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Government Administration B
Heritage Tourism SubCommittee
Parliament of Tasmania
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To Whom It May Concern

Built Heritage Tourism

The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) welcomes the opportunity to provide some input into this inquiry.

Local Government recognises that in a general sense, both the current and future value of built heritage is great. Tasmania is well known for the unique state of preservation of so many buildings and it is part of Tasmania's iconic image. However high value built heritage is not evenly distributed across all municipalities and certainly in some areas, at first glance may not seem so prominent or important. The contribution of built heritage to the tourism experience in those areas is currently quite limited. This does not mean there is not potential, with often a diverse and interesting local history at call (Aboriginal, early explorers, first settlers, maritime, rural industries, bushfire etc).

Government has two main roles in relation to our built heritage. Firstly, in providing legislation that protects built heritage, together with programs that provide financial assistance for the conservation of built heritage both in public and private ownership. Secondly, in determining the way in which this heritage is embedded in the tourism experience. The built heritage constitutes evidence of the many interesting stories that can be told and which the visitor can then experience, often as part of other experiences (arts, culture, food, walking and so on).

In order to successfully leverage off built heritage assets for tourism we must really understand the future market, identify strengths and weaknesses in current offerings and experiences and understand which heritage aspects offer the best long term value and what will be the important heritage assets for future generations (twentieth century heritage).

One emerging issue for State Government is access to particular heritage places that are located on State owned land. Break O'Day Council provides an example of a significant item related to the tin mining heritage of the area which is inaccessible due to the lack of funding being provided to Parks and Wildlife Service for maintenance of infrastructure.

The access road and track have deteriorated to the point of them being closed and there are no plans for repairs. "In North-East Tasmania we have a rich heritage of mining involving the Chinese which dates back to the late 1800's; with the increasing focus of the Chinese tourism market on Tasmania we are seeing an increasing number in this area".

Local and regional tourism organisations utilise the built heritage to varying degrees in promoting their respective areas but there is likely greater opportunity to link in with the many, varied and active community groups who have a wealth of energy, knowledge and experience in contextualising and interpreting our built heritage. Raising community awareness is critical if the understanding of the value is to be retained in the long term. Owners need to be supported to see opportunity instead of barriers.

Local Government has a special role in the protection and promotion of local heritage places – and also in relation to local and regional tourism. Local Government acts as owners/custodians of heritage properties and also through their planning functions under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*, work to ensure the conservation of "those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value".

Councils also identify and protect heritage through their planning schemes. The planning functions of Local Government mean that councils are responsible for the vast majority of statutory protection afforded to Australia's heritage places.

The level of activity around the built heritage environment by councils varies according to a number of factors including local history, community priorities/support, resources and capability. Over recent times there has been an expanded role for councils in relation to built heritage, with many undertaking non-statutory activity aimed at promoting tourism and economic benefits as well as in recognition of the benefits to a community's sense of place.

However some councils are more active than others in identifying community heritage values and there is still heavy reliance on Heritage Tasmania to lead/drive work in this space. The level of non statutory investment is a matter for each community and council to decide. Care needs to be taken not to raise expectations that all communities have similar priorities and that all councils have similar capabilities in this space.

Yours sincerely



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