

Kangaroo Island Tourism Roundtable

Convened: 16th January 2020

The session on Kangaroo Island was highly productive with a number of themes emerging. These themes have been documented below along with the specific priorities under each theme.

Marketing / driving demand

- Ensure that marketing messages are positive and focus on recovery, renewal and safety as well as what is left rather than what has been lost.
- Use imagery to provide evidence for messaging.
- Ensure messaging is consistent and highly visible.
- SATC to take a lead on providing key messages to operators through provision of factsheets and direct support in conjunction with KITFWBA.
- Leverage interstate and intrastate potential to replace lost international in the short to medium term.
- Tailor different messages to different international markets. SATC to work with operators to ensure that their product is tailored to appeal to different markets. Operators to work with trade partners and the SATC to promote these offerings.
- Work with Tourism Australia to lead international messaging with highly visible messages pushing a recovery focus and also the story of the bush evolution from a fire.
- Consider inclusion of the indigenous story.
- Publicly celebrate wins – fires extinguished, roads opening, operators reopening, parks opening etc.
- Focus on the recovery of wildlife and promoting what is still there.

Alternative/ supplemental offerings

- Identify and develop experiences to supplement the ones impacted (i.e. Chapman River and soft trails).
- Fast track alternative visitor experiences with a focus on nature-based experiences and quick wins. Look for opportunities where tweaking of existing infrastructure could create a new experience and opportunity for the operators and visitors.
 - Education to operators on these new experiences to add into tour itineraries.
- Consider incorporating actions to assist recovery by visitors as part of their experience.
- Identify, maintain and promote remaining luxury accommodation and product.
- Supplement itineraries with replacement experiences that can be achieved for the same fees – may need to adjust fees to achieve this.
- Incorporate the fire recovery into the tourism experience.
- Consider how we might be able to tell more of a heritage story as this is currently under-indexed.

Operator support

- Provide support to operators to extend their offerings or build capacity through mentoring, product development and presence at relevant events etc.
- Consider longer term impact on businesses from developing short term solutions.
- Maximising the capacity of operators still offering visitor experiences – build and increase servicing capacity. Increased flexibility in offerings and delivery.
- Minimise the impact on indirect tourism providers – especially small business.
- Ensure continued inclusion of those not directly involved with tourism agencies.
- Operators to engage with state agencies for assistance when needed.

Information provision

- Visitor information Centre is needed to replace lost assets and provide a “single source of truth” and centralised information dissemination. Need for improvement of information provision both on- and off-island.
- Develop a portal providing wildlife and habitat recovery information and updates – particularly around Parks assets, so that operators have the right information to be able to share with visitors.
- Provide and understanding of timings for re-opening access to keystone attractions and expediting this.
- Operators to make contact with all forward bookings to mitigate cancellation risk and build confidence in the offered experience. Have some consistency around cancellation policy on the island amongst operators.

Improve when replacing assets

- Identify opportunities to improve infrastructure when replacing.
- Parks infrastructure improvement suggestions:
 - Rocky River carpark access across road;
 - Purpose built assets;
 - Potential to leverage fire management outcomes for tourism (i.e. using created fire breaks as ongoing access points);
 - Create community through the strategic placement of replaced staff housing;
 - Signage improvements;
 - Using technology to improve experience (i.e. using augmented reality to engage with shipwrecks);
 - Incorporate or create touring routes;
 - Design trails as loop trails to maximise the sense of being in the “wilderness” (i.e. not passing people coming the other way);
 - Consider all markets including self-drive;
 - Incorporate pull-off areas for safe wildlife viewing;

- Review the actions identified in the Regional Visitor Strategy to identify opportunities for improvements when rebuilding.

Financial pressures

- Immediate cash flow issues.
- Reducing taxes/ costs to assist with recovery.
- Minimise red tape barriers and impost to assist in adaptation/ rebuilding.

Workforce

- Retaining skills on KI.
- Be mindful of the risk of losing volunteers (particularly for events) given fatigue and competing commitments.

Access

- Expedite any discussions with Qantas and Regional Express for additional flights i.e. direct from Sydney. Potentially brand as recovery flights.
- Investigate potential for discounts to travel and access by both sea and air.

Innovative ideas to assist recovery

- Potential to tell an evolving story of the fires through a novel pop-up style event/experience dedicated to experiencing the recovery.
 - Eg evening experiential light shows
- Build a library of stunning imagery. Consider a competition to build this. Incorporate art into the landscape to tell the story.
- Use “Instagram” frames to encourage people to take the same image at multiple points in time to show the recovery of the scenery and wildlife.
- Consider development of new two-star accommodation to cover the gap that was existing in offer prior to the fire.

Other suggestions

- There is a need for new money for state agencies to assist in the recovery.
- Look at other areas that have recovered from natural disaster and incorporate learnings into the recovery.
- Recognise the longer-term opportunity to educate and off-set future fire events.
- Demonstrate use of consumer insight and evidence base for decisions around targeting media.
- Be proud of product and confident in delivery. Avoid defaulting to discounting to attract visitors.
- Leverage any existing upcoming events (such as the KI Cup) and use the broadcast and /or media to illustrate the unaffected areas and the recovery.
- Address quality of roads to access alternative sites/experiences.
- Explore touring route options for the self-drive market around the island.