

DISCOVER ROSS:

Heritage by Day, Stars by Night and Magic All Year Round

ROSS REACHES FOR THE STARS: HISTORIC TASMANIAN VILLAGE BIDS FOR DARK SKY STATUS

The tiny Northern Midlands village of Ross, known for its convict – built bridge and charming colonial streetscapes, is now looking to the heavens – quite literally. The township of Ross has officially lodged an application to be a Dark Sky Community, one of only a handful of locations worldwide recognised for their pristine skies. If successful it will be the second Dark Sky Community in Australia, adding new dimension to Tasmania's appeal as a travel destination.

The Northern Midlands long celebrated for fine wine and locally produced food, unspoiled wilderness, and rich heritage. Now the Northern Midlands is shining – or rather dimming – in a new way. The region's naturally dark skies, untainted by the artificial glow of city lights, is fast becoming one of its most valuable assets. "Visitors from the mainland often can't believe what they're seeing," says Nigel Davies, Chair of the Ross Local District Committee. "Visitors from the 'light domes' of Sydney and Melbourne are in awe of our night sky views and, for the first time, see the Milky Way stretching across the heavens. You can't see the night sky from the big cities, there is just too much light pollution. And some lucky visitors to our southern shores may also see a naked eye aurora for the first time."



ABOVE, LEFT: Ross Bridge. RIGHT: Uniting Church at Ross. Photos courtesy of Scott Wilmot Bennett.

The global rise of 'noctourism' – travel focused on night-time experiences such as stargazing, meteor showers, and night wildlife tours is fuelling this movement. Even the BBC has listed 'noctourism' as one of the seven travel trends shaping 2025 and the potential impact on travel destinations worldwide. Davies says Ross has already complete the first stage of the accreditation process and is currently developing a formal lighting policy as required by Dark Sky International, the body responsible for certifying dark sky locations. "There's strong support from our residents and from Northern Midlands Council," he said. "We've even formed a Ross Astronomical Society to host stargazing and astrophotography nights. It's a grassroots effort that's growing quickly." As Tasmania positions itself as a beacon for nocturnal tourism, Ross is leading the way – not with floodlights or fireworks, but with the simple, ancient wonder of a sky full of stars.

TASFAIRE 2025: MAGIC, MAYHEM, AND MERRIMENT IN THE NORTHERN MIDLANDS

The Northern Midlands came alive with enchantment at Ross as the inaugural TasFaire brought crowds flocking to a celebration of fantasy, folklore, and fun. Held for the first time this year, the event was hailed as a resounding success by organisers and attendees alike. A vibrant marketplace formed the heart of the festival, with stallholders offering handcrafted goods, mystical wares, costumes, books, and food and drink that kept visitors browsing and sampling throughout the day.

The atmosphere was lively and welcoming, with something to spark the imagination at every turn. Entertainment was in no short supply, with a packed program that delighted both children and adults. Fairy shows and witch games drew laughter from younger festivalgoers, while older attendees enjoyed the spectacle of sword fighting and fencing demonstrations. The highly anticipated Quest events proved a hit with all ages, inviting participants to solve riddles and complete challenges in a fantasy-themed adventure around the grounds. Adding to the festival's charm were roving musicians and scheduled performances that created a magical soundscape across the venue.

A particular highlight was the costume parade, where attendees showcased their finest fantasy attire. From knights and sorcerers to fairies, elves, and dragons, the creativity on display was outstanding. TasFaire has firmly established itself as a welcome addition to the Northern Midlands' annual calendar of events, celebrating creativity, storytelling, and community in unforgettable style.

TOP LEFT: The Feast at TasFaire (Photo credit Cammie Mile). BOTTOM & RIGHT: Photo credit Olivia Hanslow.



ROSS: A HUB OF COMMUNITY & CREATIVITY

UPCOMING AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES IN ROSS:

- **Cars and Coffee – 3rd Sunday of Every Month, Ross Village Green**
If you missed the Annual Picnic at Ross, there's no need to wait a whole year—car lovers now gather on the third Sunday of each month at the Ross Village Green. Enjoy classic cars, friendly faces, and a good cup of coffee in the heart of the village.
- **Live Action Role Play – 'Call to Arms' Every Month**
The Southern Isle LARP group brings fantasy and storytelling to life at the Old School Oval behind the Ross Town Hall. These family-friendly events offer a unique way to experience performance, play, and camaraderie in an open-air setting. FB Southern Isles LARP
- **Painting Retreats - Riverview at Ross**
Embrace the slower pace with a painting retreat at Riverview at Ross—a peaceful and inspiring location where creativity can flow as freely as the nearby river. Perfect for beginners and experienced artists alike.
- **Basket Making Workshops – Winter Weekend, Riverview at Ross**
Over three weekends this winter, Basketmakers Tasmania will host traditional basket weaving workshops—two beginner sessions followed by one for intermediate weavers. It's a tactile, calming craft that echoes the practices of earlier generations. FB Riverview at Ross
- **Ross Film Society – First Friday of Every Month at the Ross Town Hall**
Step into the charm of the Ross Town Hall as the Film Society presents a curated selection of films for an enjoyable and sociable evening out. To join pls email midlandsfilmsociety@gmail.com
- **Ross Market – 3rd Sunday of Ever at the Ross Town Hall**
The Ross Market continues each Sunday, offering handmade goods, produce, vintage finds, and the kind of warm country atmosphere that makes Ross such a beloved destination.