visitors. Each is uniquely different, and all offer guests country hospitality.

Country Accommodation offers individuality together with a high standard of comfort and amenities, and personal hospitality, whether in-house or self-contained. Some are situated on large working farms, others are on small acreage, or hobby-farms, some have strong historical associations and all are in fine rural settings, with vistas over the landscape, or

delightful water views, or both. Several are within easy driving distance of major centres and visitor arrival and departure ports. Many offer visitors the opportunity to join in rural activities; all offer the opportunity to sample country living.

While tariffs vary, the average would be between \$45 and \$55 per couple per night (one or two are less or more expensive), and this includes either a cooked country breakfast, or in the case of self-contained and self-catering establishments, the supplies for breakfast. Several also offer long-stay and/or seasonal discounts.

Gateforth Cottage

In the north west, Gateforth Cottage at Black River is a fine example of Country Accommodation. There is a fully equipped self-contained house for guests on a large family farm overlooking the Nut at Stanley. Whether for a night or for a week's total holiday, visitors will be made welcome, and although guests may be fully self-catering, hostess Christine Medwin is happy to supply gourmet meals.

Holly Tree Farm

In the south, Holly Tree Farm, at Middleton, offers in-house bed and breakfast accommodation for up to four persons, in two rooms, each with full en-suite bathroom; a private sitting room, a sun-deck and a large garden overlooking the beautiful D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Bruny Island. Meals featuring home grown produce are a regular feature: intimate fireside dinners for two, for special occasions are a speciality of the house.



Holly Tree Farm

Photo: Henry Brigden

Silver Ridge Retreat and Mountain Valley Cabins

Excellent at any time, but offering guests a taste of Tasmania's mountain wilderness in the winter, are Silver Ridge Retreat, under Mount Roland and close to both Cradle Mountain and Lake Barrington, and Mountain Valley Cabins, at Loongana. Both offer self-contained family accommodation, either self-catering, or with meals provided, by arrangement. All other establishments, in the north west, the north, the north east, the central district, the midlands, the east coast and the south, offer their guests a quality holiday experience, uniquely country Tasmanian, with friendly caring hosts, knowledgeable in their region's special attractions.

A recent survey of guests revealed that in 1988-89, approximately 25 per cent were Tasmanians taking intrastate holidays, 25 per cent were from Victoria, 20 per cent were from New South Wales, 10 per cent were from Queensland, 10 per cent were overseas visitors, four per cent were from each of South Australia and Western Australia, and two per cent were from the Australian Capital Territory.

It is noteworthy that many visitors once they have discovered Country Accommodation, especially many from Victoria, come back repeatedly, having more leisurely holidays, in just one or two regions.

From the small beginning, wholesale package bookings have shown a regular annual increase. In 1987-88 there was a 22 per cent increase over 1986-87: 1988-89 finished in excess of 77 per cent over 1987-88.

Country Accommodation Association

In 1984 a handful of operators, realising the high cost of advertising and the difficulties in effectively marketing their properties to a large market spread throughout Australia as well as overseas combined to advertise in a single brochure. This was followed by a package holiday offered through Tourism Tasmania Travel Centres, throughout Australia.

The Country Accommodation Association has members spread throughout most regions of the State. Next year will see an increase in intrastate and interstate marketing, as well as some overseas promotion, by the Country Accommodation Association. The Association is conscious of the potential to increasingly tap the expanding overseas market, with its unique product.

12.3.2 Colonial Accommodation

(By Lynne Agnew, President, Tasmanian Colonial Accommodation Association.)

Privately owned and operated, the establishments in the Tasmanian Colonial Accommodation Association range from an old sea captain's cottage through coaching inns, convict built barns and convict out-stations, to gracious country mansions and cottages. Like Tasmania itself, all are steeped in history. Each has its own story to tell of ghosts, bushrangers, penal punishments, eccentric past owners or of historic roles in the State's past.

Some of the establishments are set in Tasmania's beautiful country side. Others in historic villages and suburbs, in an apple orchard and on the coast overlooking the sea.

Some cottages are self-contained with their own charming country kitchens and cottage gardens, while others serve traditional breakfasts in their dining rooms. Two establishments have their own licensed restaurants and three have restaurants attached.

To classify as Colonial Accommodation, buildings must pre-date Federation, i.e. 1901, be furnished appropriately and have a colonial ambience. There is a good dispersion of Colonial Accommodation around Tasmania allowing the traveller to do the popular eight day package covering most of the State.

The self-contained cottages attract family groups as they present a less formal and economical type of accommodation while still offering a unique way of seeing the State. However, the majority of people who stay in Colonial Accommodation are couples, often honeymooners, as the establishments offer a charming alternative to conventional accommodation available elsewhere.

Bookings are made directly with the owner, allowing immediate personal contact, or through Tourism Tasmania, TT Line, Ansett, Australian Airlines, Destination Australia or Travel Agents anywhere in Australia.

Some examples of the various establishments around the State include: 'Laughton House', at Stanley, a gracious home with marvellous ocean views; 'The Old Bakery Inn' (1870) in Launceston, originally a bakery with its own superb restaurant; 'Wagner's Cottage' (1860) at Swansea, a two-storey farm cottage of local stone; 'Cas-

cares' (1830) at Koonya on the Tasman Peninsula, a former hospital and officers' quarters situated in an orchard; and 'Waverley Cottage' (1854), a quaint two-storey fairytale cottage with a large open fire situated on the owners' farm at Oatlands.



Waverley Cottage.

Photo: Lynne Agnew

Colonial Accommodation is not only a very successful tourist venture; it is also a very successful business venture and as happens in these cases there is quite a turn over of both tourists and establishments. At the time of printing those mentioned earlier were current financial members of the Tasmanian Colonial Accommodation Association. The Association has 21 members covering 29 establishments (110 units) containing approximately 300 beds throughout the State.

Their occupancy rate is high all year round. One reason for their success is due to the fact that Colonial have a unique product, not only in Tasmania but unique to Australia. They have been operating successfully now for eight years. Newspapers, magazines and books still find Colonial newsworthy, nationally and internationally.

The difference between Colonial and the conventional style of accommodation is that each establishment is small enough to remain personal. The traveller is known by name, not number, the buildings have been individually renovated and decorated by the owners who, in many cases, have done most of the work themselves. This gives the feeling of care and love and atmosphere. The majority have open fires, all have charm, history, individuality, antique warmth, comfort, romance and each is uniquely different.

12.4 TASMANIAN WILDERNESS HOLIDAYS

Tasmania has more of its area than any other Australian State vested in national parks, more than 9000 square kilometres of its total 68 000 square kilometres. Three national parks, the South-West National Park, the Franklin Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park and Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair together are listed on the register of World Heritage. It is here and in the other alpine and wilderness areas that hardy bushwalkers, climbers, rafters and amateur back-packers are able to find a wilderness holiday to suit their requirements as well as their ability.

Tasmania has 14 national parks roughly grouped into coastal, alpine and wilderness. The coastal parks are more popular, offering, in most instances, easy access and a greater variety of facilities.

Asbestos Range National Park on the north coast comprises beaches, coastal hills, a small lagoon, small off-shore islands and heathland and is close to popular holiday resorts. It offers outdoor activities such as, camping, swimming, boating, water-skiing, fishing, bird watching and walking. Camping areas are provided at Bakers Beach and Badger Head while accommodation and visitor facilities are provided at the nearby towns of Port Sorell and Beauty Point.

Freycinet National Park, mid-way on the East Coast is a striking combination of red granite mountains, white sand and crystal clear water. The beaches, boating, fishing, swimming and bushwalking attract many visitors to the area, particularly during the summer. The park has a series of well-defined walks, most of them within the capability of the average visitor. Coles Bay and the nearby towns of Bicheno and Swansea offer accommodation and visitor facilities.

The Ben Lomond National Park, 50 kilometres south east of Launceston, one of Tasmania's two principal ski-fields, is a large alpine plateau, with the highest peak, Legges Tor, rising to 1573 metres. Facilities include an alpine village, the Ben Lomond Creek Inn, which offers a tavern, accommodation, and ski village with ski tows and a public shelter.

Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park in the western Central Highlands is Tasmania's best known national park and is famous for the beauty of its mountains and lakes and for the 85 kilometre walking track from Cradle Valley to Lake St Clair. The park contains numerous highland tarns and lakes, streams and waterfalls and mountain peaks, including Tasmania's highest mountain, Mount Ossa (1617 metres). The overland walk is normally made in four, five or more daily stages, sheltering overnight at one of the 12 basic, unattended huts along the way. Walkers are urged to register with rangers. For those wishing to combine wilderness with comfort the Cradle Mountain Lodge provides chalet-style and self-contained cabin accommodation, a restaurant and tavern with food and petrol sales.

The Franklin-Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park includes the Franklin River, the broad lower reaches of the Gordon, Frenchman's Cap, rain forest and unsurpassed temperate wilderness. The Franklin attracts the hardiest and most experienced, and has a reputation of providing some of the world's best white water rafting. In contrast, The lower Gordon river can be seen from the comfort of cruise boats which leave from the West Coast port of Strahan.

The South-West National Park is Tasmania's largest national park and attracts experienced bushwalkers and climbers from around the world. The park encompasses the majority of Tasmania's temperate wilderness, an area of rugged mountains, dense rain forest, button grass plains, swift flowing rivers and isolated coastline. Although road access to the south-west is limited, excellent views of the surrounding wilderness area can be seen from the road. Sightseeing can also be undertaken by light aircraft. Strathgordon, the only town within the Park has accommodation and visitor facilities, including boat ramps on the shores of Lake Pedder noted for its trout fishing.

12.5 REFERENCES

- ABS Publications Produced by the Tasmanian Office:
Measures of Tasmanian Tourism, 1988, (8637.6)
Tourist Accommodation, Tasmania, (8635.6), quarterly.