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Hon R Valentine MLC  
Inquiry Chair  
Government Administration "B" Sub-Committee  
Inquiry into Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania

Sent by email to: [tth@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:tth@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Dear Sub-Committee Chair,

**Submission - Government Administration "B" Sub-Committee Inquiry into Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania**

Glenorchy City Council appreciates the opportunity to make this submission to the Sub-Committee's Inquiry into Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania. This submission has been prepared at officer level by the Council's Manager City Strategy and Heritage Officer.

Tasmania's heritage is an intrinsic part of the Tasmanian brand.

In the Australian context, Tasmania is unique in the extent of its stock of intact colonial buildings. According to the Productivity Commission's 2006 report, 38% of all State and Territory listed places in Australia are located in Tasmania (even allowing for some past, over-enthusiastic listing on the Tasmanian Heritage Register). Indeed, some of the State's heritage themes resonate internationally, for example; exploration, convictism, frontier settlement and welfare capitalism – to name but a few. This is a positive attribute, a fortunate circumstance, a resource and a distinctive point of difference.

In reality, heritage is far more than that. It is our story. It informs our way of life and sense of place. It helps define the character of communities at the local level. It is this articulation - this animation - partly resident in heritage buildings and very often their settings, that makes the State so attractive to visit, not the mere witnessing of a set of artefacts corralled and unprovenanced.

Yet, even while we trade on heritage in our Tasmanian brand (you only have to look to Tourism Tasmania's signature marketing campaigns), we treat our heritage with complacency - some might say benign neglect - providing few, if any, incentives for owners and funding it far below the level warranted for such a rich resource. Apart from statutory controls imposed as a result of heritage listing, we largely leave owners of heritage places to their own devices. This 'stick with no carrot' approach is counter-productive. It tends to make people resistant to heritage - and the resulting outcomes are a lottery reliant on individual whims and resources. Rather, heritage needs to be elevated to its rightful status as a community good, fundamental to Tasmania's culture and brand.

Much is made of the uneven economic prospects of Tasmania's regional areas. Even allowing for the richness of heritage stocks in Hobart and Launceston, Tasmania's built heritage is a widely distributed resource that offers economic prospects right across the State's regional areas if capitalised upon sensitively and intelligently.

People come to Tasmania to see and share in its uniqueness. If we can get it right, this sense of place contribution and other community associations can be revealed for the benefit of visitors and locals alike.

So, what are the opportunities?

First, we must take a look at our State's heritage through the eyes of our visitors. What aspects or experiences of our heritage (if any) do our visitors find most interesting? Perhaps some heritage- focused market research could be carried out with prospective and past visitors, appropriately segmented by visitor characteristics such as origin, destination, age, gender and income. This research has the potential to identify the expectations of visitors with respect to heritage – and how our offering meets or fails to reach those expectations – presenting opportunities to make our budget allocations and 'heritage spend' more savvy.

Second, we must develop or sharpen our own theory as to what makes this State so special from a heritage perspective. Is it the 'beacon' properties and places from the early period of Australia's settlement? Is it the clear identification of our precincts and streetscapes? Is it the themes that we need to promote as part of our State's brand - such as convictism, Hobart, Launceston, Oatlands, our other historic towns etc.? What potential for heritage tourism exists in respect to our modern and industrial heritage? Is it the linkages between places within the State or further afield e.g. the Chinese tin mining heritage on the North-East Coast? Or links to Dutch and French explorers?

Third, we must identify the platforms to best announce and reveal this heritage – from a marketing, interpretation and information technology perspective. What applications can we exploit to create self-guided heritage trails at macro and micro scales? Can we provide open heritage data to enable innovation of new products based on different ways of organising or presenting heritage information?

Fourth, we must bring the Tasmanian community along with us. What networks are available to link and resource local history groups and empower them to enrich the experiences of our visitors? What incentives are available to turn property owners from heritage-sceptics to enthusiasts? What partnerships can we develop with heritage property owners and communities to add value and understanding? What are we doing to equip our communities with the basic knowledge of Tasmania's history to enable them to pass this information onto visitors?

Successive generations have missed out on the opportunity to connect with their history. Providing schools with resources that tie Tasmania's unique heritage to the Australian curriculum should be a fundamental plank of any heritage tourism strategy developed by the State. How can we excite, interest and involve the most tech-savvy generation of students in history in making this relevant to them and their cohorts?

Fifth, we must equip local government with the tools to ensure that local heritage thrives. A regulatory role will always be critical because loss of heritage integrity leads to a loss of opportunity. Achieving sound conservation outcomes is essential to the maintenance of values. Adaptive re-use and liveability are reasonable expectations of any heritage property owner. Maintaining the character and integrity in our heritage is a delicate balancing act. The challenge is to effect such change in a manner that is both responsive to those expectations and sympathetic to the values.

There is much to be lost - and permanently so - as a result of ill-informed, poor quality, incremental development. The negative impacts of such incremental development are often suddenly noticed after a process of 'death by a thousand cuts'. In this regard, local government's roles in provision of information, education and heritage promotion must be resourced. By way of example, the City of Bunbury in Western Australia which recently won the Heritage and Culture category in the Keep Australia Beautiful, Sustainable Cities Awards 2014, offers rates rebates of \$1000 per annum and low interest rates for heritage works, thus providing incentive for owners to act as the custodians of their heritage places and maintain them in the right way.

Sixth, we must identify the opportunities that are already out there but are perhaps not capitalised upon in the most effective or efficient manner:

- Promoting creative and innovative ways of imparting historical and place-based information to locals and visitors; Interactive web-based information, development of apps to facilitate self-guided tours; links to businesses supplying heritage tourism services; fostering genealogical research, especially family links to people and place;
- Resourcing historical societies to take advantage of local knowledge and networks;
- Valuing and recognising 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage;
- Valuing and recognising industrial heritage and associated places including garden villages (two of which, for example, survive in the City of Glenorchy in the form of the Cadbury Estate at Claremont and the former EZ Company housing at Lutana), and;
- Linking Tasmanian's history and heritage with the Australian Curriculum.

Thank you once more for the opportunity to make a submission on this important issue. Council officers would be most happy to respond to any questions that the Sub-Committee might have.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter Brooks', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Brooks  
**General Manager**