



Roads less travelled around the Tamar

by Damien Thomas

Early morning, when it is still cool and crisp, is the best time to stroll along the boardwalk to the island in the middle of the river Tamar, in Launceston, aptly named **Tamar Island Wetlands**. Renowned to be the lungs and kidneys of river systems, wetlands clean the water entering the river naturally. As the sun rises and the mists lift up from this ethereal landscape, the sound of over 60 different species of birds welcome you to the place they call home. It is also the home of a small green and yellow frog which is, unfortunately, now on the endangered list. Entry is free, although a donation is expected. There are hides from which you may observe the birds without them observing you. Photographers armed with just a mobile phone are equally at home as those with long lenses in this area. Not only are there so many different birds to capture in their natural environment, but also the landscape is remarkably photogenic filled with lush, tall reeds, flowing water and hills in the background.

A visit to the **Seahorse Farm** at 200 Flinders Street, Beauty Point, 45 minutes north of Launceston, is a wondrous event. It's no wonder it won a Gold Tourism award. The

Lake Dove, the historic boat shed and the iconic Cradle Mountain

45-minute guided tours are the way to go. You will learn the difference between a seahorse and a sea dragon amongst other gems of wisdom which come in handy on trivia nights. Most importantly, you will get to see these living pieces of jewellery gliding serenely around, with your own eyes. All age groups come away with smiles.



Sea Dragons at Beauty Point's Seahorse Farm.



Isn't it time to see a platypus in real life?

If you have never seen a platypus or echidna, now is your opportunity to book a tour at **Platypus House & Monotreme Magic**, which are also found at 200 Flinders Street. It's another feel-good experience and the Seahorse Farm, Platypus House and Monotreme Magic are great wet weather options as they are all under cover.

If you have indulged in the **Tamar Chocolate Factory** tour, you will know how chocolate is the answer to everything and hopefully you sampled enough just to confirm the statement is correct! Alternatively, it may have been a 45-minute tour of the **Boags Brewery** that channelled your inner desire to be a brewer, learning about the malts, hops, yeasts and clean fresh Tasmanian water which transform miraculously into premium lagers. I bet you cannot resist sampling a few of the seasonal brews. You can keep that satisfied feeling going even further if you follow it up with a drive north to **Low Head Lighthouse**. It has a commanding view over Bass Strait. Like so many other things around Launceston, it also has a fascinating history, so it is worthwhile considering booking a tour.

“There are now two options for API members staying in Launceston.”

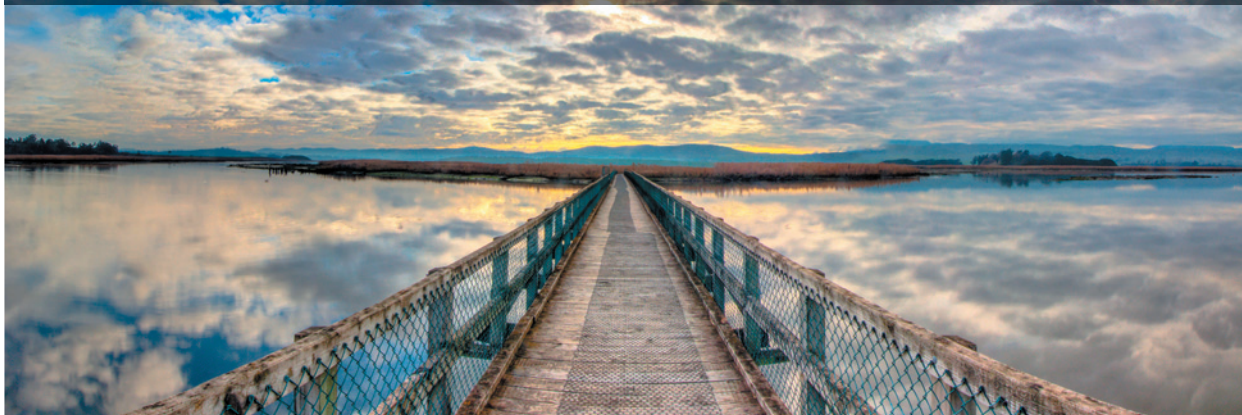
It's only 147 km to **Cradle Mountain**, which could take you a shade over two hours by car. My suggestion is to plan a stop in the delightful township of **Deloraine** either on the way there, or back, or both! A walk around **Lake Dove**, with views of Cradle Mountain in the distance, is a rewarding experience for those used to reasonably long walks. The track is very good, but single file in many places. Stop frequently to look at the reflections on the lake and the surrounding National Park.

There is so much to see and do in and around Launceston, so, whilst you are able to book accommodation in API's properties for less than a week, you get the best value by booking for at least a week. You will not run out of things to do.

Speaking of accommodation, you now have two options in Launceston at API rates. The three bedroom, turn of the century cottage in **Eglington Street** is spacious and comfortable, sleeping up to 6 guests. It also has under cover parking for your car. The other alternative is the three bedroom unit, very centrally located in **York Town Square**. It is a great location for up to 4 to 5 guests, although parking is not quite so easy, so it is the best option if you have left your car behind to explore 'Lonnie' on foot. **API**

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Check out the facilities and book your API holiday online at www.apilifestyle.com.au or call us on **1300 653 322**.



Walk into another world at Tamar Island.