

# The Tasmania Project

Share your experience during COVID-19.



Photo: Tourism Tasmania and Chris Crerar.

## Social restrictions: community, recreation and travel

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The Tasmania Project has found that there a wide variety of activities and services that Tasmanians miss participating in. Often these activities have a social component, suggesting that loss of connection with community and loved ones is significant, alongside the loss of the activity itself.

Interviewees also reported that travel bans had significantly impacted their travel plans, including plans to spend time with distant friends and family. This suggests that travel bans are not only impacting upon tourism and related industries, but is also likely to be affecting how Tasmanians connected with the significant people in their lives.

### Key findings

- Three-fifths of interviewees discussed the services and activities that they miss participating in.
- The activities and services that Tasmanians miss varies widely, often involving social connections with friends and the wider community.
- However, far fewer survey respondents chose such activities as the restrictions they would like to see lifted first, when compared with those who selected restrictions such as access to national parks or having more than two household visitors at a time.
- One third of participants discussed cancelled or postponed travel plans, including significant life circumstances such as a wedding, fly-in fly-out work arrangements, and moving to Melbourne for employment
- Of the participants who discussed changed travel plans, around half had plans in place to spend time with family and friends which will now not happen.





Photo: Ksenia Chemaya, Pexels

## Social restrictions, community, and recreation

Due to social distancing measures, there are many activities that Tasmanians have been unable to participate in. Many interviewees discussed the wide variety of activities and services that they are currently missing, such as eating out, visiting the cinema, community sports, participating in bands, choirs, and theatre, Landcare meetings, visiting libraries, and meeting with a lapidary club. Many of these activities involve socialising with others, and interviewees indicated that they missed the chance to connect with others through these activities. However, survey responses indicate that Tasmanians do not feel a sense of urgency regarding these activities. When asked to choose up to five restrictions they would like to see lifted first, 19% of respondents selected shopping, while 14% chose dining in restaurants and cafes. This is far below options such as lifting restrictions on national parks, reserves and beaches (69%), or capping household visitors to two people at a time (56%).

As reported by The Tasmania Project's [Report 4](#), many Tasmanians are using technology in new and different ways to maintain contact with others. However, many activities are not able to be replaced with telecommunication. A few participants also indicated that some groups have not adopted new forms or uses of technology during the pandemic. One interviewee described the impact on a community committee, saying that she could not imagine the group using technology like Zoom. Another participant voiced frustration at being unable to visit the library, suggesting that libraries could offer low-contact services similar to takeaway food stores.

## Changing travel plans

Alongside these activities, the interstate and international travel plans of Tasmanians have also been affected. Around one-third of interview participants discussed cancelled and/or postponed travel plans. For a few participants, these changed plans impacted upon significant life events and circumstances. One participant reported that his son's plan to move to Melbourne for work was currently postponed, while another participant was forced to cancel their wedding and honeymoon.

## Travelling to connect

Of those participants who discussed their cancelled and postponed travel, around half described plans which would have seen them spend additional time with distant family and friends. This includes both plans to visit or holiday with others, and plans to have family visit Tasmania.

This suggests that alongside impacts upon tourism and related industries, travel bans are also likely to be affecting the way that Tasmanians connect with their family and friends.

For example, one participant expressed regret about not returning to Melbourne over the Easter break. She suggested that in the future, she would take more opportunities to visit others when it is possible. Another participant described plans to see older family members on mainland Australia, something which he now hopes to do in 2021.

## Where next?

It is important for us to understand what it is that Tasmanians value about community life, and how community connections can be fostered in times of social distancing. Could some community groups benefit from assistance in moving activities online where possible? What factors help Tasmanians feel connected with others in their community, and has COVID19 changed the way that people value these connections?

The economic and cultural impacts of travel bans upon Tasmanian life are understandably at the forefront of concerns about heavily decreased interstate and international travel. It is also necessary for us to consider the social and emotional impacts closed borders might have upon Tasmanians' lives. How are Tasmanians negotiating the postponement of life events such as weddings or employment, or the loss of time spent with distant loved ones? It is likely that these impacts of the pandemic will continue to be felt by many Tasmanians as restrictions in the state begin to ease.

### The Tasmania Project – approach, method and limitations

The Tasmania Project includes a range of approaches and methods to understand how Tasmanians are experiencing and adapting to life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

See a more detailed explanation of the Project's approach and method [here](#).