

**Friday 7 December 2012 - Legislative Council - Government Businesses Scrutiny
Committee B - Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority - Pages 1 - 25**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GOVERNMENT BUSINESSES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE B

Friday 7 December 2012

MEMBERS

Mr Dean
Mr Finch
Mr Gaffney
Mr Mulder
Ms Rattray (Chair)
Mrs Taylor (Deputy Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Brian Wightman, Minister for Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts

Ministerial Office

Ms Brooke Craven

Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

Hon. Dr Barry Jones AO, PAHSMA Chair
Professor Sharon Sullivan AO, Deputy, PAHSMA Board
Mr Stephen Large, Chief Executive Officer PAHSMA
Dr Jane Harrington, Director Conservation and Infrastructure
Ms Trish Hamilton, Executive Projects Coordinator

The committee met at 9 a.m.

CHAIR (Ms Rattray) - Welcome, minister, and to your team at the table. Minister, would you like to give a brief overview?

Mr WIGHTMAN - This has been a tough year for the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority - PAHSMA - given the challenges in the tourism industry nationally with the strong Australian dollar, a tough national and international economy, and Tasmanians holidaying overseas in record numbers. Despite this, PAHSMA has managed to punch above its weight and, as outlined in the recent annual report, achieved a great deal in both tourism and conservation. As the portfolio minister I should mention a few highlights from the last 18 months or so, before handing over to Dr Barry Jones.

Port Arthur, the Coal Mines and the Cascades Female Factory historic sites were included as three of the 11 sites in the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage listing at the meeting of UNESCO in Brazil in July 2010. Another three of the sites listed were Tasmanian: Brickendon, Woolmers, and Darlington on Maria Island. This listing recognises the importance of these sites not only to all Tasmanians but nationally and internationally. I would like to recognise PAHSMA's critical role in managing three of these sites. A strategic management framework for the Australian Convict Sites was developed at the time of nomination and signed by the then minister for tourism, arts and the environment, the Honourable Paula Wriedt. This document, along with PAHSMA's strategic master plan and other planning documents, provides a strong framework for the management of these internationally recognised heritage sites. PAHSMA is represented on the Australian Convict Sites steering committee established under the strategic management framework and is an active member of the Tasmanian World Heritage Site managers group.

Following a transition period starting in 2011 and ending in January 2012, PAHSMA assumed full management responsibility for the Cascades Female Factory historic site in South Hobart. Whilst, understandably, there were a few challenges as this evolved, I can report the site is a completely different place now, with so much happening to further enhance the interpretation and overall visitor experience. I had the pleasure recently of launching some major works that have been completed in yard 4 and a further \$800 000 worth of work has commenced on yard 1. When finished this will completely transform the site and provide visitors with a much greater understanding of how the place operated in its prime. I am sure much more will be spoken in this hearing about the positive changes at this important Hobart-based World Heritage site.

I visited Port Arthur recently to open a new jetty on the Isle of the Dead - there is a lovely photo here - and saw the early stages of work that had commenced on the World War One Memorial Avenue. The completed works were launched by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Scott Bacon, last Friday.

Given the tough market and the need to diversify, PAHSMA has introduced a number of new product offerings at all three sites in the last 12 months. These include a new Coal Mines tour at that site, transforming the Visiting Magistrates House at Port Arthur into a small conference, meeting and reception/high tea facility that resonates with history, and a new dramatisation, *Her Story*, at the Cascades Female Factory historic site, together with a new night-time experience at Port Arthur, the Paranormal Investigation Experience, which recently won the New Tourism Development category at the Tasmanian Tourism Awards. I should also add that PAHSMA was also successful in winning in the Major Tourist Attractions and the Heritage and Cultural Tourism categories, which was a fabulous outcome given the challenging year.

With regard to the penitentiary precinct, the Penitentiary Conservation Project has established that the penitentiary building at Port Arthur is in need of some significant structural attention. As has been recently publicised, the works are likely to cost in excess of \$6 million.

Mr MULDER - I didn't have to publish my own photo then, minister.

Laughter.

Mr WIGHTMAN - It was a surprise to me as well, Mr Mulder. The state government provided \$500 000 towards immediate conservation works in 2011-12. PAHSMA will continue discussions with Treasury and any requests for additional funding will be dealt with through the budget process. Funding will also no doubt be sought from the commonwealth government.

Given the quantum of funding required, I believe PAHSMA will be initiating a fundraising foundation.

CHAIR - Buy a brick, minister, not as silly as it sounds.

Mr WIGHTMAN - Not bad, not a bad idea. I am indebted to the board and staff of PAHSMA for their commitment and hard work in ensuring that three hugely important heritage sites and Tasmanian icons are maintained and presented to international standards. I should also acknowledge in the highest possible way the contribution of the PAHSMA chair, Dr Barry Jones AO, to the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority over a period spanning 12 years. Barry will be retiring at the end of his current term and today, sadly, will be his last official event as the PAHSMA chair.

I have heard Barry state many times that being chair of the PAHSMA was the best job he has ever had and his enthusiasm and passion for the sites, particularly Port Arthur, is widely known and respected. On behalf of all Tasmanians, Barry, we thank you most sincerely for your contribution and outstanding legacy in your position as chair of PAHSMA.

Members - Hear, hear.

CHAIR - Minister, thank you for that overview. I believe that you would like to invite Dr Jones to the table.

Mr WIGHTMAN - Dr Jones would like to share a few words of his own for a few minutes.

Dr JONES - Chair and members, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak and can I thank the minister for what he said and follow up on that. It has been an extraordinarily productive and valuable period and I would like to think that I have made a contribution. Remember, the context was that I first joined the Port Arthur board in 1999 and the then chair, my predecessor, somebody else from the north island, the Honourable Evan Walker, had taken office in the aftermath, when things were settling down after the massacre of 1996. Evan initiated the process and then I followed on. It was particularly valuable and gratifying for me to be part of the process of getting a World Heritage nomination through because in an earlier life I had represented Australia on the UNESCO executive board and then I went over and I was the Vice-Chair of the World Heritage Committee in Paris. I was the hardship post; somebody had to do it -

Laughter.

CHAIR - I am hoping to get one of those.

Dr JONES - so it meant that over a long period I think that I have now visited about 200 world heritage sites. I think only Gough Whitlam and Jane Harrington have seen more.

Laughter.

Dr JONES - The result was getting the Australian convict site nomination, which is a serial nomination. Australia has never had a serial nomination, that is, a comprehensive nomination involving sites in different places, and it took a long time because it was like herding cats trying to get three states and one territory, that is, Norfolk Island, to collaborate in everything. It was a really long process, and I was very proud to be part of the Australian delegation in Brasilia in 2010 when the serial nomination went through.

It was a representation of the entire Australian convict experience, but there is no doubt that Port Arthur had taken the leading role and if it had not been for Port Arthur, and the very strong support of the Tasmanian government, the process might well have been bogged down. Tasmania played a very important role and Port Arthur is so significant partly because, if you are thinking of Australian heritage or Australian archaeology, Port Arthur is really head office. Every heritage consultant and every archaeologist in Australia has done time down at Port Arthur. They are all Port Arthur veterans somehow or other and so they retain a kind of lifelong commitment to it, and that is why the iconic image of the penitentiary is so important, not just nationally but it has an international significance as well.

We fought to get that nomination up and you will have noticed that Tasmania has more convict sites on the serial nomination than New South Wales, which comes second. Western Australia was on it as well with a single site, the Fremantle Prison. We like to think of Port Arthur as the great exemplar of what could be done and that means really rethinking its history. I do not want to inflict the history - in fact I do want to inflict a history lesson on it, but I will hold myself back.

CHAIR - That might have to wait until morning tea, Dr Jones.

Dr JONES - It is curious, but if you reflect on the whole British imperial convict system, the most remote of all the convict sites was, in fact, Norfolk Island. The most remote from Britain was Norfolk Island but after Norfolk Island closed down and a lot of its convicts were transported down here, Port Arthur became the most remote in the entire system. We have always been a bit shifty in coming to terms with the significance of the convict heritage in Australian history, and the formulation of Australian history, and you might have thought that the building blocks of Australian society were a bit unpromising - Aboriginal dispossession, a highly unbalanced initial population of settlers - overwhelmingly male - with a combination of military, public servants and a few freeloaders.

It does not look very promising, but, in fact, within a comparatively short period the colony started to develop quite robust democratic practices and procedures and it is not an accident that we are the first country in the world with a secret ballot. There are a whole lot of things that we now take for granted where Australia played a very important role. I often tell the minister that, in the first commonwealth parliament, there was a transportee member - William Henry Groom who had been transported to Moreton Bay. His son then went on to become the attorney-general of the commonwealth, so it is quite extraordinary that in two generations a person went from

being a transportee to being an elected official, to having a son as the chief law officer of the commonwealth.

Mr WIGHTMAN - One generation for me.

CHAIR - It just shows anyone can get a gig.

Mr MULDER - We are now in the reverse process with elected officials.

Dr JONES - I follow on from what the minister eloquently said - we have had a tough year. The period since the GFC has been difficult, but I would have to say that, comparatively speaking, we have held the line and we have done a great deal. Some of the restoration work that has been done, like the work on the Separate Prison at Port Arthur, is absolutely world's best practice. That is a much overused term, but it is absolutely true in the case of the Separate Prison, which is astonishing.

The staff have been extremely committed. It has been a difficult period for them. Numbers have flattened - they have not fallen significantly, but they certainly have flattened. But compared to some other sites, we are really doing pretty well.

I should perhaps interpolate that with all the excitement generated by MONA, we have had some kind of an informal working relationship with MONA, and David Walsh is very interested in the centre. We promote them and they promote us. We think we undoubtedly get some benefits. There was a time when we lent our ferry so that people could be transported from Hobart up to MONA. To the extent that MONA is gaining international recognition, it is very important for us.

It is essential that we continue to operate at an international standard, because we want visitors to go away, talk to other people and say, 'This is a very exciting area and you have to go there'. Port Arthur is a beautiful site and it offers a lot of very poignant experiences and reflections about the way the convict system operated. It can also create a very significant shock of recognition of yourself, and cause you to think through your place in the universe, if that does not sound too pretentious.

One of the controversies of the work that we have been doing, particularly the restoration and conservation work, where Jane has played such a very important role, relates to the fair amount of revisionism about Port Arthur. To some extent, the Marcus Clarke version - *For the Term of His Natural Life* - was a bit overstated because it was portrayed as simply a place of unremitting punishment. I think it is fair to put an alternative view. It is not the whole view, but just a part. First of all, it was a place where you had skilled labour, a very high degree of skilled labour. It was the great shipbuilding area in Van Diemen's Land and then, Tasmania, as it was renamed. It was the great metal working area. It had a very sophisticated water-power system. All these things require skilled labour and cooperative labour - it cannot just be labour enforced by the lash.

When the land in front of the Separate Prison was reclaimed - and it was a substantial reclamation of land - what was the first thing that went in? It was not a flogging post, it was a cricket pitch. One of the early things that was set up, was the governor's garden. The governor's garden is extraordinarily interesting because in a way it was a kind of a metaphor for the convicts - if you behave, you will go over the fence and you will be in that beautiful garden. In a sense, you get a different kind of recognition of what life was like.

Van Diemen's Land, in a way, was a kind of Stasiland of the British Empire - everything was recorded. I sometimes thought every bowel motion was going to be recorded somewhere. What we do know is that life expectancy for male prisoners was longer than the life expectancy for the general community. It meant that they had a regular diet, that they were protected from the elements, they had some kind of medical supervision and so on. We know that they had a significant library - and we know so much more because of the work that we have done.

I talk too long -

CHAIR - I know you are very excited and passionate about Port Arthur, Dr Jones.

Dr JONES - I am going to stop in a minute. It is quite true, as the minister said, that we have resumed responsibility - or it was assumed for us - for two other sites. The thing is - of course we are thrilled.

Laughter.

Dr JONES - You might say theoretically that it had the risk of dispersing our resources just a smidgen.

Mr WIGHTMAN - Give him a bit of money with a fair bow.

CHAIR - Minister, what was the rationale behind that?

Mr WIGHTMAN - When it came to that, there was an amount of money that came along with that. We went through a transition phase where Dr Jones worked with Peter Rae, who had a keen interest in that, to make sure that the PAHSMA was the best authority to look after that site.

CHAIR - Because of their track record?

Mr WIGHTMAN - Because of their track record and their experience. There was a challenging time with the transition because a lot of people have a lot of passion and a lot of ownership of particular sites in Tasmania but at that point we felt that PAHSMA, with their experience, their dedication and their knowledge, was the right body to be looking after the site so that we had a coordinated approach to heritage in Tasmania.

Dr JONES - The minister is absolutely right. What he is simply saying is that our expertise is drawn on and I think we have risen to the challenge. But sometimes it has been tough but it has worked out pretty well. I think we can say we are very optimistic.

CHAIR - Albeit it is early days.

Dr JONES - I was going to say a lot of work has to be done at the Coal Mines. The Coal Mines site is absolutely stunning but comparatively few people go there because you always have that problem of: how many people do you put there to manage it? How many people will do work on it? Is it going to be a priority this year, next year?

CHAIR - Is the road infrastructure good enough?

Dr JONES - Exactly. On that note I was not talking specifically, I was talking about the generality. But the Tasmanian story in this area is exceptional and has to be told but it adds another set of challenges to the past, which it is really meeting.

A couple more things, very quickly. One is the tremendous importance of PAHSMA for the local community down on the Tasman Peninsula - it generates so much employment.

CHAIR - They pay their rates on time. It is important.

Dr JONES - It is extremely important. When the World Heritage nomination came through, there were some people expressing anxiety that you were going to have black helicopters coming and supervising everything that they did and preventing them from having dogs and so on but there has been a very light touch in the way in which it has happened and it has all worked out extremely well.

There is no doubt that PAHSMA have been the key driver for that Tasman economy. We take our relationship with the local community very seriously. We have a community advisory board that is working very well and you have a lot of enthusiasm developed locally.

One of the things I was going to suggest -

CHAIR - To the minister or the committee?

Dr JONES - To the committee, but no doubt through the minister. Your committee or indeed the whole Legislative Council ought to go down to Port Arthur and have a meeting there. You would be superbly looked after. For those people who have not been recently, it would be of tremendous importance for you collectively to do what Mr Mulder has done and have a look at the Penitentiary. The Penitentiary is now 182 years old and is showing its age. There is an urban myth that when it was being built the convicts mixed - the mortar is very variable, so it may well be they mixed some of it with salt water and the result is that the salt adhesions have been very significant. What is certainly true is that if you scrape your fingers along the mortar, a lot of the mortar will come off, so people are discouraged from scraping their fingers along it. The newspaper headline used the word 'crumbling' - I thought they may have been talking about me. We talk sometimes about 100-year events and say, 'A 100-year event might come, like a huge storm surge, which will cause a lot of damage'. Maybe it could, but we have learned from recent experience not to be too cocksure about what buildings will survive and what buildings will not. If we had been talking to New Zealanders a few years ago and said, 'What's the possibility the Christchurch Cathedral will fall down?' they would have said, 'It could happen, but it won't', but it did. The result is you cannot simply be too categorical and say, 'No, everything's covered'. Day by day, week by week, we say it is safe to go and look at but you could say that parts of the building only meet 30 per cent of the engineering loads we regard as acceptable in a domestic building. In some areas it is only 10 per cent of the load, so clearly something major has to be done and sooner rather than later.

CHAIR - Hence the \$6 million.

Dr JONES - Yes. We have had consultants in and the suggestion which seems to be the most appropriate, and also the least intrusive - much less intrusive than the existing metal framework in the middle - is to lay down a concrete bed - of course you would have to get the archaeology absolutely right - and then have cantilevered columns that would then pin the walls.

There would have to be some work presumably with the dreaded poultices on the mortar. That looks to be the best option but it is an expensive outcome.

Mr MULDER - Thank you, minister, and Dr Jones for the extensive history. One of the things I picked up down there was that they are also very keen to tell the post-convict history because that is also a fascinating story. One of the things that came out of that post-convict history is the event of 1996, and that has brought a lot of international recognition to the site as well. I am thinking that 1996 is now some time ago and perhaps the minister is possibly in the best position to do it - is it time that we told that story at the site?

Mr WIGHTMAN - I will come to Dr Jones because I know he has given a lot of thought to that, and so have I. Whenever I go to Port Arthur, as minister, I am very careful when talking with the community because of the incident and the fact that many people were there at the time, so I am respectful of that fact. I think there is a community feeling at the moment, that they wish to interpret the site of the massacre, and that is something we have to take on board, consider and get the balance right. It is such a difficult and challenging thing to commemorate that site. I think that it is something we need to do.

Interestingly enough, a lot of that push, as you might call it, has come from a community perspective, as you might be well aware. I am very cautious about how we do that, and the need for sensitivity, but it is something I have been considering deeply and I know Dr Jones has as well. How we go about that now is the question. I am prepared to enter into discussions with the local community, obviously through Stephen in particular, to see how we might go about that.

Mr MULDER - Do you see one of the risks though, and I think you can draw parallels with Anzac Day. It was about 10 years after the Anzac landing that we started to commemorate the people, the courage and the events but you are always caught, aren't you, with being accused of celebrating war, or in this case celebrating the actions of the perpetrator? Is that what the sensitivity is? I was down there very shortly after the events and I saw the worst of it - not while it was happening - so I understand the impact that it has. But we now need to confront our history as a community, and accept it. We don't need this 'Don't talk about the war' stuff.

Mr WIGHTMAN - What we know about grief and trauma is that we need to be able to talk about these issues. How we talk about those issues is going to be the interesting part. From my conversations with the community, when I go down there and meet operators in the Port Arthur area, it is clear they are ready to have that conversation - about how we might commemorate or recognise what has occurred in the past. For the healing process, which I think is still going on, we need to consider that really strongly. I know a lot of work was done at the time of the 10-year anniversary, but I think it is time we re-engaged the community. We will have to be incredibly sensitive about it, but for the healing process and what we know about dealing with grief, we need to provide that opportunity.

Dr JONES - We try to take a balanced approach where we tend not to raise the events of 1996, but if asked we do not duck them. Of course, there are particular parts of the site related to those events - the footings of the Broad Arrow Café, and the memorial pool which Sir William Deane came down and opened when he was Governor-General.

CHAIR - Is there still signage there to say, 'Do not ask the staff about 1996'? There was at one stage.

Dr JONES - No.

Mr LARGE - No, we had that in our visitors' guidebook.

Dr JONES - The classic illustration of sensitivity was the clandestine movement of the cross. It was set up in a very obvious position and then in the dead of night, or the early morning, locals came and moved it closer to where the memorial pool is now located. As a historian, I would have preferred it to have been where it was historically, but I can see that people thought it was too intrusive in its original position - over by the commemorative pool was more appropriate. We have let it be and we did not attempt to move it back.

There is a new category of tourism that is being developed overseas called 'dark tourism' and that involves, for example, visits to places like the battlefields of World War I, with all the carnage. People will go to concentration camps in Europe to see Auschwitz and some of the other really terrible places. In a way you have to be careful that you do not sensationalise it. You could do it in a meretricious way, or you could do it in a way that says we have to reflect on some of the negative parts of human nature and tackle them appropriately. This is something where there will be ongoing consideration about how far we become involved in this dark tourism.

It was interesting that when they had the tenth anniversary of the events of 1996, John Howard came down and the Premier was there, and we all spoke. That was a very cathartic event for a lot of people, because there were a lot of people there who had not been on the site for 10 years and really had to argue with themselves about whether they should come back. They did, and they were glad they did, but the interesting reaction was to say, 'We faced it, we have done that, but thanks all the same, we do not necessarily want to come back next year and the year after and the year after that. We have had the cathartic experience'. We had a debate about whether we made a feature of the fifteenth anniversary, and the next board might have to think about whether they are going to commemorate the twentieth anniversary. These issues are very live and there is no one formula.

Mr MULDER - I note you talked about the fundraising foundation and I would like to get some sense of what that is, how it is going to raise funds and what sort of time frame we are talking about, given the fact that it would only take the next set of high winds and it could fall over. What sort of time imperative does this foundation have?

Mr WIGHTMAN - I will ask Stephen to answer that, but I will make a couple of broad comments. Obviously, between \$6 million and \$8 million is a considerable amount of money at any time.

Mr MULDER - It depends on the context of course. Not far away \$33 million has been allocated for the 'One and a Half Capes Track'.

CHAIR - We are talking about Port Arthur now, thank you.

Mr MULDER - We are talking about funding.

Mr DEAN - We are talking about funding, you are right, and trying to know where you can get it.

Mr WIGHTMAN - Do not make that phone call in 20 years then, Mr Dean.

In a broader sense, it is an excellent idea to have a foundation. We hope Dr Jones may be interested in being involved, and I will be having some further conversations with him about that, but Stephen may have some ideas.

Mr LARGE - We have known about this for a while now and we have talked to state Treasury about looking at a tripartite approach with us. We have a conservation fund set up so people can contribute, and get tax advantages from that. We have not set the foundation up yet. The board talked about it at the last meeting briefly but, hopefully, we will get Barry involved. We will work with state Treasury and we will work with the commonwealth government in terms of the best approach to setting up a foundation. You are right, we have to raise the money as soon as we possibly can - not tomorrow, but over the next 12 to 18 months we need to be in a position where we can commence this work.

A lot of us are thinking about it and tossing ideas around about different people we could approach, but we do not have a firm strategy in place yet. That will certainly occur over the next couple of months in terms of putting our next plan of attack in place.

Mr MULDER - No, minister, I did not bring the chequebook with me.

Mr WIGHTMAN - I understand and accept your point. There is the current \$3 million as well that goes in for conservation works.

CHAIR - How far in advance is the \$3 million in the forward estimates allocated?

Mr LARGE - In 2015, but because of the fact that - and Barry was very instrumental in this - in 2000 we talked to the government about the need to have some certainty with our conservation programs, so we could plan, so we could get the right people. But you cannot just make a decision on the Penitentiary or the Separate Prison like that. There is a lot of planning that has to go into place and various approvals, particularly now that we are on the national heritage list with the commonwealth government.

Since that has been in place, since 2000, it is recognised that we do need that amount of money and a similar arrangement is being set up with the Cascades Female Factory. That is now in place. It is linked to CPI so that we are not going backwards. That happened in 2005-06.

The more you do at the sites we have responsibility for, the more the recurrent costs are for looking after it. We are good at doing that and we are good at looking after what we have, but we are limited in terms of new projects because we do not have that amount of funding to do that. We are not unique there, it is the same with Parks, it is the same in all areas that the budget reaches and there is only so much money, we realise that. For something like the Penitentiary, we just cannot find \$6 million like that and that is a special and unique case but we will approach that. We had similar challenges with the Separate Prison but we managed to secure the funding there.

Going back to the earlier discussions about the Female Factory, one of the great things about our getting involved is that we are good at finding money and we have some people like Dr Harrington who can write really good grant submissions and Gabrielle Woods, too, managed to secure \$500 000 for us for the Penitentiary at the end of the last financial year. That is a real coup for the Female Factory site and we have demonstrated that twice with the yard 1 funding

program and the yard 4 funding program. We have raised close to \$800 000 or \$900 000 worth of grants since we took that property over. I think that is good for those properties.

Mr MULDER - I noticed the attempts to somehow bring the Coal Mines, Port Arthur and Darlington on Maria Island together and it would be interesting to explore the idea of making that a tour. Since that meeting the other day, it also dawned on me that there is a significant site that we basically ignore on Sarah Island, yet that has a very rich story to tell, even though it is not well connected. There is a capacity to bring tourists on these heritage convict tours and get them across to the west coast at the same time. There is an island there that very few have ever visited, yet it is prime archaeological territory. I am wondering whether you have given any thoughts to including that as part of this package.

Dr JONES - Sarah Island is already a World Heritage site. It is not part of the convict site but it is part of the wilderness heritage area. Obviously there is a diversity of tours that could be offered and I see the importance of bringing in Darlington. But there is also another issue and that is that you find people around Launceston, you would be staggered to know, who say there is too much emphasis on the south, what about Brickendon and Woolmers? They have to be more included as well.

Mr DEAN - What about Launceston? I could talk about Launceston's heritage for years.

Dr JONES - I am saying that there is a variety of different approaches you could take where you bring in Sarah Island. I think it is a very good idea to recognise the tourist potential of saying, 'Don't just see one site'; don't say, 'I've been to Port Arthur and I've seen the lot,' and that is it - to see the diversity of it.

That is one of the things about the nature of the convict site nomination: it was meant to illustrate the diversity of the convict experience. Woolmers and Brickendon are really about how the ticket-of-leave system operated and how convict labour was used. A site like the Great North Road in New South Wales was never a convict site in the sense of being a prison, but it is the outstanding earthworks and construction work carried out by convicts. That went on the list, and you might say it is a bit of an anomaly because it did not have people who were there as prisoners but simply working on the construction. There is a variety of different approaches. The linkage between Sarah Island and Port Arthur is very obvious.

Mr MULDER - There is also an Aboriginal connection on Sarah Island that is very significant.

Dr JONES - Indeed.

CHAIR - Minister, the Auditor-General in his recent report talked about the authority actively pursuing avenues to facilitate valuations of the historic collections. What avenues are being taken to get those valuations? I know they are not being valued at the moment.

Mr LARGE - We have started the process in that the Auditor-General raised it so we know we are going to have to do it. Unfortunately, it is a very difficult and expensive exercise. TMAG has been through the same thing but the Auditor-General said he wants it done. We will try to stage it over two or three years to minimise the expense. Gabrielle Woods is our corporate services manager and she has been in discussion with TMAG as to how they went about the process. We have not started it yet but we know we are going to have to do it at some stage.

CHAIR - There are opportunities to have it done. It is not something that cannot be done, is that correct?

Mr LARGE - Yes. There is a formula for valuing heritage assets, as I understand it, and TMAG has been through that process. We have approximately 220 000 archaeological assets -

Dr HARRINGTON - We have a large number and putting a value on them is very awkward. When we were looking, for example, at how you would value the Penitentiary, what would you do if it fell down? You probably would not rebuild it but you would want to be able to tell the story. That is one end of it; the other end, if you have an extraordinary amount of artefact material that has come up from an excavation, for an archaeologist it is very precious but to put a financial value on it, it is minimal. Its value is intellectual. It is irreplaceable; if you have a collection you have never had the opportunity to research properly and it goes, you cannot replace it. In terms of material, we have a range of different collections but our material, for example in the house museums, where we have bought particular pieces - for example, furniture that might be period-related - you can put a value on those, but with most of the things, particularly the archaeological collections, it is a very difficult process.

CHAIR - So it is a work in progress and one that is perhaps not quite as advanced as the Auditor-General would like.

Mr LARGE - That is fair to say. He will keep mentioning it until we do it, and we have given him a commitment that we will do it. He is comfortable with our staging the process over the next two to three years. It is on the agenda and we know we have to do it.

Mr DEAN - We have talked about the heritage connections around the state, what is the connection between PAHSMA, the National Trust and Heritage Tasmania? What sort of involvement do you have there? Do you meet on a regular basis or work together?

Mr WIGHTMAN - From a ministerial point of view, this is an area we could improve in - and this is my personal view about that. I meet with a lot of different individual bodies on heritage in Tasmania. There was a tourism strategy put together by Tourism Tasmania around heritage in Tasmania and the way we can link those sites. That is an interesting challenge into the future because we have a number of historic sites that are privately owned and lived in, we have some owned by the trust, and some operated by Parks and Wildlife and our ability to bring all that together is an important challenge into the future. We have such substantial historic heritage in Tasmania and so much that people wish to see. The challenge for us all is to coordinate that in the best way we can to provide the greatest opportunity for visitors who come to Tasmania, and Tasmanians to access those sites.

Mr DEAN - It is good to hear you say that, minister, because the tourism survey that was done about two years ago identified that the great majority of people who come into this state come for the purposes of looking at built heritage, over and above wineries and all those other things we have put a lot of emphasis on. So it is good to hear.

Mr WIGHTMAN - I have this discussion with the trust quite regularly. But we need to understand that we have a lot of different players in the heritage market in Tasmania - private operators, Parks and Wildlife, and other statutory authorities - and that creates a great number of challenges. There are ways in which we can work more strategically and I have discussions with

the Minister for Tourism, Scott Bacon, about that as well, but I cannot underestimate how challenging it is.

Dr HARRINGTON - We have a multi-layered approach to working with various stakeholders, particularly Heritage Tasmania and the trust. From the point of view of the convict sites, we have a state managers' forum, the secretary for which is Heritage Tasmania. That allows us to meet with Parks as well through their connection with Darlington and it would be fair to say that our conversations and deliberations go far beyond the six sites that are part of the World Heritage listing.

One of the things we are very conscious of is that the listing is not the 11 best places in Australia, it is the 11 most representative places in Australia, which leaves us with a very strong obligation to recognise that there are 3 000 other convict sites that fall under our banner. So there is a lot of talk about companion sites and how important it is that anything we do engages with those sites. That is one level where we do some work.

Tasmania has a very small heritage community, so there are exchanges at a range of different levels. For example, with the trust and with TMAG, we also have a memorandum of understanding in terms of our collections and emergencies. If there is a collection emergency with one of the national trust properties we put our hands up to assist, if we can, with advice and reparation.

There are formal and informal connections across a number of levels, and in my position I regularly debate and discuss with Pete Smith and the chair of the Heritage Council if issues come up. They seek our opinion on issues and, similarly, I have a relationship with Chris Tassell as well and I would give him a phone call if there were matters for us to discuss. So there are some fairly solid formal and informal associations, but I absolutely support what the minister is saying - those foundations are there, but there are opportunities to build far more strongly on them.

Mr DEAN - Thank you very much.

Mrs TAYLOR - You have plans to do that?

Dr HARRINGTON - We have plans to do that, and interestingly enough, with the Female Factory site - which has brought new challenges and opportunities into our day-to-day working life - we have set up a ticket arrangement where you can buy a ticket that takes you to Narryna as part of TMAG. We are now in discussions with the trust about bringing Runnymede into that as well. We are looking at that from a marketing perspective.

I also work on a committee with Willow Court. It is something that Stephen asked me to do, and we are working very closely with the works that are happening there at the moment. It is very flattering to be asked to participate in that, but it also a very useful opportunity for a whole range of expertise to be exchanged.

Mrs TAYLOR - I want to congratulate all of you on the work that has been done for PAHSMA. You say you more or less held numbers, but the drop in tourism numbers is an opportunity to look at where you go from here. Challenge is often a good thing because it encourages innovation. The things you are doing are obviously going to stand you in good stead as the economy turns around, so congratulations on that.

I want to pursue a little further your relationship with other heritage sites and with other heritage bodies, because we are connected whether we like it or not. It gives us opportunities not just in heritage studies, but also in tourism.

To what extent are you promoting from Port Arthur, or from the Female Factory in the future, the other tourism sites - the other heritage sites? When people leave Port Arthur, do they leave with a brochure that actively promotes other tourism sites in Tasmania?

Dr HARRINGTON - One of the proposals we have currently agreed is that the convict sites will have similar signage. If you go to Woolmers, for example, you will be shown the other places we recommend you go to. We are trying to create a formal linkage and we are trying to do that through stories and people. We have discovered that it is impossible to find one convict who has been everywhere, but we are going on the six degrees of separation theory - 'while that person was there they would have met this person'. We are working on that at the moment, as a way to tell those stories. One of the projects we have in train at the moment is to put a large sign out the front of the visitor centre at Port Arthur, and a whole panel in that sign will be about other convict sites in Tasmania, with a map showing the regions that you can go to. At the moment there is also a booklet that was funded through a combination of Heritage Tasmania and Tourism Tasmania, outlining the stories of the convict sites and the regions and companion sites in those areas as well.

I do not think that we are as far as we would like to be with it. It has been a fairly slow process, but it is gaining momentum, and opportunities have arisen out of the recent heritage tourism report. We contributed to that quite substantially, and it identifies opportunities to engage in a much broader way.

Mrs TAYLOR - If it is complementary, it is good for you as well as the other sites.

Mr WIGHTMAN - I want to make a couple of broad points. It was noted that perhaps Launceston folk might feel there is too strong a focus on Port Arthur. I do not see that is the case. Port Arthur is so unique - it is something that all of Tasmania is very proud of. That is the feeling I get, as someone who has grown up in Launceston. We have a real ownership, and we are particularly proud of Port Arthur. Both honourable members, Mr Dean and Mrs Taylor, raise a very good point about coordination, and that is something I think a lot about.

I think there are greater opportunities, and one of those opportunities comes out of the world heritage sites and the linking of those. It is challenging, but we have to do that in a way that does not exclude other people. As Jane mentioned, you cannot say, 'These are the best sites, just go here', because there are so many other historic heritage players in Tasmania, and we need to support them as well.

CHAIR - Like Oatlands.

[10.00 a.m.]

Mr WIGHTMAN - Yes, Oatlands has done an absolutely outstanding job. That is a wonderful experience down there and it is a terrific story of the council in particular doing some excellent work. It is something that occupies my mind.

CHAIR - Your brochure is going to be this thick.

Mr WIGHTMAN - Yes, that is one of the issues. But the good starting point is the World Heritage sites and what we need to encourage is, if we can get people to come to those World Heritage sites, we can then spread to the Clarendons - that we can engage with other property owners and property managers in Tasmania. But I do not underestimate the challenge that is because there are many different views when it comes to historic heritage.

Mrs TAYLOR - There are plenty of other ways in which that is done. If you take the wine routes, for instance, we promote Tasmania as a cool wine region. Then you go to a particular area and they promote all the things within that area. You can have different levels of connection, can't you? But if you say it is too hard you will not do it.

Mr WIGHTMAN - I think you are right.

Dr HARRINGTON - It is also happening at the national level. It is a very strong push with the Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee which I am currently the Tasmanian site representative on. We are looking at setting up a website so that, hopefully, if people do a search of World Heritage and convicts, this will be the first place that they will go to. It will provide literature, information and tourism advice that is a little bit more extensive than what you might find if you go to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Community website, for example, which is all about the formal listings on the inventory. It is working on a number of levels at the moment.

Mrs TAYLOR - I wanted to talk about the twentieth anniversary of World Heritage and your plans for that, 2012-13 -

Dr HARRINGTON - Fortieth anniversary.

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes, I am sorry. How are you involved in that?

Dr HARRINGTON - We have been involved and some of you may be aware I have, up until recently, had another hat as the national president of Australia ICOMOS. We have been very strongly involved with working around Australia and had, at our AGM in Sydney two weeks ago, a major national symposium. But if anyone is looking for something to do at 4 o'clock on Monday evening in Tasmania, we are having a special Tasmanian talk with a number of people. I am doing a presentation.

Mrs TAYLOR - I will see if I can get permission to be away from the forestry debate for that.

Dr HARRINGTON - It might be more interesting. It is a really exciting opportunity. I have been involved with it on a number of levels but not necessarily through PAHSMA. I have personally engaged with meetings at an international level as well. It has been a very exciting time but it is also an opportunity for all of us who are involved with heritage. The other thing it ties in with at moment is, we had just had the Asia-Pacific regional reporting, which happens every six years on a cycle for World Heritage. Our region has just reported back and with the combination of the 40 years, a major regional scorecard on how our world heritage is being looked after. It is a really good opportunity for us to work more closely with government at all levels in encouraging responses to the outcomes of the debate that has come through both the fortieth anniversary and also the periodic reporting.

Mrs TAYLOR - Minister, do you have plans for PAHSMA to be involved in that? I hear it from your own point of view from the work you have been doing.

Dr HARRINGTON - We are more involved in it from the broader state point of view and through our engagement with the other states. But I am pushing our involvement with PAHSMA with our state colleagues, so that we come up with a response at the state level and press the Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee to urge the government to progress it as an initiative.

Mr GAFFNEY - Going through this year's financial statement on page 26 of the annual report, I am assuming you have an item such as food and merchandising expense. It is the same category when it is under expense column as it is under the revenue. In 2011 you lost \$734 000 between expenses and revenue for food and merchandising. Last year it was a little bit better, \$726 000. Is that traditionally the way you just carry that loss or do you address each of those item losses? I want to know from an organisational point of view, are you accepting that that is a valid loss for those items?

I have page 26 of the annual report and then page 33 and one is revenue and one is expenses - food and merchandising sales, and there is a difference of \$720 plus \$30 000.

Mr LARGE - Let us look at the merchandising side of things, which is our retail and gift shop operation, and that makes money and always has. In the food area total for the Port Arthur facility we do not make money, we lose money but we are very conscious and are continually trying to improve that. Being a site of the significance of ours and being the most prominent historic site and tourism site on the Tasman Peninsula, it is really important that visitors are able to get food. A lot of the private operators close during winter but we are open in winter. We have a restaurant there in wintertime which is doing really well but on some occasions it does not. You have to staff a restaurant not knowing how many people are going to turn up so we might get 40 one night and in the middle of winter you might get three the next night. That is one of the challenges of running food but it would be detrimental to tourism in Tasmania if visitors came to Port Arthur and could not get a meal.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, but what I am asking is: is that an acceptable loss within the organisation?

Mr LARGE - No loss is acceptable but it is understandable and we are on top of it and we are improving it all the time.

Mr GAFFNEY - What strategies have you got in place to try to address that?

Mr LARGE - By the range of food we present and how we staff and manage that; how we promote the bistro. Our numbers in Felons, which is the night-time dining facility, would probably be about 40 per cent up on where they were five years ago but five years ago we were getting a lot more people at the site so some of the strategies we put in place there.

We are looking at other options for food. We have just opened up the Visiting Magistrate's House] and through January we are going to have a high tea there each day. It is an historic site and the work we have done on there has been amazing. It is a fantastic venue and, hopefully, when the Council comes down you will be able to experience that and have a meeting there but there is a real opportunity there. The way we have looked at it and modelled and planned for the

high teas I think that is a real opportunity to make some money. We are looking at different strategies like that.

At our museum cafe we have reduced the hours in wintertime. We do not open Saturdays sometimes in winter at the museum cafe because of the staff cost. I would not say it is acceptable but it is understandable and we are continually improving it.

Mr GAFFNEY - If you are introducing a high tea concept, which is terrific marketing, if you are putting on the experience and you have an income and you have expenses and it does not make money, for example, because of the work, staff or whatever, how do you weigh that up within the organisation? Do you still say that that is a valuable thing for us? How does the organisation weigh up the initiatives you have put in to see if they are cost-effective?

Mr LARGE - We have a bit more flexibility with a high tea. If it does not work, we will try to understand why it does not work and how we could promote it better and market it.

CHAIR - Put the scones in the freezer, Stephen.

Mr LARGE - If it is a dud we will obviously discontinue it, but we do not think it will be. It may take us more than one year to get that going. We will have to give it a bit of time and we will finetune it and do what we can. That is essentially what we have done with the restaurant and also the cafe facilities during the day. We continually finetune them, we look at the food, we look at what makes money and what does not make money, what costs us time and money to prepare and we have changed our food range considerably over the last three to four years to try to maximise the revenue potential.

Mr GAFFNEY - Would you be able to provide me with the last, say, five years in food merchandising?

Mr LARGE - Yes.

Mr MULDER - Following up from Mike, what are the effects of penalty rates on a site like yours, with shift allowances and things like that?

Mr LARGE - Those costs are significant. All our tourism operations staff are known as rostered day workers, and they get a 25 per cent loading because they have to work seven days. Port Arthur runs 365 days a year, so wage costs are significant. On the other side of it, if you look at the economic benefits to the state in what Port Arthur contributes to the gross state product it is very significant, and I think that has to be taken into consideration as well.

Mr MULDER - I know a lot of your operators in that area are struggling with the site being open at prime time and they are not making money out of it - in other words, your restaurant operations after hours would have to be seen as contributing to the broader state economy rather than making money for Port Arthur.

Mr LARGE - That is how we look at it; we do not make money in food but the overall tourism operations make money. It struggled last year because of the downturn. All that money goes back into the site. The wages of our staff are spent in the local community or in the state. You have to look at the economic benefit of the site to the state as part of this. You could close the food operation at Port Arthur but that would be unacceptable.

Mr GAFFNEY - No, I am not saying that. It is a line item and I was wondering how you manage it.

Mr LARGE - It is a good question and I will get you that information.

Mrs TAYLOR - While we are talking about financials, one of your expenses is the ferry contract but that is not recognised in your revenue as a separate item. I understand you may need to recognise it in your expenses as a separate item because maybe you have nowhere else to put it. I understand it is part of your entrance fee and tour income - that is where it is in your revenue. It is included in the ticket price, isn't it?

Mr LARGE - We have a series of packages. With the bronze package everybody who comes to Port Arthur and pays to come into the facility gets a 40-minute guided tour, a 20-25 minute harbour cruise, and access to all the houses and gardens, et cetera. Then we have a silver pass which includes a third component, the Isle of the Dead or Point Puer. There is also a gold pass where you get a bit more. Every visitor to Port Arthur gets a ride on the ferry. I think 263 000 was our record year and I would not say every single person went on the ferry because some of the return visitors who have done the ferry trip may not do it.

Mrs TAYLOR - But they have paid for it?

Mr LARGE - Yes, absolutely, it is part of the package.

Mrs TAYLOR - If you recognise it as a separate expense, I would be interested to see how it is as an income item. Do you make money on the ferry?

Mr LARGE - We have a contract with Navigators and have had for more than 20 years. We make money, but it is a complex question to answer because the contract price is based on the number of visitors who take the harbour cruise.

Mrs TAYLOR - It is based on the number of visitors because they are all entitled to take the harbour cruise.

Mr LARGE - They are. It is the first time we have shown the ferry expenses in our annual report, which in hindsight probably was not the most sensible thing to do because it reveals the contract price.

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes, it does.

Mr LARGE - Because it was such a significant expense, the Auditor-General felt it should be recognised in the annual accounts. I need to get you the actual figure as to what the harbour cruise is worth if you went to a place and asked if there was a harbour cruise available around Port Arthur, 'What would you pay for a 20-minute cruise?'

Mrs TAYLOR - You used to charge for it separately once upon a time.

Mr LARGE - A long time ago.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am not suggesting you do; I am saying if you recognise it in expenses you should probably recognise it in income.

Mr LARGE - It is recognised as part of the site entry but not on its own.

Mr WIGHTMAN - It would be complex to break that down because it is attached to the site entry.

Mrs TAYLOR - I understand that, but when you are costing the site entry you must say, 'This much has to be allowed for the tour,' so you know how much you are allowing for that component and then you multiply that by the number of people who come and hopefully it comes out at least break even.

Mr LARGE - The contract is structured to the number of visitors that come to the site. So if there is a downturn, as there has been, we are not paying as much. If there is an upturn, both we and the contractor are winners. Do you understand?

Mrs TAYLOR - Does the contractor get more?

Mr LARGE - The contractor gets more as they carry more people.

Mrs TAYLOR - So it is not a fixed contract price?

Mr LARGE - No, there are certain triggers in the contract if they carry more people.

Mrs TAYLOR - Okay.

CHAIR - So visitor numbers were down but the contract went up by 3.3 per cent last year.

Mrs TAYLOR - It went up by \$24 000.

Mr LARGE - That is about the CPI, isn't it? What page are you on?

Mrs TAYLOR - 33.

CHAIR - The ferry contract in 2010-11 was \$731 078; 2011-12 was \$755 183.

Mr LARGE - I will probably need to get back to you on that but there certainly are triggers in the contract. I do not have that information here with me as I was not expecting that question.

CHAIR - Thanks. We will let you know at the end what we have on.

Mr FINCH - Minister, we did have from stakeholders who came to us some really positive feedback about the PAHSMA.

Mr WIGHTMAN - That is great, and I must say, as an aside, I planned a holiday there this year, very quietly.

Mr FINCH - No, we knew.

Mr WIGHTMAN - You knew we were there.

Laughter.

Mr FINCH - The telescope was a dead giveaway.

Laughter.

Mr FINCH - Of course, minister, access is being improved in Port Arthur, as we heard, \$18 million was the figure that was mentioned for the roads.

Mr WIGHTMAN - Coat, hat and gloves, yes.

Mr FINCH - Was that number correct? Certainly, the road is being worked on and improved, which is good.

CHAIR - \$18.3 million, I recall.

Mr FINCH - Thank you, which is good for the site. One slight issue, I am wondering how much PAHSMA takes an interest in it or who gets involved in the discussions. It was about the information bay that used to be at Eaglehawk Neck that provided information, I believe, and I don't think that is there now. Is there an intention or would there be a positive view from PAHSMA about having that re-established in respect of the tourism for the Tasman Peninsula itself?

Mr LARGE - Absolutely. There used to be a Tasmanian visitor information network in the Officers' Mess but that was knocked down a few years ago. The Tasman Council developed a Tasman tourism strategy which we were part of and local players as well as Tourism Tasmania, and that demonstrates that there needs to be some sort of gateway at Eaglehawk Neck because that is the gateway to the peninsula.

Visitor centres traditionally do not make money and they cost a lot to fund so the visitor information network at the minute is at the Port Arthur Historic Site. We would have no problems at all with that being at Eaglehawk Neck if there were an appropriate facility there but there isn't at the minute.

Everybody would like that to happen but until somebody has the money to do that and then man it, it is probably unlikely. At a couple of meetings I have been to in the last couple of weeks people were talking about it again and I think it resulted from somebody writing to the general manager of the council who had been away and came back with their idea - a local Eaglehawk Neck resident - about the importance of having something there. She has sent that letter to Tourism Tasmania - probably to the minister.

The council asked the various other stakeholders on the peninsula, so it is being talked about but, once again, it is a difficult thing with funding as it is.

Mr FINCH - Perhaps an information bay or something like that.

Mr LARGE - Yes.

Mr WIGHTMAN - I guess it is rhetorical in a way, if you get to Eaglehawk Neck you are probably on your way to Port Arthur. You know what I mean, I am on my way to Port Arthur so I am going to stop and have a look when I am on my way to Port Arthur.

Mr FINCH - Yes, but there are things that are going on there; the developments on Tasman Peninsula are quite fantastic. We heard about a couple of things like the information bay and also signage are a bit of a problem on the peninsula itself, and I would imagine PAHSMA would be involved in those with your local tourism authority representative.

Dr JONES - Sure, I think that signage outside the site is not really our responsibility. We would have input into that and we would be a party to any grant submission that looked at additional signage on the peninsula.

Mr WIGHTMAN - You are talking about a broader tourism hub or awareness.

Mr FINCH - I am searching for negatives. It was really hard because everything is so positive in the way PAHSMA is conducting itself in that area. The World Heritage listing that you are so passionate about, Dr Jones, I am wondering if we have capitalised strongly enough in a marketing sense and in registering in people's mind that World Heritage listing has been achieved.

Mr WIGHTMAN - We are building upon it. It will take time. I played a role in being at each of those sites and assisting them with some signage and different things like that from Heritage Tasmania's point of view. We will need to take a little bit of time to build up the understanding of that. Port Arthur is very important in being a gateway is probably the wrong words, but in spreading the message about the significant historic sites around Tasmania and the World Heritage-listed sites. What is important is how we coordinate those World Heritage sites. Once the fact that we have the heritage sites in place has settled, we will need to improve that coordination. That is something that is at the forefront of my thinking as minister at the moment but also with the tourism minister. We have opportunities to coordinate those sites.

Mr FINCH - Could there be more federal government support because of that World Heritage listing? Is there enough federal government support for Port Arthur?

Mr WIGHTMAN - There is never enough federal government support.

Mr FINCH - What is available; what does come in for the Port Arthur site?

Mr WIGHTMAN - Grants-wise?

Dr JONES - It is also talking it up and getting federal ministers and so on to jump up and down being excited about it. Part of the problem here is that there is a high level of understanding about Port Arthur being a World Heritage listed site but when you refer to Darlington to them, they say, 'Oh, that's interesting'.

CHAIR - Or 'Where's that?'

Dr JONES - I came across some quite highly placed people who had been on the wonderful walks and I said to them, 'You know it's a World Heritage site,' and they said, 'Oh, really?' They had been there but it had not registered with them. They were well-informed people and very

experienced travellers but it had not settled in. They all knew Port Arthur was a World Heritage site but they did not know about Darlington.

Mr WIGHTMAN - There is more to do there.

Mr DEAN - During the meetings that we have had in relation to Port Arthur we talked about the Ghost Tours and the fact that those have dropped off but we know that there are ghosts down there and we need to promote that.

Laughter.

Mr MULDER - Easier to find than foxes.

Mr DEAN - You are right.

Mr WIGHTMAN - You'll be eating your words; don't be ringing me in 20 years' time.

Mr DEAN - I will not be ringing you, I can assure you of that. Are we looking at any other night-time activities for Port Arthur? Are there any other programs being considered? I am not saying we need a sound and light show similar to what they have at Ballarat; in Ballarat they have those night-time activities that attract many people. What else have we got or are we looking at other things for Port Arthur?

Mr LARGE - This year, as the minister touched on, we introduced a new talk called Paranormal Investigation Experience. This is targeted at people who have a really strong interest in not so much ghosts but an alternative experience and with new scientific equipment, you go into some of the buildings for tours of about five hours, and that has been very successful in the interest shown and the numbers doing those. You are right, the ghost tour numbers have dropped off and we have been conscious of that. There are a couple of reasons for that: the downturn and people's capacity to have money to spend. Night-time is important to us because if people do night-time activities at the site the local hotels do okay and the restaurants do okay and people stay down there, and if they stay down there they are more likely to go to the Coal Mines and look at other areas of the Tasman Peninsula and that is really important.

In terms of doing something else, it is something that will come up with the Penitentiary precinct - the possibility of some sort of activity there of an evening. There have been different thoughts in relation to maybe the Separate Prison. We are looking at that, Ivan.

Mr DEAN - That is good. That was raised with us as an area that perhaps they ought to be considering.

CHAIR - Minister, accommodation in the area - Stephen talked about that overnight experience by doing the ghost tour. I know the Federal Group had an initiative that they were planning to implement and that has not taken place. It is on hold.

Mr WIGHTMAN - We have spoken to Greg Farrell about this and they remain committed to the project.

CHAIR - Accommodation is a slight concern, is that fair to say?

Mr LARGE - What Federal have in mind in terms of that five-star experience is really important because Federal coming down there will lift the standard and they are such powerful marketers in promoting a product. That will be really beneficial for us. In the summertime - January, February and Easter - it is very difficult to get a bed down there so there are some opportunities to do that. Some of the accommodation is a little bit tired and that is something where, if Federal come down there, that will help.

Mr WIGHTMAN - Do you mean top-end accommodation or do you mean accommodation generally?

CHAIR - It was just raised that the level of accommodation is not quite where some in the community see it would need to be.

Mr WIGHTMAN - Do they think in terms of Stewarts Bay, you cannot get much better.

Mr MULDER - Go and stay in a room at the Fox & Hounds Inn.

Mr WIGHTMAN - That was not the question I asked.

Mr MULDER - It is accommodation in the area.

Mr WIGHTMAN - That is why I was asking for some clarification there.

CHAIR - There is nothing wrong with the Spring Bay Hotel at Triabunna. It depends on what you are looking for. It was raised with the committee that accommodation does not appear to meet everyone's needs and, as Mrs Taylor said, for the number of visitors that you hope to increase to, you need to have that accommodation available.

Mr DEAN - The Federal Hotels is on hold, isn't it?

CHAIR - It is, but they are still committed.

Mr WIGHTMAN - They are still committed to it and obviously Saffire has been a big development for them and once that is embedded and settled I would suggest they will be looking at Port Arthur because I know they see it as a great opportunity.

CHAIR - We have about three minutes left, members, any pressing questions?

Mr FINCH - Have we not been drawing on federal support as much as we might? We are talking about World Heritage listing and that is about an Australian project and the Australian ownership of this initiative, yet are we getting enough support federally in respect of what the Tasmanian government is being asked to do or PAHSMA provide, and present for conservation particularly and the people, as you mentioned before, Dr Jones, the skills that they have built are part of their CV for a lifetime, and the students who we bring in who spend the time at Port Arthur? It is like a national initiative so I am just wondering whether the feds are being pressed enough to support us.

Mr WIGHTMAN - I will come to Dr Jones in a moment. There was approximately \$100 000 in 2010-11 and that was for the conservation of the Female Factory.

CHAIR - From the feds?

Mr WIGHTMAN - Yes, from the feds.

CHAIR - Chickenfeed.

Mr WIGHTMAN - I would like a bit of that chickenfeed in some of my areas. You may remember that Tony Burke was down this year and he put -

Mrs TAYLOR - He has been down a number of times but this is a particular time you are talking about.

Mr WIGHTMAN - Tony Burke announced \$263 775 this year which will appear in next year's financial statements.

We would take any additional money that the federal government would provide to Port Arthur. I think they recognise the importance of Port Arthur. Whether that transfers into a lot of cash coming out at the moment is doubtful and that is an honest opinion about that. It is something that I talk to Tony Burke about on a regular basis and I think he understands the importance of it. Whether that transfers into money coming down, we need to all continue the lobbying.

Dr FINCH - The \$6 million that will be required to look after the Penitentiary is a huge impost on a hard-pressed state government at the moment.

Dr JONES - When the Separate Prison project went on, the commonwealth did come to the party. The commonwealth were pretty good.

Dr HARRINGTON - We are very successful. With any formal grant that is announced, we always put in an application, usually more than one. For the last Your Community grant, for example, we put in three. We were successful with one which was the one the minister was talking about. We recently received \$100 000 through T-QUAL. We look around for whatever grants we have. I would suggest that our contribution is recognised in that we regularly are granted good amounts under existing grant funds. It is the bigger picture things, outside of funds, that is an issue.

Mrs TAYLOR - To continue from Mr Finch's discussion about your place in the peninsula itself. We have already discussed that there ought to be something at the Neck. You are right, in that your particular focus has to be on the site. Nevertheless, the health of the whole peninsula will also improve the health of your own facility and you are, whether you like it or not, the major partner there. It is good that the council has done the plan but they employ 18 people so they are probably a much smaller partner in the economic health of the whole peninsula than the Port Arthur site.

I would like to ask whether you might consider Port Arthur being more proactive in developing and promoting the tourism and the information about the whole of the peninsula because you are the major financial partner and the major economic driver of that. You are right, minister, when you said that when people are at Eaglehawk Neck, they already know they are going to Port Arthur. That is not the point. I know it is not specifically Port Arthur, but do you morally, or even economically, see a benefit for yourselves and the whole economy by looking at the bigger picture and saying, what can we do to contribute to everything there is on the peninsula and promoting that, whether it is accommodation or the walks or the wonderful environment?

CHAIR - It is going to be a brief answer.

Dr JONES - It will not be a brief answer. Part of the problem is that people say, I am in Tasmania, I will spend a day at Port Arthur, and that is it. The essential thing is saying, if you are going down in that direction, you ought to be thinking of three days and then you look at all the other wonderful things that are around.

I am conscious of my own case. I am ashamed to say I had not been on the Tasman Island cruise until last Saturday because every time I come down I think, oh well, I will do it next time and you put it off. But the point is that you do not get to see all these other wonderful things, Remarkable Cave and so on, unless you say, don't dash down, dash back and say, I have done the whole experience because you have not.

Mr WIGHTMAN - One of the interesting things I found when doing some reading about this is that visitor behaviour has changed. In many ways there are a lot shorter stays, with people staying three or four days - and that may be a sign of economic times and the like. I think Port Arthur plays a key role in attracting a greater number of people to the area. Port Arthur attracts people and allows them to experience many other things on the Tasman Peninsula. There is a role for the individual businesses that operate there and a role for Tourism Tasmania and not lumping it on Port Arthur to do all that aspect of it. I take the point that bringing more tourists to the peninsula brings more tourists to Port Arthur so it can work hand in hand. There are some other players in there, particularly Tourism Tasmania, and some of the business operators in the area, who could work together on that project.

Mrs TAYLOR - They have set up an RTO, which will be good. I suppose I am saying, because you are the biggest player on the peninsula, would you be prepared to - not necessarily put money into it - but be proactive in helping that RTO and the whole scheme work better?

Mr LARGE - I think we are. If you look at our website, we have suggested itineraries. We have 250 000 people who come to Port Arthur but probably only between 15 000 and 20 000 go to the Coal Mines. We want more people to go to the Coal Mines. We encourage people to stay a night because they will do the ghost tour.

CHAIR - Dr Jones, I think you should have the last word.

Dr JONES - I never tire of reminding people that Mark Twain came to Port Arthur in 1897. Some of our guides distinctly remember it.

Laughter.

CHAIR - Minister, I want to place this on the record, on behalf of the committee and the Legislative Council, and Madam President is with us this morning, and we thank her for coming in. Dr Jones, thank you immensely for your contribution to Port Arthur and Tasmania. We are very grateful and hope you will continue to visit us. I know you will continue to support Port Arthur and what it has done for Tasmania, Australia and the world.

Dr JONES - It has been an honour, a privilege and a delight.

The committee suspended at 10.38 a.m.