

### The why.

Delivery of the project is part of the THA's Hospitality 2030 Plan and is supported by the Tasmanian Government through the Department for State Growth. THA and Sprout Tasmania have partnered on this project. The THA is committed to supporting their members and the broader hospitality sector to have easy access to Tasmanian produce and has funded this project as a first step. This is clearly articulated in the Tasmanian Hospitality Industry 2030 Plan.

Goal 3 – Hospitality and the Tasmanian Brand – Tasmanian Produce Is at The Heart of Our Businesses

*"Visitors to our island state are looking for that authentic Tasmanian experience. This includes the provenance of the food, wine and beverages being offered – they are looking to "taste Tasmania". Importantly, they are looking for that very local experience, to enjoy what the locals enjoy. As an industry we must therefore focus on our local producers and providers and be proactive in promoting what Tasmania has to offer, while at the same time matching our venues with our local suppliers. This also represents an important benefit to local regions, increasing demand and therefore supporting regional jobs."*

### The how.

The project was designed to better understand how we can make it easier for Tasmanian cafes, pubs and restaurants to source, serve and promote Tasmanian food by understanding the challenges and identifying possible solutions to explore further.

#### Key stakeholders for gathering information and perspectives

- Food service – restaurants, pubs, and cafes – chefs and managers/owners.
- Tasmanian wholesalers for fresh ingredients (for e.g., fruit and vegetables, protein).
- Education sector – TasTAFE, VXT.org.au, school curriculum (Food and hospitality teachers).

### PROJECT TIMELINES AND OUTPUTS

- JUL** • project planning, hospitality survey, research, design, and testing.
- AUG** • Hospitality /food service survey was launched on 19th August; wholesaler interviews and education/curriculum scan commenced.
- SEP** • food service and education sector interviews; develop café, pub, and restaurant, wholesaler and education case studies identified.
- OCT** • Survey results shared with participants and other key stakeholders. Stakeholder interviews finalised. Case studies developed and project report drafted.
- NOV** • report finalised and disseminated

## What did the hospitality sector tell us?

Challenges, motivations and benefits to buying Tasmanian ingredients

#### TOP 5 CHALLENGES

- 62% Higher costs
- 53% Limited availability
- 47% Inconsistent supply
- 41% Seasonal variability
- 33% Lack of contacts to buy from

#### TOP 5 MOTIVATIONS

- 89% Supporting Tasmanian growers and producers
- 80% Freshness and quality
- 80% Supporting the Tasmanian economy
- 52% Environmental sustainability
- 48% Unique flavours and varieties

#### CHANNELS FOR BUYING INGREDIENTS



1 IN 4 said lack of information about what is available and 1 in 5 said lack of information about seasonality were challenges

NEARLY 40% said customer demand was a motivator, as was reducing food miles 47%.

The size, type and location of the venue did not influence these choices.

#### TOP 5 IMPACTS

- 75% Improved quality of food
- 73% Positive customer feedback
- 68% Improved freshness

- 63% Enhanced reputation
- 51% Increased costs

1/3 said it increased complexity in menu planning

1 IN 5 reduced food waste

# 93%

of participants would like to use MORE Tasmanian produced ingredients

### What did the hospitality sector tell us? (cont.)

Participants would like to buy more:



**72%**  
Seasonal vegetables



**64%**  
Fish and seafood



**62%**  
Seasonal fruit



**50%**  
Beef



**49%**  
Cheese



**46%**  
Milk and cream



**45%**  
Deli items



**37%**  
Lamb/Hogget



**36%**  
Pork



**38%**  
told us more...

We asked participants to tell us more about their answers and buying Tasmanian produced ingredients and products. We analysed their feedback, and these are the key themes:

Some feel they have a lack of knowledge about what is available, who to get it from and seasonality.

Some would like to know more about the source of food they buy through wholesalers and retail outlets.

They feel they need more time to plan and source Tasmanian.

There is a disconnect between what is available and harvested locally and what can be used – particularly for fish (fresh and saltwater).

Pricing and managing costs impact choices.

Where you are located makes a difference to what is available directly and through wholesalers and retailers – this can be positive and negative.

Tourism and local government are key stakeholders in future solutions.

Solutions will simplify and connect producers, suppliers and buyers.

## What did wholesalers tell us

–about perceptions of existing demand; challenges to source and supply more Tasmanian sourced produce and products; and what would make it easier to source more from within Tasmania?

### DEMAND

- Often kitchens are buying Tasmanian product without even necessarily knowing or specifying.
- Hospitality values local and want to buy local, but it often doesn't translate to action due to cost and lack of availability.
- Kitchens infrequently specify Tasmanian with the exception of bigger hospitality groups.
- Wholesalers want consistent supply and are happy to purchase from all scales of producers/processors.
- Some wholesalers supplying local is at the heart of their ethos/value proposition.
- Different customers groups have different needs.

### CHALLENGES

- Sufficient supply, seasonal variation, volumes.
- It is hard to know who is growing what, what is available, and when.
- Identifying local on invoices is hard due to constant new stock from multiple suppliers; contrasted with some wholesalers do this routinely.
- Food safety and HACCP, for e.g., accreditation of suppliers
- Finding/connecting with local suppliers takes time.
- As a state we export a lot. More could be kept in Tasmania if we prioritised it and had the systems in place.

### MAKING LOCAL SOURCING EASIER

- Activities that connect buyers and sellers – via online, trade shows and better marketing and promotion of what is available and the story behind the products/produce.
- Trust, good relationships, sufficient supply.
- For F & V buying more within Tasmania is preferred as the biosecurity treatment shortens shelf-life and increases waste.
- Freight and F & V biosecurity treatments costs make Tasmanian produce price competitive.
- Growing demand should grow the products available.

## What did the education\* sector tell us

–about the flexibility of curriculum to teach about Tasmanian seasonality and sourcing; how is it included; and what would make it easier to teach about how to use and produce Tasmanian ingredients?

**FLEXIBILITY OF CURRICULUM** – does allow teaching about Tasmanian produces and products and seasonality; often dependent on the passion and knowledge of the teacher

**CAN BE INCLUDED** in theory and practical skills/competency sessions

**MAKING IT EASIER TO TEACH** – developing resources for use in classrooms, planning; connection with producers and processors via tours or in class visits; working collaboratively with the hospitality sector

\*secondary, TAFE, private college

## What are the next steps?

Invest in working with key stakeholders to undertake feasibility research, planning and testing to support the Tasmanian hospitality sector to serve more seasonal locally focussed menus/dishes through increasing the availability, knowledge about and/or visibility of seasonal Tasmanian food.

### OBJECTIVES

- 1 Consolidate and/or create Tasmanian produce and products seasonality data sources and work with end users (hospitality, wholesalers, and education/training) to create usable resources/guides (downloadable, online, searchable) for seasonality
- 2 Conduct further market research with chefs and education/training around menu development and procurement behaviours to inform future approaches
- 3 Explore wholesaler operability and feasibility of seasonal sourcing
- 4 Develop and deliver a communications and engagement plan to build skills and knowledge around seasonality for target sectors
- 5 Develop evidence-based recommendations and a longer-term project model/plan based on the lessons from this feasibility phase.





## CASE STUDY

# Stanley Hotel Bistro

North West Tasmania local food champions



*“Up here good produce is what we have grown up with. We don’t take it for granted, but you always know and can find someone producing good quality food... Making a profit is a fine line, but our philosophy is use fresh, local ingredients, keep it simple, let them shine and you can balance your costs”*



### What do customers say?

*“The feedback is terrific - they love our commitment and can taste the difference... what they get from us is what they have been looking for on their trip to North West Tasmania”*

The award-winning Stanley Hotel Bistro offers the North West of Tasmania’s best steaks and fresh locally caught and harvested seafood. When they first bought the business, it was ‘freezer to the fryer kitchen’ - but this was not the owner’s vision - so they scrapped the menu and started again. The change was also driven by their customers who when they are visiting a fishing port like Stanley expect to be eating freshly caught local seafood.

Over the last 20 years the Bistro has increasingly sourced more and more ingredients locally - Cape Grim Beef, locally caught lobster, Tarkine Oysters (which they collect and shuck in house), value added products like marinated octopus, locally made bread, kimchee and cheeses, “seasonal berries still warm from the sunshine”, free range eggs, and freshly dug potatoes - for example. Over the years the local producers have become their friends. They continue to also work with their wholesale suppliers, so they know how important using Tasmanian sourced ingredients is to the Bistro.

While the menu is fairly static across the year their daily and weekly specials allow them to profile what’s in season in the region.

### Advice to other hospitality businesses

- get to know your suppliers - they are certainly out there and its good for your region to support other local businesses
- work with your wholesale suppliers to move towards local sourcing - they need to know it’s important to you
- visit your local farmers market to find fresh and value-added products to include on your menu
- Use your specials to highlight what’s local and in season.



## CASE STUDY

### Waterloo Inn Swansea - a regional pub with a drive for all things local.



“We felt like there was a shortage of venues in the East Coast region responding to the call for local food. We are both not from this area, and wanted to do a restaurant that spoke to the seasons and showcased this amazing part of Tassie. We wanted to do something different. We are all about delicious food, not beautiful food.

We wanted to honour their hard work and source direct from Tasmanian small-scale business and have this money flowing back to the community.



#### For our customers

“Some people didn’t understand why we had a dish with just tomatoes. We would encourage them to try it. Then, when you saw the shock on their face, when they tasted it...it’s pretty good to see. People are shocked at the amazing flavour of such simple ingredients.”

Established in 2020, Zac and Alex knew they wanted to do something different on the East Coast. Waterloo Swansea serves up modern Australian bistro food, giving customers a seasonal dining experience. Sourcing food to this region of Tassie has its challenges and so a combination of building relationships with smallscale producers as well as using wholesalers when they needed to was necessary for their consistency of supply. Building these relationships takes time, yet is enjoyable too. Logistics and consistency of supply were their key challenges.

Planning their menu started with building an index of what dishes they cooked and when, and this was then revisited the following year and tweaked accordingly. They also made the decision to close during August, where traditionally there is a ‘hunger gap’ in produce and customer numbers are low.

They have built skills in preserving, dehydrating, storage, nose to tail butchery, portion sizes, all to ensure financial viability and reduction in waste. Learning to have the confidence to portion dishes and price them appropriately was key to making this kind of menu work for them. Having a one-chef kitchen meant keeping things simple, and making the produce be the champion.

#### Advice to other hospitality businesses

- Build good relationships with both suppliers and transporters.
- Remember, not all customers care about local, but still do it!
- Factor your time into the cost of source local produce.
- Just do it! It is so rewarding and your customers will be blown away by the flavour of the produce.



## CASE STUDY

### Grain of the Silos - a produce driven, European inspired restaurant.

“Customers love to know where their product is coming from, some will even go and visit the farms. We have an open kitchen and so naturally people interact and ask questions - where is this coming from, why are we cooking it that way, from what part of the animal is this meat coming from?”

People love to have a conversation, love to hear the story and interact with the staff. A lot of people keep coming back for that aspect.”



The Grain of the Silos (Grain) Head Chef Thomas Pirker explains that the primary reason for sourcing local produce is a personal belief for him and the way he was trained in Europe. It was obviously Executive Chef Massimo Mele’s vision for the restaurant, which Thomas shares and the restaurant’s reputation for using fresh, high quality produce has been consistent over the years.

For Grain, the benefits of dealing directly with farmers include better product quality, community connection, and direct financial support to farmers. Grain work hard to build connections with producers, understand their growing cycles, visit their farms and ask questions about their practices on farm. Building trust in this relationship is key. Taking pride in the farmers’ products once it is in their kitchen always translates to better quality final dishes. Creativity is key in the kitchen; using all the produce from nose to tail, or tip to root by way of fermenting, pickling, preserving and freezing allows for flexibility in menu planning during the offseason of various produce. They work on a six-week seasonal cycle for their menu.

Finding volume of produce is sometimes difficult and means working with multiple providers of the one product.

#### For our customers

“At the end of the day, if you come to the restaurant, you can taste it, and we get positive comments still, after five years, that the food tastes better. I am convinced it’s because of the product; it is straight from the farm, no middle man, it hasn’t travelled for weeks.”

#### Advice to other hospitality businesses

- Build the relationships with producers
- Keep your menu simple
- Map out your menu over the year, locking in produce you know you can get and when, then fill in the gaps as you go on.
- Believe in yourself and be open to feedback
- Chat to other chefs who are sourcing local to get advice





## CASE STUDY

### Hamlet Café - a social enterprise with its values on the menu.

“Sourcing local was important to us when we first started... the whole concept of Hamlet is about supporting the community, and we want to do that in a number of ways, obviously, through the charitable side of the work we do, but also through building those connections and supporting small -scale suppliers.

Generally, we have to do less work to make it delicious, because it's delicious when it walks through the door, you don't really have to work as hard for it.”



#### For our customers and staff

“We build really good relationships with the small-scale producers and when we put a dish on that has their produce, we explain that at the table. We also have the relationship so that we can go and do tours out at their farms with our staff and training participants. “

The Hamlet chef plans with producers who are suppliers to ensure they have what they need - quantities and types of produce that work well on the menu. Using the smallscale producers who produce a wide variety of produce does make the menu planning a more interesting and creative process. In adapting the menu for what's in season, hamlet has a dish, like their buck wheat galette that is on the menu all year, but the vegetables change each season and sometimes even weekly.

The Hamlet Team preserve fruit and vegetables during times when there is abundant supply extending the seasons on the menu and having a pantry of products to use across the year. This started during COVID and is now an important part of their training program. Last summer, Hamlet preserved two and a half tons of berries and stone fruit between January and March.

Hamlet have found buying from small-scale local suppliers may cost a bit more, but it's much better quality and in terms of the wastage, it is far less. Hamlet's experience is that the shelf life much longer and it tastes better!

#### Advice to other hospitality businesses

- Build the supplier relationships over time - start with one or two to get started
- You don't have to change your whole menu, start with a dish
- Writing a menu when you rely on local seasonal ingredients can be easier and more interesting

