



# Destination Visitor Survey Strategic Regional Research – Tasmania

## Community perceptions of the impacts of tourism – Kentish: Summary of results

This report is part of the *Stage 2: Social Impacts of Tourism in Tasmanian Communities* project funded by Tourism Research Australia and supported by Tourism Tasmania and the Kentish Municipality. The study examined the perceptions of Kentish residents towards tourism within their community during the period February to March 2010.

A quantitative research method was used, based on a refined version of a questionnaire that had been developed and used previously in a range of destinations. The questions related to general impressions of tourism and a number of specific tourism impact statements.

The study used a three phased method to collect data. In the first phase, a postcard notifying residents of the survey was sent to a sample of households within Kentish Municipality. The second phase of the study was the distribution of the questionnaire; this was followed up in the third phase with a reminder postcard. An online version of the questionnaire was also made available for completion.

Kentish Municipality is on the North West Coast of Tasmania and it has a population of just over 6,000. Since 1996, the population has steadily grown and indications are that it will continue to rise at the highest rate of all the Councils on the North West Coast. About one third of the population is in the towns of Railton and Sheffield, with the balance being spread across smaller townships and farming areas.

A total of 256 responses were received from local residents out of a sample household population of 2,587. This represents a 10% response rate. There were substantially more female respondents than male in the survey sample and the most common age group was 40–59 years (49%) followed closely by the 60 and over category (41%). With regard to the length of residency, four in ten had lived in the Kentish Municipality for over 20 years or their whole life (40%). The majority of respondents owned their homes (88%).



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**Table 1 Characteristics of Kentish Municipality respondents**

		%
Gender	Male	37
	Female	63
Age group	18–39 years	10
	40–59 years	49
	60 years plus	41
Years of residence	Less than 2 years	8
	2–5 years	17
	6–10 years	18
	11–20 years	17
	More than 20 years	28
	All my life	12
Place of birth	Within 50km of Kentish	31
	Elsewhere in Tasmania	19
	Elsewhere in Australia	26
	In another country	24
Education	Less than Year 10	11
	Completed Year 10	22
	Completed Year 12	9
	Trade qualification	13
	Technical college/TAFE	20
	Undergraduate degree	10
	Postgraduate degree	11
	Other	3
Living arrangements	Own home, live there permanently	88
	Rent home in Kentish	7
	Own holiday home in Kentish	1
	Other	5

The results from the survey in Kentish Municipality indicate a weaker level of support for tourism at a personal level and a very high level of support for the impact of tourism on the community as a whole. In relation to the personal level, the main reason for the weaker level of support was the fact that 41% of respondents indicated that tourism had no impact on their personal quality of life. Only just over 10% of respondents reported any negative impact on their personal quality of life, which does not indicate any substantive problems.

In comparing the responses from Kentish Municipality to those from more developed tourism destinations, it can be seen that issues such as overcrowding and damage to the environment are perceived more negatively in these other communities. For respondents in Kentish Municipality, tourism is perceived as providing interesting things to do and an economic injection for the community. On the downside, tourism is seen to pose some problems for the environment and potentially add to delinquent behaviour, but these impacts are lower than have been found for other communities.

The results indicate that respondents were favourably disposed towards tourism although most felt that tourism is currently not of great significance for the region.

## First impressions of tourism

One of the first questions asked of each respondent was their impression of tourism. These responses were coded according to themes. The most common themes were:

- Tourism and the environment – this theme focused on tourist behaviour such as littering and damage to the environment through their visitation to the built and natural environments. There were also general comments that, when thinking of tourism, the image of sharing the towns and nature with visitors and the beauty of the area came to mind (46%).
- The key attractions in Kentish Municipality such as the murals. This theme was often presented with the words such as ‘murals’, ‘country landscape’ and ‘nature’ (36%).
- The economic benefits of tourism. Respondents included the employment opportunities and the benefits to local businesses (25%).
- People (activity, crowding). This theme presented positive and negative impressions. The activity made the Municipality lively and dynamic but tourists also led to crowding of roads and difficulties in obtaining parking spaces (13%).

## Contact with tourists and preferences for growth

Respondents were asked various questions relating to their contact with tourists, their feelings about tourists, and their preferences for future tourism development.

- The majority of Kentish Municipality respondents said they liked tourists (62%), while a large proportion of the minority were happy to tolerate tourists (28%).
- With regard to contact with tourists, almost half the respondents (47%) reported that they ‘see tourists around but don’t usually speak to them’.
- Over a quarter of respondents (28%) stated they had met tourists around town and talked to them, while only 2% of the respondents reported that they ‘never come into contact with tourists’.

When asked about development preferences:

- The majority of Kentish Municipality respondents were happy to see continued tourism growth (66%) along current lines, while a further 19% thought that future growth was needed, although it should be focused in a different direction.
- Fewer than 3% expressed a desire for less tourism.
- With regard to general population growth in the region, 43% were happy to see continued growth along current lines, while 35% wanted to see more population growth, but only if accompanied by the development of new facilities.

## Impacts of tourism

Respondents were asked to rate the overall impact of tourism on their personal quality of life. Nearly half (49%) rated tourism as having a positive impact, 10% indicated that tourism had a negative impact and 41% stated that there was no impact. The overall mean rating for the impact of tourism on personal quality of life was 0.85 on a scale that ranged from -3 to +3. Although this rating is not particularly high, this outcome is due mainly to the large percentage of respondents who indicated tourism had no impact on them rather than due to concerns regarding negative impacts. Other Tasmanian communities have obtained ratings of 0.10 (Bruny Island), 0.67 (Break O’Day), 0.82 (Glenorchy), 0.88 (Dorset), 0.94 (Richmond), 1.12 (King Island) and 1.22 (Flinders Island).

Following this, respondents were asked about the impact of tourism on the community as a whole. About 94% of respondents rated the impact as positive with only 5% indicating that this impact was negative. The overall mean rating for the effect on the community as a whole was 2.28, which is the strongest result recorded among Tasmanian communities. Aside from Kentish, scores have ranged from 1.06 (Bruny Island) to 2.06 (King Island).

## Specific impacts

Overall, the results show very strong support for the positive impacts of tourism such as having interesting things to do, the benefits from staging events and the influence on improving or keeping facilities well maintained. Each of the specific positive impacts listed in the questionnaire was perceived more positively for the community as a whole than for the individual. This was particularly so for economic benefit which was perceived as being substantially greater for the community than the individual. Concern for the impact of delinquent behaviour and damage to the environment were equally evident at both the individual and community levels.

This summary is extracted from research conducted by Tourism Research Australia and supported by Tourism Tasmania and the Municipality of Kentish. For the full Strategic Regional Research Report, please email [tourism.research@ret.gov.au](mailto:tourism.research@ret.gov.au).

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