



# Tasmanian Audit Office

## Expressions of interest for tourism investment opportunities

Report of the Auditor-General  
No.3 of 2020-21

# Welcome and Introductions



**Tasmanian**  
Audit Office

# Objective

**Objective:** The objective of this audit was to assess the effectiveness of the EOI process for the development of sensitive and appropriate tourism experiences and associated infrastructure in Tasmania's national parks, reserves and Crown land by private investors and tourism operators.

# Scope and intended benefits

**Scope:** The scope of the audit was limited to the tourism developments submitted under Round 1 and Round 2 of the EOI process from June 2014 to October 2019, administered by OCG & DPIPWE.

**Intended benefits:** To identify potential lessons and opportunities for improvement concerning the coordination of submissions, governance and administration of the EOI process and its links to RAA process

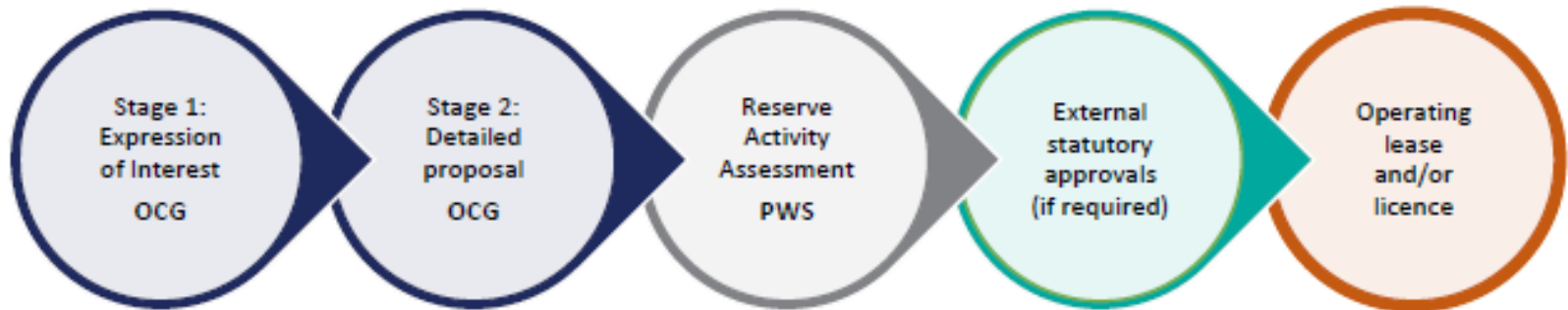
# Conclusion

- The EOI process, as measured against the audit criteria, was in all material aspects implemented and administered effectively and in a manner consistent with the Government's policy objectives.

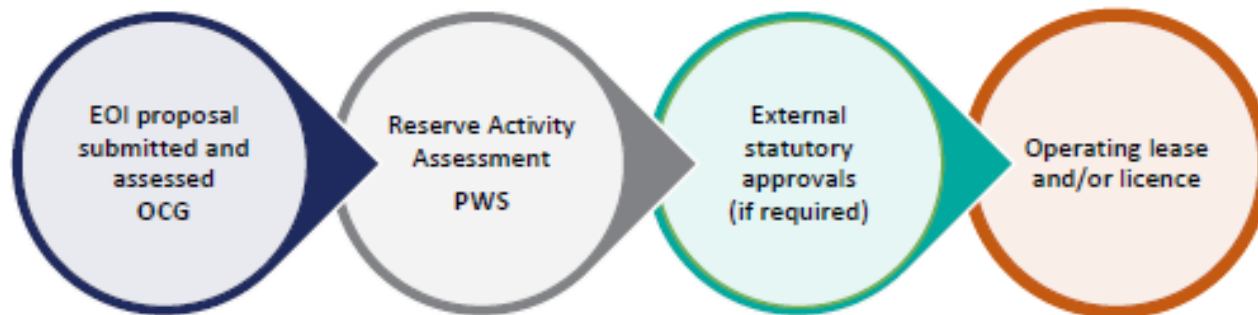
# What is the EOI process?

- EOI process launched in 2014.
- One of the mechanisms by which Government seeks to attract investment in tourism in Tasmania.
- Endeavours to provide a more consistent process for dealing with applications for tourism and community activities in National Parks and on reserved land.
- EOI process was designed to supplement but not replace the existing application and approval systems

Figure 1: Round 1 EOI Process (commenced June 2014, with submissions closed November 2014)

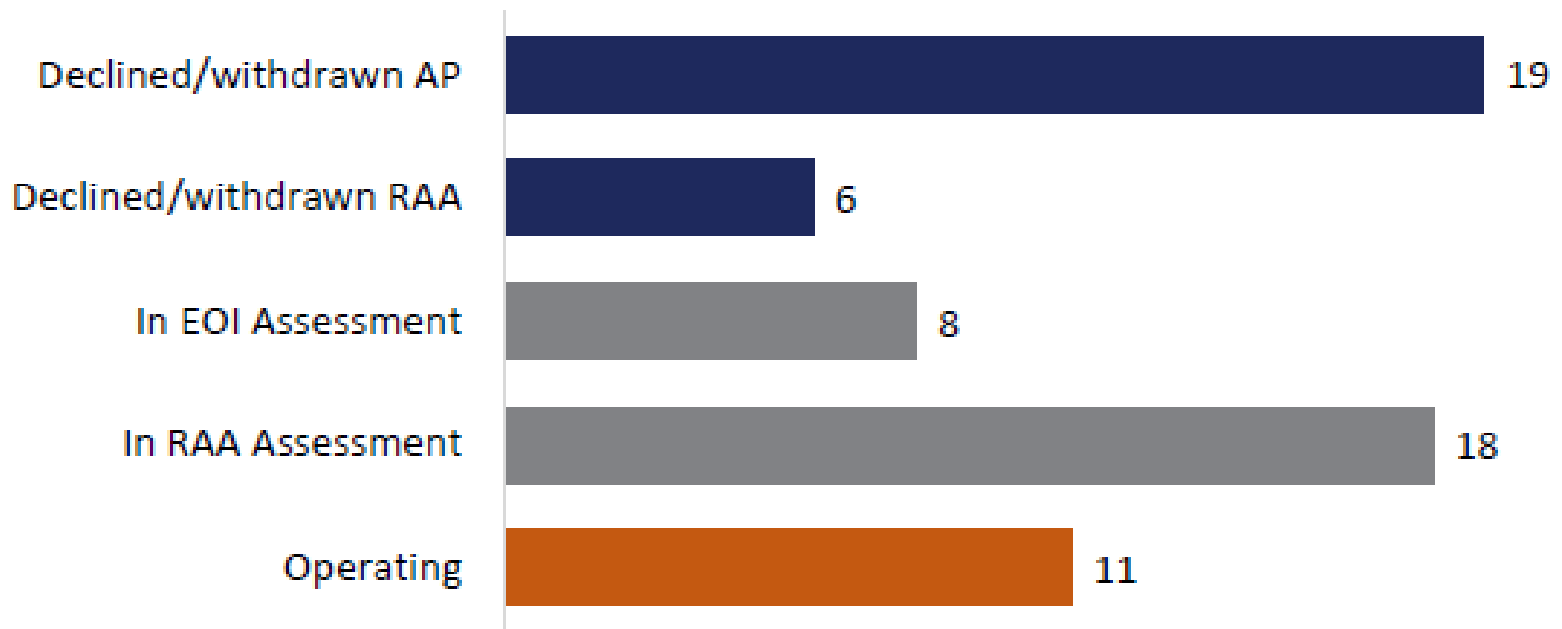


Round 2 EOI Process (commenced November 2016, with no end date)



# Analysis of proposals received

Figure 2. EOI Proposals by Stage of Progress





# Was there an effective governance structure for the whole EOI process?

- Appointment of Assessment Panel members had a narrow focus.
- Probity advisor potential conflict of interest was not adequately addressed.
- Ministerial authority was respected and appropriate communication channels used.

# Were EOI projects appropriately assessed by the EOI Assessment Panel?

- Assessment criteria and guiding principles were appropriate.
- Job creation was not a core focus of EOI assessments of proposals.
- Transparency of the EOI process was reasonable.
- Advice from Solicitor-General's was not sought.
- Administration of assessment process was robust.
- There was significant variation in the quality of proposals.
- Documents should provide greater awareness of the subsequent process post EOI assessment.

# Were EOI projects appropriately assessed by the EOI Assessment Panel?

- Assessment criteria and scoring methodology could be improved.
- Previously rejected assessments were not raised although they were relevant to the EOI process.
- External advice was appropriately sought and considered, including external reviews.
- Round 2 of the EOI process provides rigour to applications and is now effectively business as usual.

# Were EOI projects appropriately assessed by the PWS and approved by the relevant authority?

- RAA process was adhered to by PWS.
- PWS document management system was inadequate.
- RAA is not geared to deal with more complex proposals received through EOI.
- Stakeholder consultation proponent driven.
- Effective licence/lease negotiation processes are in place.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes should be better documented.

# Recommendations

We made ten recommendations to assist OCG & DPIPWE in strengthening the EOI and RAA processes..

- Explore and implement options for improving the format and structure of stakeholder consultation.
- Increase the rigour of the public consultation as part of the RAA process to improve the level of transparency or objectivity.
- Make stronger guidance available to potential proponents which more clearly outlines the process beyond the EOI stage.
- Modify the Assessment Panel Evaluation Report to improve alignment with each of the seven guiding principles.
- Review the composition of the EOI Assessment Panel, specifically to obtain broader representation of community stakeholders.

# Recommendations

- Seek advice from the Solicitor-General, as part of the EOI assessment process, to enhance legal understanding, mitigate risks and provide insight.
- Exclude the contractor appointed to provide the Probity Advisor role from providing any external advice to avoid conflicts of interest.
- Include a question on the EOI application form as to whether the proposal has been previously put forward.
- PWS better document RAA post-approval reviews and ongoing monitoring of leases and/or licences.
- Assess the extent to which operating proponents have achieved their objectives.

**Thank You**



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