

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON TOURISM IN TASMANIA MET IN NUBEENA COUNCIL CHAMBERS, NUBEENA, ON THURSDAY 26 AUGUST 2010.**

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**Mr ROGER JOHN SELF**, CHAIR, PORT ARTHUR AND TASMAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Welcome, Mr Self. We would like to hear your views about tourism here and in general.

**Mr SELF** - I believe this area is the number one tourist destination. We have a lot of natural attributes with the scenery, and Port Arthur of course. That is a great drawcard. I think Port Arthur is a bit of an iconic tourist mecca, with some 300 000 people a year going through it. I think the Government on the whole is giving us support in every way. I own a tourist coach and have owned several school buses, a tow truck and hire care service. I am involved in transport a lot and for 17 years I have been a Tasman councillor. I had a term of two years as mayor and two years at deputy mayor and my main grouch has been the road. I have been following that for the 30 years I've been down here. There is no parochialism with this, but up north we see it over and over, and you've heard it over and over, they seem to have beautiful roads and down here it's the same old story. This is the number one tourist destination - some 300 000 people visit Port Arthur. But the road is absolutely saturated with heavy machinery, hire cars, campervans and trucks. We have log trucks, boats, campervans, motorhomes, caravans at the number one fishing spot at Eaglehawk Neck, and grain trucks for the chicken sheds. There is a section as you leave Murdunna to the top of Eaglehawk Neck hill of 8.25 kilometres with double lines and nowhere to pass. People get frustrated and want to pass and there have been some minor accidents there. There is one particular bend in between Dunalley and Murdunna, 35 kilometres an hour around a sacred tree, a huge tree.

I know the road - I have done thousands of trips - and that's my grouch with the bus down here. We're not getting enough support. Last year a Saintry's school bus from Launceston was side-swiped. A bus, luckily empty, went over the bank about 12 months ago at Port Arthur and nothing came out of it. I'm not saying there's a conspiracy here or anything like that but I think all these things should be divulged or made public so that statistics can take care of the road.

I think that is my main grouch - the road. I think there is a lot of future down here. We had our annual general meeting last night with PATTA - the Port Arthur and Tasman Tourist Association. We had some 20 members there and we signed up 18 new members. We had a bad run last year and a suit cost the association \$8 000, but that is another story and I do not want to go down that path. The feeling of tourism is very strong. We are looking forward to the major development of the Three Capes Track, which is an injection of some \$30-odd million. We cannot see any other major development in the near future down here. We do not know about Federals but that is in another area and is \$800-a-night accommodation.

**Mr PARKINSON** - I think they are going ahead.

**Mr SELF** - They have had a few hiccups. I think the Three Capes Track will put more of an injection into employment long range, and building of course, and \$30 million is better spent here than anywhere else. There is some resentment against the Three Capes. A few people down here get a little possessive perhaps and want the walking tracks for themselves. We had a meeting last week and the suggestion was put forward - actually the minister came down and we had a meeting at the Neck - that locals could have a ticket, like they do at Port Arthur, for free entry, so that would meet a compromise with the locals who think they are hard done by. I can see a lot of positives with that Three Capes Track and I certainly hope we get it. If we have a development like that then something should be done or may be done about the road, which gets back to my grouch.

**CHAIR** - Your main concern is the width and the lack of passing lanes?

**Mr SELF** - That is it, really. The surface is not bad, I will say that. It breaks up in part but they are usually onto it. It is line of vision. You could have some of the side bushes cut down, which they are starting to do slowly. The road is my main concern, the safety aspects of it for people driving down. The volume and variation of traffic is worth looking at.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - There do not seem to a lot of pull-off bays or anything like that. If there is a slower vehicle on the road you get traffic banked up behind it for miles.

**Mr SELF** - We want to remove the frustration. Most people with a campervan or a boat would pull over and let them go through and that is where you get frustration. Some people down here commute to Hobart, believe it or not, particularly from around the Taranna-Eaglehawk Neck area and Copping. They use the road of a morning and at night.

**CHAIR** - How long does that usually take from Eaglehawk Neck to Hobart?

**Mr SELF** - You can do it in about one hour - it is about 80 kilometres - depending on the traffic.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - What is your opinion about some of the legal speed limit signs like 'End 70' and 'End 80'?

**Mr SELF** - It is a bit of a dog's breakfast at times, not for us so much but for the people coming from the big island. They are very confused and you can see that. I do not know whether DIER could have a look at that and streamline it a little and perhaps make the signs a little more uniform, because they are confusing.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - There is a road safety committee that would probably be looking at those issues but it has come up before because once it says 'End 70' you do not really know what you are allowed to do now.

**Mr SELF** - That is right.

**Mr FINCH** - Is it 100 or 110 kph?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Well, here it is 90 kph.

**Mr SELF** - There are only two signs and I have been on about that. We should have a refresher all the way down to say it is 90, because people say that you are in the country and you can do 100 kph. That is council's problem. Only in this council there is a 90kph limit.

**Mr FINCH** - Are they recommendations or law?

**Mr SELF** - Law.

**Mr FINCH** - So you would get fined if you went over -

**Mr SELF** - Yes. When they installed it they had a trial period, several months' warning and so forth, but it is law now - 90.

**Mr FINCH** - Well, that is a way of not fixing up the roads, isn't it?

**Mr SELF** - Well, I did not want to say that.

**Mr FINCH** - It makes it safer.

**Mr SELF** - That is right.

**Mr FINCH** - And slower.

**Mr SELF** - Yes. That is my main concern, the road - the safety aspect of it and the frustration of people.

**Mr FINCH** - Roger, are you finding that many people travel around Nubeena and Highcroft and the various areas around Tasman Peninsula after they have done Port Arthur?

**Mr SELF** - You do get a few.

**Mr FINCH** - Do they want the roads unsafe then?

**Mr SELF** - Not really. The roads are of the same condition, but leading away from your question, the site now is promoting the coalmines as a World Heritage site. A lot of people do not know about it or it has not been advertised and you get a lot of people going out to the coalmines. That is a reasonable sort of road, but people are not in haste, are they, going back to Hobart or coming down. They are quite happy to dawdle a bit and have a look around.

**Mr FINCH** - And the locals are accepting of that?

**Mr SELF** - Well, they should be, particularly the businesses. They might leave a dollar or two here.

**Mr FINCH** - So it is not an issue for your group, PATTA?

**Mr SELF** - No. I think they would more than welcome people doing the loop, as we call it.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Roger, do you have a caravan park?

**Mr SELF** - Two.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - What about overnight motorhomes? Do you have areas set aside for that or is that an issue? Do you have a dump point?

**Mr SELF** - The council have a dump point just down here. That is about the only one. That is a grey area with most councils, though, isn't it? What do you do? If they park on the side of the road do you move them on or do you leave them there to get a little bit of revenue?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Does PATTA have any policy?

**Mr SELF** - No, we have not got any direct thoughts on that. Without handballing it, it is a council matter really, but we have input with council. We have representatives of council on PATTA.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So does council set aside an area? Some councils set aside an area where motorhomes can go for 24 or 48 hours.

**Mr SELF** - We have a caravan park here and one at Port Arthur.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So they are directed to the caravan parks?

**Mr SELF** - Normally. I notice that at Dunalley people are welcome to park alongside the hotel and then go into the hotel to use their facilities, which is a good one. That is the sort of thing that businesses can do as a bit of a sideline really. We have had caravan groups down here, big groups - a gathering - and the council has put them on the oval for the night. They are not turned away.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If there was a big event down here, do you believe there is enough accommodation?

**Mr SELF** - Seasonal.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It is seasonal.

**Mr SELF** - At the moment you would get a bed anywhere. I forget the exact number of beds. I think we have something like 500 beds here. Dan Clark, who has Cascades Colonial Accommodation through Koonya, said to me a couple of years ago that we do not want the road to be too good because if it is, people will not stay overnight. What do you do?

**CHAIR** - The two main points are that you were concerned about the roads and some residents were concerned about the Three Capes and the cost of that. You feel it may be possible for locals to undertake those walks free.

**Mr SELF** - Yes, that is basically what I think.

**Mr FINCH** - Roger, does PATTA get good support, encouragement or communication from Tourism Tasmania? Do they get involved in your organisation?

**Mr SELF** - Very good.

**Mr FINCH** - In what way?

**Mr SELF** - As I said, I do not want to go down the path of the past but the year before last, we had a problem with PATTA. They had an ill-conceived committee. There were money transactions not going missing but the minutes weren't correct and it fragmented the whole area down here for the last 12 months. Everyone stood down. We had three meetings to get a quorum last year. Everyone was disenchanted. Some people did money on the printing of this brochure, the printer went bad - he shot through with the money. It was a real shemozzle.

We came in and there were fellas like - I am dropping a few names - Rob Pennicott -

**Mr FINCH** - Yes.

**Mr SELF** - You know Rob Pennicott? He is a good businessman. There was Kathy Werner who has the Basin Cottage. We have a really good committee in the last 12 months that has pulled us out of the poo. It cost the association \$8 000 for legal fees.

So to answer your question, that is where we went a little bit bad. We got fragmented with all this kerfuffle. We paid the solicitor's fee. When I was on council we used to quite easily give \$10 000 to \$15 000 to the tourist group, PATTA, to help them on their way but that all ceased last year when it turned upside down.

So not building myself up, but in the last 12 months we have come out of it. We have had a re-run of our brochure. We have some flyers that we have put around for people to advertise in our new brochure. It is quite comprehensive. This year now we are in the process, we have set a date, we had our annual general meeting last night and we had about 22 people turn up, which was very encouraging. We are going ahead now to reprint 50 000 of those.

**Mr FINCH** - You have updated it?

**Mr SELF** - It will be updated. This is the latest one. That is the one that was done about two years ago. We are in the throes of doing that and I think that is very important.

**Mr FINCH** - Where do you distribute those, Roger?

**Mr SELF** - On the ships, at the airline terminals -

**Mr FINCH** - Do you use Brochure Exchange?

**Mr SELF** - Yes, all that. Not just down here; we want to get the boats going to Melbourne, the ferry, the airlines and for them to plan out their trip before they get here. I feel very

positive now that we are going ahead and we have the new committee back on. They all came back on. We have Ken whatever his name is who has Taylor's Restaurant in Port Arthur. He is a really good businessman. He has a couple of hotel/motels in Hobart. He is on the committee. So it is all positive now.

**Mr FINCH** - Good.

**Mr SELF** - And this is what we want to get to, getting the Association, PATTA, back onto firm ground.

**Mr FINCH** - What sort of a sense do you get of that brochure working for you in respect of the numbers that you get on the peninsula?

**Mr SELF** - It is very hard to gauge. You would have to do a survey really and say, 'How did you come here?' I am not being smart.

**Mr FINCH** - No, we have already seen someone this morning who does that.

**Mr SELF** - People take the brochure so we assume that they make up their mind that they are going to go there or visit here. If you were going to Tasman Peninsula, you would be looking for something like this.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - With 300 000 people, getting people here is not an issue, is it, really?

**Mr SELF** - No, not really, but that is the icon, Port Arthur.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes.

**Mr SELF** - But there is a lot to see around here in the loop, as you said a while ago, or at the coalmines.

Over and over you see it; people come down for a day and they go back and they say, 'There is not enough time'. We used to have travel agents on the mainland who would talk about driving from Strahan to Port Arthur for lunch. It doesn't look that far on the map, but look at what there is to see in between. These sorts of things you have to overcome and try to educate people.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Do you have backpackers' accommodation here?

**Mr SELF** - Yes. There is one at Eaglehawk Neck and one at the old hall at Port Arthur.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Which is the bus?

**Mr SELF** - Tiger Line run a daily service up and back of a night. It is mainly schoolchildren but it has other passengers also.

**Mr FINCH** - Apologies if you have covered this already, Roger. What does the World Heritage listing mean for your operation and for the operators here? How is the community viewing it and what do you know about it?

**Mr SELF** - There was a very small minority opposed to it. There were banners up and marches. But overall people were a little hesitant that they would lose their rights, but everything still has to come through council. Even the site has to come through council. It think it has been welcomed. They can see that it must be a plus rather than a minus, and I think generally it has topped off the peninsula, in particular Port Arthur and the coal mines.

**Mr PARKINSON** - So are you unsure of what the implications of that are?

**Mr SELF** - Some were. Some were a little bit uneducated about what was going to happen.

**Mr PARKINSON** - Has it been clarified now, though, as far as you know?

**Mr SELF** - I think so, yes. People were worried that they had to paint their doors a certain colour, a little bit over the fence perhaps. But that has all cooled down and I think people have accepted it now because it must be a plus to have World Heritage status.

**Mr PARKINSON** - Has there been any sort of briefing to your organisation about it, and the implications and that sort of thing? Is Tourism Tasmania cognisant of it and working with it and looking for opportunities?

**Mr SELF** - For our association?

**Mr PARKINSON** - Yes, or for your community.

**Mr SELF** - We were informed through council and meetings and consultations. The average person who had a business or lived here was well informed, whether it came from council or the powers that be. I think they were well informed. There were plenty of public meetings to ask questions. Yes, I think it is a good thing. I think it has been accepted now. There are only a very few people against it, but they just don't have a say now because it is completed.

**Mr PARKINSON** - And your perception, do you think it is going to be good for the Tasman Peninsula? Do you think it is going to bring people here? Will people want to come and see this World Heritage listed attraction?

**Mr SELF** - You'd think so. I would say so, but I am a mere mortal.

**CHAIR** - And you would hope so.

**Mr SELF** - Oh yes, naturally. That's what it is all about. If I went to Europe and there was a World Heritage place you would be apt to go and see it, wouldn't you? I think it has a ring to it, World Heritage. There are not many in the world. That is my general feeling. That was the other one we have just put out recently to get adverts in our new tear-off -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That is one of the best ones I have seen.

**Mr SELF** - Is it?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes. I think that is excellent.

**Mr SELF** - I think it is very good.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Who developed this for you, Roger?

**Mr SELF** - A printer in Hobart. A young lady -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Did you do the editorial and the photos in that?

**Mr SELF** - They did. Everyone had a go at it, really. But we are going to use that format the same, just brighten it up, renew it now.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It is very informative. If I were travelling in this area I would find it really helpful.

**Mr SELF** - It draws you a bit, yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Public phone and chemist, coffee, you will know where the police are.

**Mr SELF** - Yes, barbecues, everything, you know.

**Mr PARKINSON** - It even features the Sorell fruit farm.

**Mr SELF** - Yes, Bob up there at the Sorell fruit farm. He's a good operator, Bob. He is a member of PATTA, even up there.

**Mr PARKINSON** - He's got a good idea. He's starting to put out a brochure in Chinese.

**Mr SELF** - Yes, that's right. Very good.

As I said before, I don't want to repeat the past, but I was on council for 17 years and most councillors are in favour of tourism, but there are a few who are against tourism. Now, as I said before, PATTA, was allocated an amount of money each year. In this budget we got nothing. So we are going to print this new brochure which will cost us about \$25 000 for 50 000. We worked out that if we get the same back as the ads in that brochure we will take about \$36 000. But there again, Mike, if we want to print another 50 000 we have to have reserve to print that 50 000. Once we take the money we might show a profit but we have to allow to reprint again don't we. Now we will have to make approaches to the council for a grant. But before we had the money. The site is very good and they have a representative on our committee - Trish does a lot of work and a lot with the new brochure. The site is supporting her wages, which is good for us. We could not afford to employ anyone. This new committee is positive and we are looking forward.

**Mr FINCH** - I like that too, Port Arthur is only part of the story.

**CHAIR** - The time allocated has expired, are there any other questions? Anything you would like to say, any concluding remarks.

**Mr SELF** - No I am just disappointed that I did not do enough homework, that is my fault.



**Mr PARKINSON** - No, you have covered a range.

**Mr FINCH** - You are able to sit in more if you care to, keep in touch with Tom. If you think of something later on, think I should have mentioned that, then get in touch with Tom.

**Mr SELF** - My pet hate is the road and I think that I have expressed myself.

**Mr FINCH** - We got that message.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Mr KEN STRONACH, MANAGER, STEWARTS BAY LODGE, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.**

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for coming. To begin with how about you tell us something about your operation, Stewarts Bay Lodge, and then move on and let us have your views about tourism in this area.

**Mr STRONACH** - Apart from Stewarts Bay I am a tourism operator throughout the State. I have had the Stewarts Bay Lodge operation for about three years since it was developed from 20 cabins to 40 cabins. It is unusual in Tasmanian tourism terms or Tasmanian accommodation terms in so much as it is a management rights business a la the typical Gold Coast or a high-rise building where the apartments or cabins, in our case, are individually owned and we manage them on behalf of owners. We derive our income from commission on rooms revenue and cleaning fee and body corporate income for managing the site. In addition I have inherited, more so than desired, the restaurant on site, which is a lovely, large waterfront restaurant and function centre. I took the business on approximately three years ago on the basis that it was a management rights business and therefore there was not the ongoing need for knowing the seasonality or anticipated seasonality of the area.

I guess it is quite fortunate because it has proven to be even more seasonal than I had expected. I had not operated outside of the capital cities for a long time until I came down here. We operate at around 50 per cent occupancy averaged throughout the year. We had quite a good average room rate last year - \$187 - and we have an average stay of around about 1.7 nights. That is across the year. The longer length of stay period is the school holidays - January, February, March, April period, for instance - and then the rest of the year has been around about 1.2 to 1.3 average. I have an aim this year to try to get our average length of stay up to two nights, which is better for us and better for the owners and obviously will show increased occupancy as a result. I am looking to try to achieve 53 per cent this year. I had hoped to achieve that two years ago but the reality is that I think visitation down here has declined rather than increased, as I think most people would attest.

It is quite interesting because, having a foot in both camps, operating in Hobart we say to people, 'No, just come down here for the day', while an operator down here will say, 'Come down and stay for the night or two or longer.' I see it more clearly now because I am on the ground here more than I was a couple of years ago. Given the right economic, promotional and marketing conditions for the destination here, there is definitely the capacity to occupy people easily for a couple of nights on the peninsula. There is enough to do; it is just a case of how we tell them to do it. I can only say that I am particularly disappointed and disillusioned at the moment in the way I have seen Tourism Tasmania's activities over the last three to four years. Their focus has changed. Felicia is a good friend of mine, as is Simon, but I am disappointed in how we are not spending our money and how there is a lack of recognition of what tourism can or ought to be to the State. I do not think that the famous 'zone marketing' thing has worked anywhere near as well as it ought to have.

I know Roger has put a lot of time and effort into this new brochure, but I was saying to him last night - because I was at the Port Arthur AGM last night - there is a great need for a much better website for the destination. I am convinced now that 75-80 per cent of

people, from what I have seen, coming down here start their search for accommodation in Tasmania online. So few people these days are looking through brochures or go to travel agents. Even if they go to travel agents they are going after they have discovered something from Google or wherever it may be.

**Mr FINCH** - Ken, you have got a website?

**Mr STRONACH** - Yes.

**Mr FINCH** - Who has the website? Is it council or PATTA or is there a general tourism website?

**Mr STRONACH** - There are various websites. I do not think there is anything as all-encompassing as we need to drive people to the destination. I was talking to Adam Saddler, a consultant who was along at the AGM last night is coming along to the function this evening in Nubeena. I was talking to him at our property in town, Hotel Collins, for a couple of hours about the issues that he is dealing with down here at the moment for the Tourism Association. He raised something with me called the Sea Cliffs Coast. I said, 'What the hell is that? I have never heard of it before.' I am not saying that somebody did not have a good idea in wanting to put it there, but all it was trying to do, in my opinion, is divide and take away from the focus. The focus is always going to be the destination. The hero here is always going to be Port Arthur, and World Heritage can only help that. It is just a case of how it is sold, and it has to be sold more cohesively and sensibly, with a lot more effort, time and money going into online access for it. We all have to have access, in a marketing sense, to a well put together, organised website for the destination.

**Mr FINCH** - Who do you think should manage it?

**Mr STRONACH** - I do not know. It cannot be private. Because of the population down here, the Tourism Association seems to be over here and the councils within the region seem to be over there, but they seem to be trying to get together a bit more. To manage something like this it is probably going to end up by being industry supported but probably coordinated by council, because there is no other resource down here to do such a thing at the moment.

**Mr FINCH** - Tourism Tasmania should help or do they have opportunities for you to join?

**Mr STRONACH** - Obviously there is the major Tasmania website and all the rest of it, but there still has to be, perhaps linked to it, some regional stuff. A superior website for this destination would be absolutely advantageous.

**Mr FINCH** - Did you talk about this at PATTA last night?

**Mr STRONACH** - Not really. I talked to Roger about it briefly afterwards. I am becoming less and less of a believer. As I go on, looking at the cost and the results from traditional form of sales and marketing such as brochures and newspapers and TV, I get more and more disillusioned with what I see. I talk to everybody who comes through our front gate and ask how they found out about it, and it is always from a friend who saw you on Google or your website or whatever it may be and that is where they all start. There is a

need for some sort of paper paraphernalia when people get to places but I am, again, a bit cynical about it. I tend to be very cynical about things such as - and these are good friends of mine as well - the success of things like brochure exchange. I see the amount of paper that gets picked up on the ferries, at airports and retail travel shows and just gets discarded and thrown on the floor. Port Arthur have a recycling bin for brochures because they know people pick them up and throw them away.

**Mr FINCH** - We saw a very good graph done by the Sorell Fruit Farm. Bob Hardy up there has done a survey -

**Mr STRONACH** - He has; I was talking to him about it.

**Mr FINCH** - about where people found out about it. It was quite interesting to survey that aspect of his operation. It was a suggestion that I have taken on board. Where is Stewarts Bay Lodge?

**Mr STRONACH** - Sometimes I think it should be changed because Stewarts Bay Lodge is next door to the historic site. It is on Stewarts Bay and we literally share a boundary with the historic site. There is Stewarts Bay, Ladies Bay and then there is Port Arthur. Ladies Bay, for your information, was where officers' wives used to bathe out of sight of the convicts, just across the boundary. Stewarts Bay has some of the most stunning views I have seen anywhere in Tasmania. It is a glorious beach.

**Mr FINCH** - When you said you have increased to 40 properties -

**Mr STRONACH** - Forty cabins.

**Mr FINCH** - Are they all at Stewarts Bay?

**Mr STRONACH** - Yes. There are 21 two-year-old, virtually brand new, very contemporary, very spacious, very nicely furnished, two-bedroom, two-bathroom cabins. Then there are 19 others which are an older log cabin style with one, two and three bedrooms.

**Mr FINCH** - How do you market Stewarts Bay Lodge?

**Mr STRONACH** - When I bought the business I was trying to drive business initially through traditional media, with a lot of stuff in Hobart because I found out that a lot of people had not been down to Port Arthur in general for a very long time. We did quite well with that for a while and had a lot of people coming down for weekends. August is the quietest month of the year. The majority of our business in August is weekends and the majority of that business is local people from Hobart.

**Mr FINCH** - Do you reduce your rates?

**Mr STRONACH** - Yes, significantly, and we package them with breakfast and things like that - and kayaks. Apart from that, we market it through our website. A business partner and I have a business which we call Stay Tasmania and that markets Stewarts Bay Lodge, the two hotels that we own between us - Hotel Collins in Hobart and the new Hotel Charles in Launceston - and a property at Cradle Mountain and on the east coast.

So we are using that branding and some feet on the ground to market the property, along with wholesalers.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - On the local council website is there a tourism accommodation link?

**Mr STRONACH** - No.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It's never easy but that would be a terrific way because you don't really want to have a different group to Tasman Council.

**Mr STRONACH** - As I said before, I firmly believe that Port Arthur is always going to be the reason to come down here. From a relative outsider's point of view - and I guess I can say that because I don't live here all the time and I probably don't get blinded by other things - I see it most of the time from Hobart, thinking that Port Arthur is the reason to be down here, regardless of the fact that there are other things from Sorell down to Nubeena.

**Mr FINCH** - With a lot of add-ons.

**Mr STRONACH** - There are add-ons, but it is Port Arthur. I think there's no reason that we shouldn't benefit, and we will benefit in the longer term. The destination will benefit from World Heritage listing, without a doubt, along with the coalmines. I know that Stephen Large is talking about doing a tour of both - a bit more interpretative. I am sure you're aware that they will more than likely be taking on the Female Factory in South Hobart as well. They will be trying to sell those three destinations together, which will once again help the regional destination down here.

I firmly believe in competition and I firmly believe in the success that Saffire is going to bring to the east coast and to Tasmania in general and the money that Federal will throw into the destination because of that. I am positive that they will develop something significant down here on the site of the Comfort Inn, and hopefully someone else will take on a lodge at Crescent Bay. I think those things will be wonderful for the destination. It's the old story; there is the pyramid with only a few people up there, but most of us are down here and we find out about it from the money that those people can throw at the destination.

**Mr FINCH** - You mentioned earlier, Ken, that you were disappointed in Tourism Tasmania not spending on what tourism should be.

**Mr STRONACH** - I just think they've lost the focus a bit. It's easy for me to criticise - and I can't necessarily be totally specific - but I was upset the other day when I heard Michelle O'Byrne talking about how wonderful tourism was because people had the confidence to put money into Stillwater being launched in Launceston. On the other hand, we know that numbers are significantly down; spend is down. I'm not saying it is just a thing here. It is a national thing. We're all in a difficult situation. There's the dollar and the dramatic rise in interest in short-haul travel overseas. In North Queensland, for instance, Cairns is down 9 per cent in their high season on last year, and Port Douglas is down even more, so we're not the only ones in the boat and it's easy for me to complain about it because there probably is a limited dollar, however it is interesting to note that New Zealand has had their best July on record in terms of in-

bound business. Funnily enough, like the mainland, in Tasmania we tend to follow trends to a degree. We also tend to follow trends in New Zealand. When they have their highs and lows Australia seems to be a bit behind them. They are always more innovative than we are. They are much more reliant on tourism than we are as well and, traditionally, they market themselves really well.

**Mr FINCH** - We hear, we see media and we read stories about the fact that the numbers for tourism are good. Sometimes they say they are up 2 per cent and figures like that. Do you think that that is misleading?

**Mr STRONACH** - It is misleading and it is funny. It is politics, we see it in economics and we see it in tourism and our interest today is tourism. We know that we follow trends on the mainland here. We are always down a year, or thereabouts, after anything that happens on the mainland and we always go up a year after.

When trends are down on the mainland and we are still up here, we are doing a wonderful job. No-one says anything when it is the other way around - and numbers are down, it is a fact.

**Mr FINCH** - So if you were running Tourism Tasmania or had a bit of a focus at some of their marketing dollars, what would you be thinking about? What do you think is a focus that you might return to or a new focus that you might go to?

**Mr STRONACH** - I guess it is not that easy and it is dollar-driven. In Felicia's favour, she has very limited dollars. She is a marketing person, she is not an administration person - she never wanted to be an administration-type person; didn't ever want to come in here and cut the backside out of Tourism Tasmania as a department.

**Mr FINCH** - But somebody had to do it.

**Mr STRONACH** - I'm not saying that she hasn't had to do it, but she is a marketing person and I don't think she has had the opportunity to focus on marketing. I do not disagree with you there.

The dollar is limited and that is a big problem. On a tourist-achieved basis or on a dollar-achieved basis, it is fairly well known - and I can't give you specifics - that we spend significantly less on achieving that than other States do - other destinations do.

**Mr FINCH** - Recently when the State Government injected another \$4.5 million into the tourism industry did people in the industry have a sense that that was overdue, appreciated, needed?

**Mr STRONACH** - I think it had gone backwards for a long time and it really wasn't making a lot of difference. I don't think it made any difference, personally.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You mentioned, Ken, the zone marketing and how you have some reservations about that. One school of thought would say, 'Look, you have to give it some time to run' - we have heard that - and the other school of thought would say, 'We don't think it's going to work no matter how long you give it, just scrap it'.

**Mr STRONACH** - Another classic example of how I don't feel it has worked is that we can't go back to paper material. Does anybody know how many squillion brochures there are left lying around that we haven't been able to get rid of? They are everywhere. I look at that as being a waste of money. Then, all of a sudden, it came down to the operators being asked to advertise in the zone ones and the overall zone one as well - the individual zone ones and then Tourism Tasmania things - without seeming to have a great deal of thought of results.

**Mr FINCH** - Are you involved in the zone operation, in the zone market area?

**Mr STRONACH** - From the point of view of advertising or -

**Mr FINCH** - Yes, or as a representative for your own zone market?

**Mr STRONACH** - No, I'm not, I'm not a representative.

**Mr FINCH** - Do you think that the zone marketing could be about that website you were talking about?

**Mr STRONACH** - Yes, there needs to be a greater focus on digital advertising, generally. There will always be a need for a Tasmanian major website but I do think that there is a great need - we were talking today about regions down here, particularly - for a Tasman Peninsula website - a really good one. Whether that ties in with other zones or otherwise, I don't know.

**Mr FINCH** - I am only exercising my mind here, but it could be that if we got the five zones, then a way that they could market is come into the Tourism Tasmania or Discover Tasmania website and then have the various areas.

**Mr STRONACH** - I know what you're saying, yes, that's right.

**Mr FINCH** - Then you could feed your information from your zone into that - whatever they call it - portal or link.

**Mr STRONACH** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Any further questions? Would you like to make any comments to conclude?

**Mr STRONACH** - Just a quick one, how much longer do you have to run in what you are doing?

**CHAIR** - We want to present the report early next year.

**Mr STRONACH** - Early next year, okay.

**Mr FINCH** - We could take more, if you wanted to present more information to us through Tom. If there is more that you think could be helpful to us in making recommendations, or any information about how operators feel, we are happy to take information on that.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for being with us and thank you for being so frank with us. We appreciate it. Good luck with all your enterprises.

**Mr FINCH** - Are you in Launceston tomorrow?

**Mr FINCH** - My lunch group is going up to -

**Mr STRONACH** - The Charles Darwin, very good.

**Mr FINCH** - I will warn them.

*Laughter.*

**Mr FINCH** - They are really looking forward to it.

**Mr STRONACH** - The young chef we have there has done a wonderful job actually, a terrific job.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**



**Mr PETER ROCHE, FERRY OPERATOR, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED**

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Could you give us a brief overview?

**Mr ROCHE** - I represent our family business. My family has been operating cruises since the 1940s and we have run cruises every summer since then. We operate two vessels on the Derwent in Hobart and we have been the operator at the Port Arthur historic site for 24 years. We operate the cruise around the harbour and out to the Isle of the Dead and the settlement at Point Puer.

In Hobart we will be operating up to the new museum at Moorilla, which is an exciting development for tourism in Tassie, and we are looking forward to the challenge of being the prime transport link between the city and the new MONA museum.

I operate the business with my two brothers, and my dad and his two brothers started our family business, so I guess that we are second-generation operators. We have had long service here at Port Arthur where we have been through thick and thin over the 24 years that we have operated.

When I first came to Port Arthur it was estimated, but nobody really knew because no particular numbers were taken, that somewhere between 130 000 to 140 000 visitors came to Port Arthur. In the mid-1980s the Government decided to annex the Port Arthur historic site out of the Parks and Wildlife umbrella and make it the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority. That was a wonderful result for the historic site and it was pushed through by two excellent legislative councillors in Peter McKay and Steve Wilson. They were the instigators. Since then Port Arthur has grown to last year welcoming a total of about 300 000 visitors. Rough figures show that about 250 000 of those come during the day and about 50 000 for the night activity.

**Mr FINCH** - What year did that happen - 1985, did you say?

**Mr ROCHE** - Yes. Since they started to charge an entry fee at Port Arthur in the 1980s they have had a firmer grip on the actual visitor numbers and as a result they have been able to peg the performance of the historic site as an attraction. Port Arthur, particularly in the last six or seven years, has had very good growth and it is only in the last 12 months that it has plateaued but it could not keep going up forever. It has plateaued out a bit but the site still met its target. They have a monthly target and that target was met last month.

In a 12-month season our operation carries about 220 000 people a year on our boat in Port Arthur and there is only one other boat in Tasmania that carries more people than us and that is a red one with TT-Line on the side of it. It is a very busy operation and it is hard to quantify what 220 000 people is like to put through a 25-metre boat in 12 months, but that is what we do and it can range from as few as 150 people in a day, as at this time of the year, to as many as more than 2 000 a day in the summer.

In Hobart we have a very different operation where we run cruises from Brooke Street out to Moorilla and then out as far as the heads to the Iron Pot Lighthouse. We have already worked out a timetable for the new MONA museum at Moorilla and the owners

of Moorilla are very keen to emphasise the waterlink rather than sending people out there by road and the waterlink will be a critical part of people visiting Moorilla.

**Mr PARKINSON** - That is Hobart to Moorilla?

**Mr ROCHE** - Yes.

**Mr FINCH** - But Moorilla is separate from MONA.

**Mr ROCHE** - MONA is the museum, which is the Museum of Old and New Art and Moorilla is the property I guess. At Moorilla they have MONA and they have their winery and they have their Moo Brewery as well and of course their outdoor concerts and their high-quality accommodation as well.

**Mr FINCH** - Where do you come in now at Moorilla?

**Mr ROCHE** - They have a pontoon but they are building a new facility to the south of that pontoon.

**Mr FINCH** - Will it be at the MONA site?

**Mr ROCHE** - Yes, absolutely. Moorilla is built on a little promontory that juts out into the water and the southern end is the MONA museum. Bang in the middle is the function centre and restaurant and on the northern end there is new accommodation so they are building a new jetty on the southern side of the promontory.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - What size boat are you envisaging for passenger numbers to that?

**Mr ROCHE** - That is the very difficult thing. People seem to think in Tourism Tasmania and at government levels that it will attract a different clientele to Tasmania - people who would rather not bushwalk or do adventure tourism or other activities. They are talking about cultural tourists and they think it will attract quite a different visitor to the State. They do not know how many - it could be anything from 30 000 to 130 000, but nobody seems to know - and I guess we will know after the first 12 months of operation.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - With the size of your boat how long will it take? Is it going to be like a water taxi?

**Mr ROCHE** - The boat we are going to operate is a 100-passenger catamaran and we will be doing a service every hour-and-a-half up to Moorilla.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - How long will the trip be?

**Mr ROCHE** - About 25 minutes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That is decent, isn't it.

**Mr ROCHE** - Yes.

**Mr PARKINSON** - Where will that boat be sourced from?

**Mr ROCHE** - We already have it in-house as part of the fleet. The boat is actually at Port Arthur at the moment because things have changed at Port Arthur in the time that I have been here. When I first came here it was a 10-month season and now it is a 12-month season and the only way we can do annual slipping and survey is to bring a second boat in which we successfully did four years ago and we have done it every winter since.

**Mr FINCH** - What normally do you have here - what size?

**Mr ROCHE** - A 25-metre 240-passenger catamaran.

**Mr PARKINSON** - These were both built at Richardson Devine?

**Mr ROCHE** - Yes, Richardson Devine Marine and we just had the vessel refitted after eight-and-a-half years. We have had extensive refitting to the vessel and quite a lot of quite important work to the boat and she will be back here on the run the first week of September.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - With a potentially different clientele to the MONA, are you looking at having a different service on board, because that is going to be an interesting one, a glass or wine or whatever?

**Mr ROCHE** - Absolutely. For MONA we anticipate we will have to take our service level up at least another notch. The clientele will be quite different. They will want to taste wine on the way up. They will probably want a little hors d'oeuvres or something with the wine. They will want some interpretation about the winery and why it is important, and we anticipate quite a different service level to what we do in Port Arthur.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - To get the staff that you need for that, is it upskilling the ones you have that work on the boats, or is it actually going through the industry and saying, 'Well, look, this is going to be an issue for us.'? What do you have to do to upskill your staff in the areas that they are going to need it?

**Mr ROCHE** - In our industry we have crew-related staff. In other words, under the Marine and Safety Tasmania operational procedures we have to have qualified crew. In the past we have had the tendency to train those qualified crew in hospitality. What we will be doing, I think, for MONA will be training the hospitality crew in MAST-related issues. I think this has to be a hospitality focus more there than what we have in Port Arthur.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - How long do you have the licence to operate at Port Arthur?

**Mr ROCHE** - We have two years to run on the current contract and we successfully renegotiated the current contract that was put out to public tender. We have another 10 years from 2012, so by the time it comes to 2022, I will be ready to hang up the boots, I reckon.

**CHAIR** - I am pleased that you have been extended because I remember we had a boating committee who came down here and talking with you, and the licence was about the

expire and there was a discussion about whether you should be able to have that automatically extended or whether it should go to tender. I was not sure what happened, but you have just explained that.

**Mr ROCHE** -Under the GBE act, the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority had the power to negotiate with us and perhaps give us another contract. But the Government wanted an open process - a good concept at government level actually to have an open process, someone able to clearly look at things. So the open process meant that we went to tender and we were the successful tenderer after what was not a cheap exercise. It is an expensive exercise to go to tender and quite time-consuming for the management authority. What it did establish, I guess, is that we had the credentials to take on another 10 years stint.

**CHAIR** - I am not surprised and personally I am very pleased.

**Mr ROCHE** -Thanks very much.

**CHAIR** - On 10 April I brought a visitor from Hong Kong down. We were late arriving and got in about 10 past 3 and went to book the whole tour, including the boat, but we were told the boat tour was not available. There were not enough people for it at the 3.30 sailing. It usually sails then, does it not?

**Mr ROCHE** - One the difficult things about operating a place like Port Arthur is that it is hard to explain to the visitor how much time to spend on site and some people turn up at Port Arthur quite late in the day, expecting every activity to be happening. The reality is when you are staffing houses, when you are providing guided tours and you are providing services around a harbour and cafeteria services, and all those things, there has to be, particularly in the off-season, a reduction in what happens on the site. Now, for instance, in summer I have seen people on the site as early as half past seven in the morning, and they are still there wandering around at half past seven, eight o'clock in the evening when there is still full daylight. In the winter people's length of stay on site reduces and the time they come on site is later in the day, and they want to get off the site earlier in the day. So the window comes right in in the winter.

The management authority is now employing 170 people. That is a lot of people to keep in work and so they have to look at how they reduce costs in the off-season and we just run fewer cruises in the winter than we do in the summer. We run a minimum of five cruises every day of the year.

**CHAIR** - What time is the latest one?

**Mr ROCHE** - Three o'clock.

**CHAIR** - Oh, I see.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Peter, one of the things we heard today is that hopefully there will be an increase in international visitations, perhaps looking at Asia or China, with the new MONA experience and people from the arts world coming across. What sort of consideration will you have on board to cater for international and non-English speaking visitors who will still want to have that experience? Somebody suggested - I think it was

Bob at Sorell Fruit Farm - that a Chinese group arrived and they had either Chinese students or interpreters on board to assist. What is your situation?

**Mr ROCHE** - The issue of offering interpretation in languages other than English is an issue that we have talked about at Port Arthur quite a bit. So I guess that is a good example of what we might do at MONA. At Port Arthur we once did everything just in English. Australians are probably one of the very few nations in the world where they speak only one language. The historic site now produces their booklet in four different languages and many of the groups that are non-English speaking will have an interpreter with them. Some of the specialised Japanese groups have an interpreter who has a little electronic gismo and he actually does the interpretation and everybody else in his group has a little ear-piece. Modern technology means that people can download languages onto an iPod or onto their mobile phone.

I think it is one of the issues that will come out eventually when the breakdown comes but international visitors are not a big percentage of Tasmania's total visitor numbers. That does not mean that we should ignore that 15 per cent or so of internationals of whom maybe 5 per cent or 8 per cent are non-English speaking. I would not know what the exact breakdown is but roughly about 15 per cent are internationals and I would imagine of the 15 per cent, the non-English speaking would be probably less than 10 per cent.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Have you had any discussion with Tourism Tasmania about the role that the catamaran could play between the dock and MONA during the 25-minute period in selling on other adventures or other possibilities, whether it was within Hobart or within Tasmania? It seems to me that MONA will greatly increase our visitation and there is an opportunity to spread those people elsewhere. I am just wondering whether there has been any discussion at all with Tourism Tasmania on how that might work?

**Mr ROCHE** - There has been none with Tourism Tasmania but considering that we are contracted to MONA they would have a fairly good deal of input into what we say and what we do as far as interpreting to the property. On the way back there might be an opportunity to on-sell.

One of the biggest issues we have in Hobart is the Visitor Centre where a big percentage of visitors go and it is a building that is crying out for I think a better -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - A revamp.

**Mr ROCHE** - It is the front gate to tourism in the south. From our personal point of view we have been operating at Brooke Street Pier since the 1940s. I can show you a photograph of Dad loading a prefabricated building to take to Port Davey in 1942. The same building is still there and that is what we have now. We do not have public toilets and we do not have public shelter. We have a piece of infrastructure that is falling down around our ears.

We participated in a process with Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority to try to do something about improving the infrastructure and the decision was made by the Government to stop that development. Now we are in negotiations looking at how we redevelop Brooke Street Pier because we see the hub of where people step on the Brooke

Street extremely important, not only to the MONA experience but also to the Peppermint Bay experience, for our cruise from Hobart to Port Arthur and our cruises from Hobart out to the Iron Pot Light. We have better infrastructure at Port Arthur than anyone else in Tasmania has for our type of operation.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You are really spot on because if we are going to have world class places like MONA and Peppermint Bay and they come back and get off at the dock and it is just not up to scratch that will colour the whole trip down and back.

**Mr ROCHE** - I had better not say any more but it is a really contentious issue for us and we have been fighting this. We put plans to Hobart Ports I reckon eight years ago.

**Mr FINCH** - So who are you dealing with now? The Sullivans Cove Authority is I suppose gone.

**Mr ROCHE** - They are still occupying quite a substantial building on Franklin Wharf.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Didn't they just release a plan or something?

**Mr ROCHE** - They released a plan only last week to say that Princes Wharf No 2 will be handed over to the University of Tasmania.

**Mr FINCH** - So who would you deal with now?

**Mr ROCHE** - We are dealing with State Government, TasPorts and the Waterfront Authority, but the bottom line is it is in the hands of the State Government at the moment.

**Mr FINCH** - And your suggestion?

**Mr ROCHE** - Bring it on. We have been waiting patiently for 60 years. Bring it on is what we would say.

**Mr FINCH** - When you say you have an issue with the visitors centre, are you thinking that should be incorporated into something?

**Mr ROCHE** - That has been talked about. I do not have an issue with the visitors centre; I think it is a fantastic service they offer.

**Mr FINCH** - That is there near the old Hydro building.

**Mr ROCHE** - Yes, but the building is not ideal. You only have to ask the people in the visitors centre. It is not an ideal building considering the number of people they get through it.

**Dr GOODWIN** - The public toilet issue is a huge one I would think.

**Mr ROCHE** - The public toilet issue around the waterfront is a huge issue. If you look at visitor numbers into Tasmania one of the most visited places is Hobart's waterfront.

They extrapolate the number and they are talking about some 300 000 visitors to the waterfront. There are no public toilets. It is a fairly basic issue.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The toilet issue is statewide. Campbell Town's success is because they put nice toilets there and it has just grown and all the other things add on. You are right.

**Mr FINCH** - Have you got plans or just suggestions you are bringing forward?

**Mr ROCHE** - No, we are putting plans forward. We are in the middle of negotiating with the State Government right now. We were led to believe that the next project in Sullivans Cove will be Brooke Street Pier - the redevelopment of Brooke Street Pier - as a hub for cruise and ferry operations. It is critical.

**Mr FINCH** - What do you think your price is going to be at the moment?

**Mr ROCHE** - It will be \$15 return.

**Mr FINCH** - That is good isn't it? Locals do not have to be well heeled to be able to take the trip out and back.

**Mr ROCHE** - Absolutely not, and there will be a range of packages like there will be packages where you will be able to buy that and lunch. They have obviously got their own beer that people can taste if they like beer. They have their wine centre to taste wine if they want wine. I do not think people really appreciate what MONA will be like as an attraction. Nobody has invested that level of money in infrastructure in Hobart since Wrest Point Casino and the Convention Centre. It is just a staggering development and everyone should thank the vision of Mr Walsh for what he has decided to do in Hobart. It could have been spent anywhere.

**CHAIR** - It is staggering in terms of size and the cost.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - For \$15 each way you should put a car park out there.

**Mr ROCHE** - \$15 return.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, so you should put a carpark out there. You would get commuters who do not want to park in Hobart.

**Mr ROCHE** - We are not talking about commuter ferries today because it is not tourism. I am happy to talk for an hour on that.

**Mr FINCH** - Just on that Peter, did you go to a tender.

**Mr ROCHE** - We went to a tender process.

**Mr FINCH** - For that as well.

**Mr ROCHE** - Yes, but we have been operating to Moorilla, functions and all that sort of thing since they first put their jetty in which would be close to 20 years ago now.

**Mr FINCH** - So you have a sense of what was going on out there and the economics of that?

**Mr ROCHE** - We took Gareth Evens and Cheryl Kernot up there to a function.

**Mr FINCH** - Do go on Peter. I wait for your book. So what happens with other operators? Does that mean that you are the sole user of the operation there?

**Mr ROCHE** - Absolutely. Yes it is. We are the sole operator. We are the sole operator at Port Arthur and the historic site saw fit to offer a sole licence and what that does is give you security in your investment. We have a \$2.5 million investment in Port Arthur. That is a lot of money. We are looking to invest a similar amount of money eventually on the MONA run and you need a bit of security on that otherwise you won't do it. I don't think anyone should shy away from sole-operator status because it gives certainty to the operator. We would not be at Port Arthur if we hadn't been a sole operator, full stop. The historic site would have had, I believe, a less efficient and a less professional service if they had kept going from year to year getting a different operator just on price or whatever else the consideration might have been, or two or three operators all fighting over it.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If you want to increase the prices on your boats, do you have to have a discussion with the Port Arthur site or with MONA? You are talking about a sole operator but we've had one example along the coast where an operation a couple of years greatly increased their price - and it is now probably reflected, I believe, in their numbers. If you were going to up the price for your Port Arthur tour, would you have to make contact with -

**Mr ROCHE** - The little bit of difference at Port Arthur is that when people come into the historic site they pay a set fee, an entry fee, and the cruise is included in that. If the management authority want to increase our fee I am very pleased, that would be fantastic, but we have a set fee and that's in our contract and we've signed up to that.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - And the same with MONA?

**Mr ROCHE** - MONA will be a different kettle of fish and it will be obviously commercial in confidence what we do, but any agreement has to be agreeable to both parties otherwise it's not an agreement.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Do you operate at night with MONA?

**Mr ROCHE** - We will be, yes.

**Dr GOODWIN** - So people can go out, have dinner and come back?

**Mr ROCHE** - Yes, they'll be wanting a later service because I think functions are going to be a big component of what happens at MONA. We already know that there are convention groups and people willing to have weddings and other functions out there that are holding back waiting for MONA to open.



**Mr FINCH** - Peter, do you have any thoughts or suggestions on the operation of Tourism Tasmania and the way they go about their marketing, their contact with the industry and the way they deal with the industry?

**Mr ROCHE** - I can remember the days when it was Tas Bureau and my father fought tooth and nail day after day because he said, 'Why do you send people down to the Tudor Village in Taroona as a tourist attraction when we have this magnificent harbour out here to see?', and he never won the battle. I think sometimes you don't win the battle; you just have to do your own thing and focus on your own business. You can't always rely on a government instrumentality to bring business to your door. Having said that, Tourism Tasmania has the role to market Tasmania to the interstate visitor and I don't think I am qualified to comment on their marketing, but I believe that Tourism Tasmania should focus on good operators and not new operators. There are very good operators in Tasmania who get no coverage at all from Tourism Tasmania, but if you were a new operator coming into the industry, wet behind the ears, you'll get all the coverage and all the publicity you require. Whether you run a tearoom in Richmond or a bed and breakfast in Stanley, if you've been doing your job extremely well in the tourism industry for the last 15 or 20 years you're off their radar. I think that is really disappointing.

**Mr FINCH** - They should work for both. They should remember the ones that have been putting in the hard yards and also give a leg up and support and help those who are new and need a bit of encouragement.

**Mr ROCHE** - There has to be a balance there somewhere and I think often the balance is in favour of new operators rather than quality existing operators.

The Tourism Council has an accreditation system and one of our complaints is that there is no way - and I don't know the answer to this - that you can quantify attractions when you do tourism accreditation. It is extremely easy to go to a hotel and say, 'That's a three-star hotel. That's a four-star hotel and that's a five-star hotel'. They have a checklist of whether you've got an electric blanket on the bed or whether there is room service at midnight and they can quantify what it is that makes it three star, four star or five star. A visitor to the State can pick up a guide and say, 'I don't want to spend \$191 a night for my room, I want to spend \$90', and they can choose whether it is three star or five star. When it comes to a lot of the attractions, whether it be a cruise on the Derwent or a bus up to the top of Mount Wellington, there is no way that the Tourism Council can quantify the difference in accreditation between a bus operator and a ferry operator or any other attraction, whether it is a devil park or whatever else it is. And the other part of that is how do you reward the good operators and not reward the bad operators? There is one operator in particular who I won't name who still has his brochures exhibited in the Visitor Centre in Hobart and he hasn't been accredited for more than 18 months, so why are we pushing an operator, who has no Tourism Council of Tasmania accreditation, in a visitor centre? Why aren't we being punitive and saying, 'We are not going to exhibit your brochure until such time as you come up to the standard.'? It is no good having a toothless standard. What is the point in having a standard unless you make people come up to it? An accreditation should mean something, and it should be a badge proudly worn. If we are serious about raising service levels in Tasmania in our tourism industry, and we are serious about improving what we do for our visitors, we have to have a very good accreditation system, we have to make sure that accreditation system has real teeth, and we have to police that

accreditation system. I don't know how you punitively police it, but there has to be some way of quantifying so the visitor can make an assessment when they go into Richmond and they are looking and deciding which tearooms they go to. Would they go to one which has good accreditation and support the good operator or the dodgy one, whether it is a boat ride or whatever is, otherwise what is the point of having accreditation? We might as well not have it and save the money.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for that. Unfortunately the scheduled time has passed, but you may well have other views, Peter, that you would like to express. Please feel free to do that. If you would like to write to the secretary, Mr Tom Wise, he will give you a card, and we would welcome any other ideas that you might like to let us have or any other information that we haven't had time to deal with today.

**Mr ROCHE** - No worries.

**Mr PARKINSON** - We have to get back on to commuter ferries because it is a far superior idea to that silly light rail idea.

**Mr ROCHE** - Light rail hasn't got legs, or wheels. It is a joke. Sorry.

**CHAIR** - It is fair to say the community generally appreciates the very high standard and excellence of the service that your family company has provided for decades.

**Mr ROCHE** - Thanks, Mr Wing.

**CHAIR** - Keep up the good work. Thanks very much for being with us.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Ms KATHY WEIDNER**, MASONS COTTAGES, TARANNA WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Thank you very much for coming to help us by giving evidence and letting us have your views. First, would you please tell us about your operation, your business, and then let us have your views on tourism in Tasmania, in this area and generally.

**Ms WEIDNER** - My husband and I operate a small accommodation business in Taranna called Masons Cottages. We have three self-contained cottages and two self-contained studio apartments. It is only a small business. We operate it ourselves. We have no employees. We have been operating that business for about four years, and prior to that we had a smaller bed and breakfast at Eaglehawk Neck for about four years as well. Going into this business for us was a step down from what I call the real world, and we moved away from real jobs to just relax and enjoy ourselves and enjoy Tasmania. To a certain degree you would probably put it under sea change. I would prefer not to because that is a bit ordinary. That is our business; it is a nice profitable little business. We are thinking very seriously now about moving on to completely doing nothing, which I am looking forward to. I am 64 years old so it is about time in life.

My other interests have been with our local tourist association, the Port Arthur and Tasman Tourism Association. I was on the board of PARM when that was operating, then into PATTA and I have held various seats there. I have been chair for 12 months. Currently I am treasurer. We had a meeting last night and a new board was elected. I am part of that and I suspect that I will continue on in the treasurer role.

Through that I have gained a lot of knowledge of tourism, particularly in the area. Certainly in the whole of Tasmania there is not an area that we have not visited or walked at one time or another. The only walk that we have not done is the south-west coast and I am sorry I do not do that.

**Dr GOODWIN** - It is a good walk.

**Ms WEIDNER** - It is a great walk, but no. Twenty years ago perhaps but not now. We have done the Overland Track, we have done the Bay of Fires, we have done quite a number of walks and definitely walking in this area. I participate in the Tasman Council Tourism and Economic Development Committee as well. I have a fairly good knowledge of all the businesses and probably know very well every tourism operator on the peninsula and some obviously outside.

If you were to ask me what I considered the biggest lack or the biggest impediment or perhaps barrier, maybe challenge - it depends on where you come - to this area, it is the lack of a gateway. In an area that has probably the foremost iconic tourist destination of Port Arthur we do not have a visitor information centre. I can understand to a degree the history of that because Port Arthur was considered a day trip from Hobart and it was adequately covered that way but there is a lot more down here and I believe that for the health of tourism in our area this is a critical impediment to the growth of tourism.

**Mr PARKINSON** - Kath, where do you think the visitor centre should be located?

**Ms WEIDNER** - I personally believe Eaglehawk Neck or Dunalley. But preferably Eaglehawk Neck because you are right there. One of the benefits that I see of a visitor information centre is that it will then create the ability for a lot more smaller operators to come in and operate tours around the area, promote their own businesses whilst the people are here. The people will come; what we need to do is give them more opportunity to experience what we have to offer. I am thinking of little buses that can do individual tours, I am thinking of nature guides that can do fauna, flora, small walking groups - that type of thing - and also the cultural and heritage opportunities that lie in this area.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Excuse my ignorance, where does the Tasman Council start - at Dunalley?

**Ms WEIDNER** - It starts at Dunalley. Dunalley is not part of the Tasman Council; it starts once you have crossed the bridge. Ideally Eaglehawk Neck because that is the first iconic historical centre that we have but also we have the natural features down at the sea cliffs coast.

**CHAIR** - Have you had dealings with Tourism Tasmania or have you been in any organisation that has and do you have any views about the effectiveness or any problems associated with Tourism Tasmania?

**Ms WEIDNER** - I have had a little bit to do with Tourism Tasmania in various initiatives that they have had but mainly that has been through the local tourism associations. They have provided opportunity in small areas, which has been fine, but I believe that Tas South, who have since folded, were probably seen by Tourism Tasmania as the buffer between the local tourism associations in the southern regions.

**CHAIR** - Yes. Do you take bookings online in your business?

**Ms WEIDNER** - Absolutely.

**CHAIR** - Have you seen promotions online by Tourism Tasmania?

**Ms WEIDNER** - No. I have literally just come back from a month on the mainland and we were seeing some evidence of it there.

**CHAIR** - Have you had any involvement with the Tasmanian Tourism Industry Council?

**Ms WEIDNER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - What is your opinion of their activities?

**Ms WEIDNER** - I have a really strong belief in the TICT. I think they do a wonderful job. I was listening to Mr Roche when he was talking about the TICT and I thought there might have been some confusion between triple A, which rates various properties, and the TICT whose role is the tourism accreditation. I am a 100 per cent true believer of accreditation and the accreditation program.

To fill in a little bit of background, back when I had a real job, I was looking after a chemical plant. I was responsible for a small chemical plant and accreditation, documentation, auditing was part of my life, so I find it an incredibly important tool.

What I probably would say is that the accreditation program that is operating in Tasmania is good but there are ways to go. But when you start up any program like that, you have to draw people in and get them to believe in that program and the benefits. One of the hardest things that anybody has to do when they are trying to promote a program such as that is sell the benefits back to the operators. What it really should do is force the operators to look at their own procedures and practices and try to bring them into the best practice type of scenario. It is not triple A, it is not saying three plus, four star, five star.

**CHAIR** - Are you able to tell us anything about trends in the number of tourists who have come to this area, particularly in your establishment, over the last two or three years?

**Ms WEIDNER** - I can certainly do that. Probably three years ago we would have had many, many more. We probably would have been running 30 per centish of overseas visitors and they were Europeans or Americans. The European trade and the American trade has almost gone down to backpackers - you are not getting the more mature tourist/traveller coming.

The Australian business has gone up quite considerably, and I guess that has a lot to do with the GFC. But the Asian market now is the big one. We are getting a huge number of Asian tourists and, strangely, what I am seeing now is the number of Asian students bringing their families - their parents, their whatever. That is a big change that we have had. We notice that because we have the two-bedroom cottages and they will come to us.

We have been fortunate that our numbers have been improving over the four years that we have been there. This year is a little bit down so it has taken probably this year, and I am talking from May, because prior to that it was doing really well - but from May there has been a significant downturn. The reason for that, I do not know.

**CHAIR** - Compared to other years?

**Ms WEIDNER** - Yes. As I said, our business has been going up but that has been as a result of taking on Tourism Tasmania's open booking exchange, which has been fantastic because that has given us online bookings from a range of wholesalers and wotif.

**CHAIR** - Would you like to make any other comments before we conclude the session?

**Ms WEIDNER** - I think I have touched on the things that are personally important to me -

**CHAIR** - That is what we want to hear.

**Ms WEIDNER** - and they are important to tourism in the area. The upcoming Three Capes Walk is going to - not immediately - bring so much focus to this area. We find even now, through some of our guests who come to walk, that the Three Capes Walk is well and truly out there in walking clubs and walking groups - people who want to walk. It is

out there, they know about it, they come and they ask about it. So that is going to be good for us but we need this visitor information centre to help that work.

The other thing concerns Federal Hotels when they develop the Comfort Inn. Federal have changed Strahan and they have changed other areas because they have just been there and because of their focus and their size. They have the resources to be able to go out there. This is a personal opinion; I think Federal are probably good corporate citizens too in that they look after their own business but they also promote the environment.

**CHAIR** - Also tourism.

**Ms WEIDNER** - Yes. Anything else, I do not think they are all that interested in.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Kathy, I was interested when you said Eaglehawk Neck for the information centre because I must admit that when I come across there I get disappointed in the history of that piece of that neck and, with all due respect, the bronze dog is good but it is really underselling that part of the history. So I think you are right; as a visitor information centre that would be a huge attraction there to sell the area and they cannot miss it.

**Ms WEIDNER** - That is right.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - But historically - and Tom mentioned - it really does not show the importance of that small stretch of land within this historic area. That was a really important piece of land in our history.

**Ms WEIDNER** - There has been a bit of scuttlebutt, and I call it scuttlebutt purely for that, that maybe PAHSMA will take over the conservation area at Eaglehawk Neck. Whether that is scuttlebutt or not, I do not know, but if that happens, gee.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thanks for that.

**Dr GOODWIN** - The scenery is spectacular there but you could easily miss it. You could easily just drive past and not realise the tessellated pavement is there. That magnificent view from the Lufra Hotel area is gorgeous.

**Ms WEIDNER** - The new signage that Tourism Tasmania have put up at the top of the hill before you come down into Eaglehawk Neck has diverted quite a lot of traffic into the lookout. The road, if I might say so, is abysmal, it is disgusting, and somebody should do something about it.

**CHAIR** - That is the loop road.

**Ms WEIDNER** - The Pirates Bay Road.

**CHAIR** - Ms Weidner, thanks very much for being here. We wish you a happy retirement when that comes about.

**Ms WEIDNER** - Thank you very much.

**CHAIR** - No doubt you will continue your interest in tourism.

**Ms WEIDNER** - Absolutely, yes. I cannot help myself.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Mr ANDREW JAMES GRIFFITHS**, OWNER OF THE NUBEENA BAKERY, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**Mr WING** (Chair) - Thank you very much for coming. You run the bakery here?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - I do, and I own it, too.

**CHAIR** - I think it has been patronised by some of our members.

**Mr PARKINSON** - It has.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - That is why they are so happy.

**Mr PARKINSON** - We were fed very well.

**CHAIR** - We would like to hear your views about tourism and your business and its relationship to the tourist industry or just generally speak about tourism as you see it and things that you see happening in the correct way and other things you would like to see happening differently.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - From that point of view, I have been involved in the tourism industry for many, many years in a number of different forms but mostly in hotel management in the past up the east coast. The greatest failure that I find in the tourism industry is the lack of excellent, if you like, training that takes place and the qualifications of people within the tourism industry.

One of my roles in the past was front-of-house supervisor at the Port Arthur Historic Site and I was in charge of all the external catering that took place. When I say 'external', that is outside the main cafe area so anything that was held in buildings. In my time there I dealt with a lot of young people who came through and the Port Arthur Historic Site was very active in training people but what I found - and I hold a level 4 certificate in training and assessment - and still find is that there are a huge number of people within the industry who either, firstly, try to teach or assess people within the industry in positions that they know nothing about and my training has always taught me that you can neither train nor assess anybody unless you have been trained in that position yourself. So what we have running around out there is a bucketload of people with level 1, 2, 3 qualifications in various levels of tourism and, quite frankly, I do not employ them. I do not employ people just because they have those and, as a matter of fact, I prefer to employ people who have no qualifications so that I can train them properly.

I will give you an example of that. At one stage we were putting a group through level 3 training, food and beverage. The lady who was doing the assessing was from an external company and when it came time for her to do an assessment on the staff's abilities to do coffee we found that she had no qualifications. So I told her, 'No, you cannot do that; you are not assessing my staff unless you have proper qualifications' and, of course, she got a bit shabby about the whole deal. She said, 'Who is going to assess them?' and I said, 'I have the qualifications so I will do the assessment and if you are not going to accept that then you need to get somebody down who does have the qualifications'.



The point that I am making in all of that is that there are people running around out there doing all these things and the people that we get out of the training authorities are not sufficiently well trained.

**CHAIR** - Out of where?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Out of a lot of these places. Drysdale has improved hugely over the last 10 to 12 years, in my mind. This is being recorded, isn't it?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - If I get sued because of this, I am coming to see you, Mr Wing.

**Mr PARKINSON** - No, you are under parliamentary privilege so you can't be.

**CHAIR** - No, it is being recorded and copied and immediately sent to Drysdale and then outside.

*Laughter.*

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Good, I appreciate that.

I can go back 20-odd years when I was managing the Bayside Inn at St Helens and I would not hire people out of Drysdale, but it is a different situation now. Their training methods are a hell of a lot better.

Regarding some of the private companies - and I really do not want to mention any names because that would be unfair but there are a number of them - the impression I get is that their trainers are often people who cannot get a job in the industry. So they are going to be trainers in the industry; well, sorry, what you need is people who are top end of the industry to train your next lot of people.

That flows on, of course, into the workplace where, therefore, the service that you get is substandard and I still find that the service that you get in various places that tourists go into in this State is substandard. It is a real 'don't care, who can be bothered' type of attitude. You guys saw the attitude of my staff up at the bakery. Sometimes we are a little bit over the top. We have a lot of fun; my staff say, 'Gee, it's nice to see you doing a little bit of work for a change today', and its lunchtime and we have a lot of fun. I often say to people, 'Gee the food and the coffee are crap but the entertainment is fantastic'. I say that in jest but in reality it is that type of thing that makes people feel welcome and want to come back. It is not only the fact that you have to have a good product, that you have to serve people quickly, make sure they get the right change and all those sorts of things but you also have to be enjoying your work. There has to be a genuine smile on your face, and I find that is lacking.

**Mr FINCH** - Before we go too far down the track, you said Drysdale had improved over the last decade. Are they at the level where they could be or should be?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - I can't really answer that question because I haven't been involved with them since I have owned the bakery, which has been the last five years. When I left Port

Arthur Historic Site and bought the bakery they were certainly one of the best in the field at that time.

**Mr FINCH** - In Australia do you mean?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - No, I wouldn't say that. I don't know what is available on the mainland so I cannot do a comparison and it would be grossly unfair of me to say that so I could not go down that track. Certainly if people said to me they had been trained in the last 10 years by Drysdale, I would look at them far more favourably than I would have done in the previous 10 years.

**CHAIR** - We also heard from the Tasmanian Hospitality Association, I think that is the name, the former AHA and the restaurateurs combined, that they are not using Drysdale House now, they are engaging training organisations other than Drysdale because they're not training people for the work that they require them to do.

**Mr PARKINSON** - I think as well, though, from memory - and correct me if I'm wrong - one of the things they were saying was that the reason they are using privates was that they need to come onto the job to train the casuals they need to work on that premises, whereas Drysdale won't come onto the job to do it. They want to take you down to their school.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Yes. There are a number of issues in there. I run a small business and I had a girl come back today after two weeks' holiday and the pressure that puts on is huge because I only run a staff of five adults and three kids and when you take one of those out of the system it means somebody has to pick up the workload, and usually that's the boss. I run a pretty fine system so that all of my guys get reasonable hours during the wintertime as well, so if there is somebody away on holidays or on sick leave, it becomes difficult. For me to have a situation where, as a small business, I send somebody off to town for training and they have to be away for two weeks, I just can't do that; they have to be able to come on site, so I disagree with Drysdale's theories on that.

I know some of the people at Drysdale and, quite frankly, there are some that I wouldn't employ and they are teaching the people. We need to have the best of the best doing the training. I am going to mention this guy's name because he's one of the best teachers I have come across and he is at Drysdale. Garry Rand started a process off and it was called FTOLI - from the outside looking in - from a customer's perspective. He was developing that program and we implemented it at Port Arthur, and I ran with that because it was a great little program. He is an ex-manager from Federal Hotels, Wrest Point Casino. He used to do a lot of the training down there and ran the bars and so forth so he was very experienced man. As far as I know, he's still with Drysdale and he is fantastic. FTOLI was a down-to-earth, basic program of how to look after customers, how to make them feel comfortable and want to be where they are. I believe now that Drysdale has taken part of that scheme on because he is working for them now. He is a great trainer.

**Mr FINCH** - Earlier you mentioned bad teachers.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - With that goes bad assessment and attitude of people, I think. To be honest with you, I didn't have the faintest idea what I was coming for here today so I'm a

little bit thrown. Usually once you get me started, as those people at the back will tell you, it is difficult to shut me up and get me out the door.

It's an area that I am passionate about and I believe in. I am passionate about Tasmanian tourism and I have to be because I am married to one of the people who is well up in the Port Arthur Historic Site - I don't have to be, but I am. I am passionate about this particular area; I think it has huge, untapped capacity. I just cannot wait for Three Capes to get under way and the sooner it happens the happier I will be. I am over the moon that the Port Arthur Historic Site has World Heritage status. I can't wait for Federal Hotels to start building over at Port Arthur. The other thing that will happen within the next few months is that we are going to start doing a feasibility study for our own community bank. Those four things, and particularly the bank as far as I am concerned because I am wholly involved in it, will make things really jump down here.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Is that Bendigo Bank?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Yes, you are right. It is a community bank and they franchise the banking business from Bendigo. There are a lot of them around Australia. If you are unfamiliar with their operation, it is one of the things you really ought to get to know about because any small country community that does not embrace the idea have rocks in their heads. There is so much benefit to the community it is unreal.

Those things I think will make this area really go but they will only go so far if they do not have good staff, good training and good people working within the industry.

**Mr FINCH** - Do you teach your staff about the fact that they are part of the tourism industry/hospitality?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - You betcha! The tourism industry is all of those things, isn't it? It covers hospitality, guiding and everything, the whole spectrum. My people are guides as well because we get lots of people these days who want to find the walking track to go to Shipstern Bluff. So my people have to be guides because they have to be able to direct them out to Shipstern Bluff or to Lime Bay or wherever it may be, the coalmines. I say to them it is a bigger part of our job - to know where there is accommodation or most likely accommodation, and the level of accommodation that suits the people that they are talking to. You have to have an eye for picking that sort of thing and experience will do it for you but if you have not got experience, just have a look at the clothing that the people are wearing and how they wear it and the car they are driving, how they are manicured and you will soon know if they want to stay at the Fox and Hounds or whether they want to stay - I will not mention any names. Experience tells you that and you need to know where that accommodation is and how available it is and so forth. It is so important to this industry and for Tasmanian Tourism that for all of our people it just happens naturally.

**Mr FINCH** - When your young people are guiding them around the Tasman Peninsula what about signage? Do you feel that it is one thing for them to say, 'Head up the road and you will see a turn-off to your right.'? Is there enough signage, is it good signage, is it limited to the point of not being helpful to tourists?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - My personal opinion is that there is too much signage. I know over the years that it has been one of - I cannot remember his name; he has an unusual name -

**Mr FINCH** - Elvis Presley?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - No. I did not like him anyway. He couldn't sing.

**CHAIR** - Is he the government officer responsible?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Who Elvis? No. Vinnie Cerezmanok(?) has had a bee in his bonnet for years and I agree with him that there is far too much crappy signage around. What I think people need to do is take themselves out of themselves and think, 'I do not know this place'. That takes some imagination but you can do it if you really want to. I used to be a guide at Port Arthur and one of my favourite things was to stand up outside the ticketing box before I would take a tour and close my eyes and try to put myself back into convict days, and you can do that if you really concentrate. I think that we need to do the same sort of thing so that when we drive into the peninsula we see it through tourist eyes. You try to do that and it is the most confusing thing. There are some horrible-looking signs about. You will not find any signs telling you about the Nubeena bakery and cafe - not one. There used to be but I took them all down. There are none.

**Mr FINCH** - So you think that is a good thing - not having signs up there?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - I don't need them. I don't need them because I have excellent staff and we have a lot of fun and we do good tucker - I can see by the smiles on your faces - and we do good coffee and people recommend us to others.

**CHAIR** - What about visitors who have never been here before.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - We get recommended to them. If they go and stay with Wally Lyne at Port Arthur Villas and he is chatting to them - and Wally is a great guy for looking after his visitors - and they want to go out for a meal, he will find out what sort of meal they want. If they want takeaway or pizza, he will tell them, 'Go to Nubeena Bakery and Café, it is only 12 kilometres away. Give them a ring first, they will take your order and you just pick it up and go'. The ticketing counter at the historic site will do the same. If you do your business properly, people - even if they do not like me - will still recommend my business because they know people are going to get good service, good food and good value for money. At this time of the year I can handle a bit more business but, quite frankly, in the summer time I want a bigger bakery and a hell of a lot more staff. But, my business has almost doubled in five years, so it is not going too badly.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Were you Andy's at Westbury?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Pardon?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Were you the bakery at Westbury?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - No. I am not a baker actually. I am a diesel mechanic.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - There was an Andys at Westbury and it was a very good bakery.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Yes, and it is still a very good bakery and they do lots of icecream and all sorts of things. It is unfortunate that is what bakeries have to do these days. I am not really a bakery now, I am a takeaway store. When I went into that place, just five-and-a-half years ago, we were working flat out - we hand made all our bread. I learnt how to make bread fairly quickly, but we hand made our bread. But, people do not buy bread from bakery shops. They stop at the supermarket and they buy everything at the supermarket.

**Mr PARKINSON** - That is starting to change.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Slowly, slowly - there are some little boutique bakeries that are starting to get going. There is a really nice one at Oatlands and he is doing really well.

**Mr PARKINSON** - Those Banjos Bakeries do very well. I am just talking about the customers you see in them.

**Dr GOODWIN** - You are right. They do extremely well.

**Mr PARKINSON** - Wherever you go.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Do you see any other challenges for tourism on the Tasman Peninsula that you think would be worthy of comment? I like the one about the RTOs - I understand the staffing thing. Is there anything else?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Challenges for tourism. The only major challenge that I see is being able to get both sides of an issue to find a balance. I will give you an instance - Dick Smith's proposed development at Crescent Bay. I have never met Dick Smith but I do not particularly like a lot of his philosophies and I will state that unequivocally because he has put a lot of Australians out of work in the electronics industry and people like me do not forget that. But that development should never have been stopped. It should be three quarters built, or built and operating. Within that argument there was a balance to be found and within the argument about Three Capes Track there is a balance to be found. It is the same with anything. In Federal politics right now - there is a balance in there somewhere. I do not know whether they are going to find it because there is a bloke with a big hat in there who is a bit of a problem.

**Mr FINCH** - The mad Katter.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - We are in trouble I tell you. We want to start praying for another election I reckon. Anyway, that is nothing to do with what we are talking about. That I think is the biggest problem. There is an element of people who just want everything to stay exactly the same as it was 50 years ago. My dad, who was a fairly simple man - and I do not mean stupid simple, I mean simple in his philosophies -always said to me that if you are not improving you are going backwards. You have to be improving, and so you have to have development - you have to go ahead. If you keep striking these things where there is no balance, then nothing goes ahead and if you are not going ahead you are going backwards.

**CHAIR** - Are there any further questions?

**Dr GOODWIN** - Andy, with tourists, or perhaps even locals who are coming down to Port Arthur these days, are you finding that they are coming down purely to visit the Port Arthur Historic Site, or are they roaming around the area and looking at all the other attractions on offer?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Up until probably six or seven years ago the first part of your statement would be right - they were coming to Port Arthur and disappearing again. It is not so much the case now and I think there were two things that have changed that to a large degree. One of them was the advent of the convict trail, which sent people this way and the other one was the fact that the Port Arthur Historic Site took over the management of the coalmine site and improved its promotion big time. Gradually, people are becoming more aware of what a great drive it is through Nubeena and out to the coalmines and the impact that the coalmine site had on convict life in that period. More people are now doing the loop trip, but it is still not enough, and I do not think it gets sold enough by outside agents. Also - and we have been preaching this for years and years and years - this area is not a one-day destination, it is at minimum a two-day destination. But to get the travel agents to sell that is really difficult. When you see how they do - what do you call it when they go out and have a look around an area -

**Dr GOODWIN** - A familiarisation.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Yes, a 'famil' around the area. I have seen it for years over at Port Arthur - we would do the catering for them at the bakery. They would come in and do a 'famil' in this whole area in two hours. Get away, they have not seen anything. How can you advise people about a holiday, when you have spent two hours in the area? Twenty of them will come down in a little mini-bus, rush around for two hours and then they are gone.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Where do they come from?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - They come from travel agencies. They will be a group of a certain company's travel agents from all over Australia and maybe some from New Zealand and wherever. They will all come down and do this 'famil' around Tasmania but it will be two hours here and then they are off to the west coast and, quite frankly, those people are selling us. Get away, they cannot do that.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Who would coordinate that? Would that be coordinated by Tourism Tasmania - the interstate 'familis'?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - I doubt it.

**Dr GOODWIN** - It would be the company themselves?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - I would say so. It would be the travel companies, I think, that would do that, but I am not positive.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Tourism Tasmania would use a journalist program. Federal Hotels, for example, might send 20 travel agents down to visit their six attractions - big companies can do that sort of thing. Down here, it is different to any other community we have been

to, in that you do get hundreds of thousands of people coming down here, even though the numbers might be decreasing a little bit this year - like 270 000 or 300 000 coming here. It is an interesting conundrum - you have to get them to move on from Port Arthur and stay longer. A lot of other places we have visited are not getting the tourists in the first place. That is where they are finding the problem - they have to fight tooth and nail to get them, so it is a different scenario.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Sure. They haven't got what we have to offer. I don't know how many of you people have had the time over the last few years to take a drive to Fortescue Bay and walk along the beach. It is another world, isn't it? It is just another world - people in the tourism industry down here should promote it as a great experience. Take the time to drive 12km out to Fortescue Bay and walk on the beach. If you don't you are missing one of the greatest places in the world. Other places do not have something like the Port Arthur Historic Site, which is probably one of the major convict-related tourism attractions in Australia. We are extremely fortunate. One of the things that we are starting to sell now, to a totally different group of people - I am starting to look like Julia Gillard, aren't I - is Shipstern Bluff. I don't know whether you are aware, but we have had some of the world's greatest surfers down here to surf Shipstern Bluff - what a great thing that we can sell. Other places haven't got that.

**Mr FINCH** - One of the questions we are considering is the most effective means of maximising Tasmania's tourist potential. I was going to ask a little bit about Tourism Tasmania and the role they play - whether in your role as a baker you are acquainted with that and whether you have an opinion on Tourism Tasmania?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - They have a huge role. In answer to the first part of your question, I am quite aware of their role, and I know a great number of their employees - my wife has a fairly lofty position at Port Arthur and I go to a number of dinners with her, where I meet those people. I go to the Tourism Awards and all that sort of thing. I think they do a great job of marketing Tasmania, but I wonder whether they get through to these people we talked about before - the travel agents that are selling Tasmania. I am not sure that Port Arthur is sold for a long enough period of time to do a decent holiday. I guess there are different markets that you have to get into. There is an increasing market. Because of cheap air fares people are flying in for two days.

**Mr FINCH** - Yes, short stays.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - It is incredible the number of people from Melbourne who fly into Hobart, grab a hire car, come down here for the weekend and then travel back home on Sunday afternoon. Whilst it is great that we get them for those two days, it would be a hell of a lot better if we could have them for four days, or seven days, or a couple of weeks. A number of people think they can drive from here to Strahan in half a day. I don't know where they are going to eat and drink, but it is just -

**Mr FINCH** - Andy, do we sow the seed, do you think, for the next time? Do you think when people come here for the first time -

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Absolutely.

**Mr FINCH** - that they are just gobsmacked and they go 'Wow, I didn't even know Tassie was like this'? I have a sense that they would have to feel that.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - The returns that we get are a big percentage of our tourism, I would suggest. But I wonder whether we do a good enough job of marketing to the first-timer, and how many of those people have done a quick holiday and cannot afford to get back a second time. A percentage of those, maybe, we miss out on.

**CHAIR** - Are there any comments you would like to make in conclusion, Andy?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - No. My main focus, as you have probably guessed, is people within the industry and their training.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for your views, we appreciate it.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Thanks.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**



**Mr STUART LENNOX**, PARKS AND WILDLIFE, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** (Mr Parkinson) - Thanks Stuart. I understand you are here to brief us on the Three Capes project so I will hand it over to you, and we may have some questions when you are finished.

**Mr LENNOX** - I do not know whether you have seen this particular document, which is the project summary. I will hand those around because that makes it a little bit easier and I have some spares if you want some.

Doug, I will probably take 10 or 15 minutes. I have 30 minutes, I understand. I just need to know how to pace myself and how much information to give you. I have had a look at your terms of reference and will try to address them, because I assume that is really the focus here.

This project came to us from the previous Premier, Paul Lennon, who approached the Parks and Wildlife Service and asked us to develop an iconic walk to match the Overland Track. We have done a lot of work on the Overland Track in terms of improving our management, including developing a north-south one-way walking track, and introducing a booking system and a fee. I can tell you categorically that those who walk the Overland Track today have a better experience than those who walked the track prior to those changes. Users are telling us this through the surveys we conduct bi-annually on the Overland Track.

**Mr FINCH** - That brief from Paul Lennon - was it about a track anywhere or specifically on the Tasman Peninsula?

**Mr LENNOX** - It was a case of 'Find me the best location for a track to match the iconic status of the Overland Track - anywhere.'

Interestingly, Paul Lennon walked the Milford track and *Hansard* confirmed to me that, as a result of that experience, Mr Lennon wanted us to find another walk that was of a similar stature to the Overland Track.

We did what we initially called an attribution study. What makes walks iconic - why are the Milford track, the Larapinta track, and the Overland Track iconic? There are lots of tracks - we manage 1 700 kilometres of track network across the State, but only a couple of them become iconic. We wanted to understand why some do, and why some don't. The study identified 18 attributes. We did some consumer research. We can do on-line research, with Overland Track walkers on our databases, and we get a great response rate, interestingly enough. We asked them what they thought made a walk iconic. We also asked the travel trade - people running walking companies, like Ken Latona and people of his ilk. We interviewed 12 of those companies - or we had a company do it for us.

We interviewed the travel media. We went through travel media articles and tried to identify what made walks iconic from their point of view. What were the things they

talked about? We also asked them to tell us whether they thought there was more demand for walking in Tasmania, and similar sorts of information.

We identified what those attributes were, and then I asked the consultants we had engaged to find me the best place in Tasmania - the one that ticks all those boxes, or as many of those boxes as possible. They came back to us with a long list - I think 20 sites in total - that they ran through the filter, and the site they recommended was a project called the Three Capes Track. They recommended that it start at Pirates Bay and finish at White Beach - an eight-night, nine-day walk. We went back to the Premier and put it forward as our recommendation.

At the same time the Tasman Council, with Tourism Tasmania and others, was developing its Tasman Tourism Development strategy. I have a copy here and I am happy to table it if you have not had one tabled before you. What it basically said is that Tasmania has the natural brand values, the heritage values and the food and wine. In the Tasman, because Port Arthur dominates tourism so much, consumers are aware of the heritage values, but not so aware of the natural brand values, or the food and wine.

The Tasman Tourism Development strategy suggests that something, or a number of things, need to be done to lift the natural brand values of the Tasman to match the iconic status of the Port Arthur Historic Site, because the Tasman for too long has suffered as a day-visit destination out of Hobart. The place has incredible natural brand values. It has stunning beaches, it has great walking tracks, and it has lovely temperate rainforest. It has the natural brand values that should make it quite outstanding - locals know this but visitors do not. Visitors do not know this because Port Arthur has just dominated the noise, as I refer to it - the marketing. I am not trying to impose a negative impression on Port Arthur - I think they have done a wonderful job - but we need to lift the consumer's view of the natural brand values in the Tasman.

So, you had these two things happening together. Our work with tourism, and the council's work in the Tasman. We went back to the Premier and told him we had the right product to deliver the Tasman Tourism Development strategy. He gave us \$100 000 in late 2006, and asked us to do a feasibility study. We did that over the summer of 2007 and launched it down here in May 2007.

The feasibility study looked at three things. It looked at the business case - as a Parks Service we normally have our backs to the wall on most things, working out how we going to do things in terms of a business case. How can we deliver this in a way that adds value to our business and adds value to tourism in Tasmania, and delivers some regional benefit to the Tasman area?

So the business case addresses that and it effectively portrays a business case the same as the Overland Track model, which is a peak booking season where people pay \$40 a night, which is what is proposed in here. On the Overland Track, at the moment, you pay \$160 for five nights, which is a bit over \$30. The number of people doing the Overland Track as a result of the introduction of fees has not changed, in fact as the price has gone up the number of people walking it generally has gone up. I could talk a bit more about the Overland Track model if you like. I think five years ago we generated no income out of the Overland Track. Last year we nearly got to a million dollars - \$977 000. We expect to generate over a million dollars out of the Overland Track.

We run a retained revenue model with Treasury, which means the money we generate out of the Overland Track goes back into the Overland Track. It is a good model from our point of view because it means the consumers, the walkers, know that anything they contribute will actually go back. When they are walking the track and they meet our track rangers, or they are walking the track and they see track workers out, they know it is actually coming out of their \$160 they have tipped into it. Five years ago the Overland Track was costing us \$400 000 or \$500 000, but now we have an income of about a million dollars out of it.

It is the same sort of model. It is 60 walkers departing a day as the maximum number. Unlike the Overland Track, we recommended a two-tiered experience model. I will not go on about the Overland Track, I will talk about the Three Capes here. The two-level experience model is what we call a free independent walker. That is somebody who throws a pack on their back, walks during the day, gets to a hut, cooks their own meal, does their own thing, gets up in the morning and off they go. That is one level of experience and that would cost you about \$40 a night. The second level of experience is the Cradle Huts model where you pay a premium fee, more like \$400 to \$500 a night, and you are given a fully guided, fully serviced experience. You carry a lighter pack, you have two guides and they do all the cooking, all the guiding, all the interpretation, all the cleaning and all the other bits and pieces.

So it is a two-tiered model. Most companies charge about \$2 500 for a five-day or six-day walk. That is roughly what we are suggesting here. That was the business case. The second part of it was the master plan, which really said, 'Look, where would this walk go? Can we actually physically build it? What would it look like on the ground? What is the sort of experience we are trying to deliver here?' What we wanted to deliver was Australia's iconic coastal bushwalk. We have some of the most iconic coastal scenery and we think that is a space that we can own. There is some interesting competition in that market, including the Great Ocean Walk and others, but Tasmania has a strategic competitive advantage in walking because we are a really benign environment to walk in, in terms of the temperatures. It is generally a very nice temperature. I do think we need to continue to build on what I call our strategic competitive advantage.

That really looked at what the track would have to look like to deliver Australia's iconic coastal experience, how we build it and what were the critical conservation issues that we needed to deal with in terms of the planning for the project, of which there are quite a few. There are a number of threatened species and there is a root rot fungus called phytophthora, which is prevalent in the park, which we need to manage. The advice we have had to date is that those issues are there and we should be in a position to manage those.

The third and most interesting part of this study was the research component and we did what is called discrete choice modelling. It is a type of research methodology that maybe you are not familiar with. When you make a choice, if you are about to buy a car, you make a whole lot of trade-offs: do I want air conditioning; do I want power windows; do I want a six-stacker CD; how many airbags do I want; what size motor do I want? You weigh all these things up and you trade things off, price included. What companies try to understand is how you make those trade-off decisions and what is most important to you in terms of your preferences. So discrete-choice modelling is a research

methodology which helps you understand the preferences and then customise your product to best meet their needs. We used a company called Instinct and Reason, a Sydney-based company that does a lot of work for car companies, insurance companies and the like. We did discrete-choice modelling of two market segments, those who do free independent walking in Tasmania and those who do commercial fully-guided walks. We asked them a series of questions about their preferences and we found out lots of interesting things. There was a significant preference for huts. They didn't want to walk a long distance a day. Most people would walk about 3 kilometres an hour but these people only wanted to walk about 12-15 kilometres a day, so about 3-4 hours.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Did both markets want to do that?

**Mr LENNOX** - There was a slight preference, depending on the market, but there is generally a preference for not massive distances. I think 20 kilometres is pushing people's limits. When you look at the research it's all about the trade-off and the preferences and trying to get the right mix to give you the best product. They had a huge preference for having hut hosts, having people at the end of the day to talk to you and provide information, and in some cases provide services. They were happy to have a water experience, and it went on and on. They did not want to carry a heavy pack, not surprisingly, so 12 kilos is about the sort of weight they wanted to carry. As a result of the work we did on the discrete-choice modelling, we then customised the project slightly differently to what the company had originally recommended. We cut it back to a five-night, six-day walk because clearly there was a preference between three and five nights. We decided to put mattresses in the huts so that people did not need to carry thermo-rests or mattresses. Unlike a lot of places, such as the Overland Track where you need to carry a tent and a mattress because you might get caught out in the weather, the weather here is relatively benign. You're in enclosed forest for most of it so there are not the safety issues that we have in the alpine areas. We are suggesting mattresses and that means they would only have to carry their clothes and a sleeping bag. We will put in gas-based cooking facilities. Again, that's what they do in their iconic walks in New Zealand. There are a lot of safety benefits from that because for most people who do this walk it will be their first overnight bushwalk in Tasmania, and a lot of them aren't familiar with fuel stoves. You cannot travel with fuel anymore, in fact you cannot even travel with stoves if you go to some locations. The intent is to have stoves inbuilt, which we would service, but again it will reduce the pack weight.

As a result of that, basically what you see in front of you is what we have reached in the process so far - 65 kilometres, taking in the three capes - Cape Hauy, Cape Pillar, Cape Raoul. That is probably as much as I need to tell you initially.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You said 60 people a day, so how many huts at each of the different venues and how many do they sleep per hut?

**Mr LENNOX** - There are two levels of experience, so there would be a hut for the guided company and a hut for the independent walkers. There are effectively two huts that service the walkers and then we would have a staff hut of some description. There will be staff at each of these huts so we will need to have a facility for them.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The upfront cost is quite significant to get those huts up and going and it will take some time to pay them off, so how is that being funded?

**Mr LENNOX** - That's a really good question.

I have talked about this Tasman tourism development strategy. The other report that I wanted to mention was this one called Syneca's 'Economic Impact Analysis for Three Capes'. I will table this. I have left you an executive summary; it is on our website and you can download it quite quickly. The economics of it, Mike, is that we are saying now the total project cost is \$33 million and that is made up of \$25 million of public infrastructure, which is the track and the independent huts, and about \$1 million of private huts, boats and buses. If we start it today we think it is a \$33 million project in terms of cost. Syneca Consulting estimated back in April 2008 that it would generate about \$21 million in gross State product per year when fully operational. It would generate \$3.8 million of direct expenditure in the Tasman region.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - That would work out at more than 10 000 people per annum.

**Mr LENNOX** - Yes. It is based on 60 people walking a day, over a peak season of 150 days, which is six months effectively. That is what see on the Overland Track. The number of people who have walked the Overland Track at the moment is about 7 000 - 7 500. So 60 a day, 60 times 150 is 10 000. That is when it is fully operational. Because this is a bit more accessible, with lighter packs, in a more benign environment, we would expect the sort of numbers that we are seeing on the Overland Track, possibly a few more.

So that is where the 10 000 comes from. But it is really important to note, and your question is the critical one here, that that income generation is only directly related to the Three Capes Track project and those 10 000 walkers. That economic analysis only focused on that. What the Tourism Industry Council also did was a further study of what would happen as a result of day walkers who are attracted to the Tasman Peninsula that walked on Three Capes Track but did not stay in the huts and just did day walks and stayed in the region.

The KPMG report that we did last year was modelled on Tourism Tasmania's Tourism 21 predictions and it had two ranges in its approach. They are suggesting - but I do not have the raw numbers because I did not print enough of it out - I think an additional 50 000 - 80 000 day walkers in the region. Therefore, the economic benefit of that was somewhere between \$90 million and \$188 million, depending on the number of day walkers we eventually attract. That is based on 2017 data.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Will they be handled in the same way as day walkers in the other national parks - they register and off they go.

**Mr LENNOX** - Access to the park has been a really big issue for the local community. What we are saying is that as long as you have a park pass you can use any of the tracks. If you want to do Three Capes and you stay in the huts, you pay the hut-based facility fee. Three Capes opens a number of access points that currently are there but not really well-formed or structured. In my view it will create more day walking opportunities.

It is a bit like if you go to Cradle Mountain, most of you will not walk the Overland Track but you will go and walk around Dove Lake; it will be the Cradle phenomenon, that is what our expectation is here. There will be a number of walks that will become

quite iconic but they will be day walks. Really, the extra benefit that might be there to the Tasman community is those people who come down here and stay for two or three days because they have heard about it, want to go and see it, don't want to walk it but they might go to Remarkable Cave and walk to Crescent Bay or they might go to one of the other locations and do a shorter walk there.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - What's the local community saying about it then, that they should be getting it for free or something?

**Mr LENNOX** - No, they just thought that we were going to stop them from accessing the day walks. It was a bit of a scare campaign, Doug, to be honest.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I see. That thinking obviously comes out of the old access to the Port Arthur site.

**Mr LENNOX** - I think that you are spot on. The problem is that in those days Parks managed Port Arthur and there is that history down here, and that has always been a challenge. To that end, I will table and provide for you just a little bit of a summary on day walking, which talks about the other opportunities that the project summary and the work to date had not focused on. As I said, the KPMG report is also worth looking at from the committee's point of view in terms of trying to understand the broader impact that day walking might deliver for the Tasman region.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Did you say that is on the website?

**Mr LENNOX** - It is.

**Mr FINCH** - Stuart, did you want these day walkers to all walk in the same region?

**Mr LENNOX** - No. The Three Capes Track walkers will walk one way and we have suggested White Beach through to Fortescue. I will give you all those. But day walkers are happy to go in and out. They will go to the major track nodes, the track heads and they will come in for 20 minutes and come back or they might go for an hour or two and come back. The most important one will be the Remarkable Cave one because they will either go out towards Mount Brown and Crescent Bay or they will come back towards Cape Raoul. The one here at White Beach isn't well known. It is up a public road, but that first day is a longish first day in the forests so that won't have a lot of appeal versus the Remarkable Cave one. Cape Hauy is already known as a day-walking destination, but we will improve that out of Fortescue Bay as part of the project.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So if I only wanted to do three nights, I don't have time to do five nights because of work, can I come down to Safety Cove and catch the boat across to Denmans Cove and then do those three nights? Do you know what I mean? Are you going to allow people to do a two- or three-night walk?

**Mr LENNOX** - We haven't made a decision on that yet. That is the beauty of this project, as it does give us the inherent flexibility of actually offering a two-night experience and a three-night experience. The logistics of it, Mike, we just haven't worked through at this stage.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - How to tick it, so that you've got enough beds and huts and all that sort of stuff.

**Mr LENNOX** - New Zealand make it work really well on the Routeburn Track doing a similar sort of thing. I have no doubt that we can. We haven't made a decision that that is the way we will do it, but I think we will be directed by public preference, consumer preference.

**Mr FINCH** - This little bit between Safety Cove and Denmans Cove, what are you using there to get people across?

**Mr LENNOX** - One part of this project I haven't clearly talked about is the fact that the Government in the budget before last gave us \$200 000 to run a tender to test the level of commercial interest in the project, and as a result of that we had seven companies submit a commercial interest to us, and it was only what we called an ICI, an identification of commercial interest. It wasn't an EOI as we would normally run. What we did was actually engage those seven operators as contractors to the project, because they often criticise us for getting them in, picking their brains, and then running away. So we thought the easy way to do it is to pay them as consultants, and we gave them specific briefs. One of them was about the water component, so we had two companies who are both down here working in that space already, one with a particularly long history, and we asked them a lot of advice about weather conditions, jetties, moorings, et cetera. One of the companies came back and they basically said, 'That's the boat you want, that's how much it is going to cost'. It was really quite specific. The other company has some existing boats they think they would be using, and it ultimately depends on whether we put in jetties and facilities or whether we just do it off the beach. But we would be moving about 20 to 24 people, so a boat around that size would be about the scale, it would be under 12 metres, I suspect. Just to give you some example, Freycinet Water Taxi at the moment has a catamaran - not that that is necessarily ideal - and it doesn't use any mooring facilities, so it comes in to a location like Hazards Beach, it drops its anchor, it backs in off the anchor to the shallow water, and then the people just hop out the back. They might get wet to their ankles or maybe their knees and then they walk ashore, and then they just winch the boat back off the anchor. That is one model. There is another model in New Zealand in Tasman National Park, where they have boats similar to the one Rob Pennicott runs, which is the Naiad-style boat, and they have a sort of a gangplank out the front. They just drive in, drop this large gangplank down and people hop off. We are not sure. It will be the commercial company that will make the decision about the sort of service and how they can best make that work, but I imagine most companies that are down here already have facilities and other bits and pieces. If they can integrate it into their existing business, that would obviously be beneficial from their point of view, because 60 a day is not a lot for a small crossing like that. You would have to have something else as an adjunct to your business.

But the critical thing here, Kerry, is the second component, which is the one out of Fortescue Bay, so the middle bit that we have talked about is a must-do - you can't really do the trip without it unless you want to swim, which I wouldn't recommend. But we are very keen to encourage them to go by boat from Fortescue up the coast back to Pirates Bay. The theory we are working on here is, if you know the Overland Track at all, you finish at Lake St Clair. Now, we don't tell people to catch the ferry. That is a choice the consumer makes, but there is a ferry that runs up from Cynthia Bay to Narcissus, and in

fact 90 per cent of people choose to jump on the ferry and pay the \$35 ferry fee now as opposed to walking around the lake 15 km. Most people say it is a no-brainer, why would I fork out \$35 to catch the ferry rather than walk 15 km. But they have a choice, and what we are saying here is, when you get to Fortescue there is a choice. If somebody wants to run a boat and provide that quality experience to finish on, I think it would be outstanding and we would love to see that happen. But equally, if people want to choose to walk that last little section - and we do not believe they will because the research shows that five nights is about the maximum and this would add another night or two - if you know that section called Tasman Coastal Trail from Fortescue North, it is a really lovely section but it is about another six or seven hours. I think people will not or they will be able to take a bus. But by finishing at Fortescue, it does at least give people that option.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Stuart, are you going to have some facilities at the end of the walk, like showers?

**Mr LENNOX** - We already do, Vanessa, at Fortescue Bay, although we might have to upgrade them. But our expectation is that people will do two things, effectively, and this is based on what happens currently at Lake St Clair and what happens out at the Overland Track. So of those people who come and walk the Overland Track, 92 per cent are from interstate and only 8 per cent are Tasmanians. For 75 per cent of those interstate people, it is their main reason for coming to Tasmania for a holiday. So it is a very important reason to come. That is the first thing and that is what we talk about in terms of special interest niche marketing.

The interstaters stay an average of 10 days in the State. So they do the overland track but they will stay another five days on average. The internationals stay 14 days on average. So we know that, on average, they stay in the State longer and do other things.

So my expectation and, I guess, my desire and hope, Vanessa, is that when they get to Fortescue Bay they will get picked up by Safety Cove B&B or Eaglehawk Neck Backpackers or whatever, be taken back to their place and given a shower and a hot meal and have an experience here in the Peninsula because that is really where we are going to increase and change the overall visitor mix to the Peninsula.

**Dr GOODWIN** - I understand that but I was thinking of your local market. Being a bushwalker, I know how nice it is to come out of a longish walk and have a shower and then go and have a decent meal at a local restaurant or something like that. But you want to be able to have the shower and feel good before you get back -

**Mr LENNOX** - We do have those facilities at Fortescue but we have something even better than a shower; we have this magnificent bath called, Fortescue Bay itself.

**Dr GOODWIN** - In the middle of winter?

**Mr LENNOX** - No, not in the middle of winter but certainly in the middle of summer it is beautiful.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Bit cold even in summer.



**Mr LENNOX** - Oh, Doug.

**Dr GOODWIN** - So you are going to bus them in to start; is that how it will work?

**Mr LENNOX** - Again, based on the Overland Track, we would expect the vast majority of people to use buses because you will not want to hire a car and then leave it somewhere for five or six days doing nothing, so it does not make sense. A few local will. So the bus component is really important and that is something that really is an issue down here on the Peninsula - that sort of bus network. So, again, something like this hopefully is catalytic in terms of improving the bus network and the amount of business that can be generated. Again, the amount of day-walking opportunities that a bus operator could link in with, I think would be a really positive thing for the community.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Can you catch the bus in Hobart?

**Mr LENNOX** - Yes, it would pick up in Hobart and then pick -up at the airport. I imagine it would through to Nubeena, right here. People would do their last-minute shopping. There is always something you have forgotten, such as sunscreen. So they would come into Nubeena, pick up their bits and pieces, get their track passes and others bits there and then they would be taken out to the start of the track.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Your international walkers, if they come to Tasmania, might even think of doing both. So providing them with an extra experience in between might be an idea so that they can have a bit of a rest from one to the other. So would you offer a dual pass to entice them? That would be -

**Mr LENNOX** - It is interesting. I thought I had had every question I possibly could about this project over four years but I have never had that one! Potentially, as I said, Mike, I have not really given it any consideration. But I do not think that the cost of the ticket is an issue for these people and I will tell you why, at the risk of boring you with too much detail, but it was one of the reasons we put the Overland Track price up \$50. Originally it was \$100 and we put it up to \$150. I talked about these preferences and all this is on the website if you want to read it and this is on the web if you want to read it. This is what really fascinated people about this. So these are the two market segments. Can you read that? Independent walkers, guided walkers.

This company Instinct to Reason did this discrete-choice modelling on 72 occasions. This is the seventy-third time it had done this bit of research and you know the number one factor that determines your purchasing decision? What do you reckon it is going to be?

**Dr GOODWIN** - Do you get value for money?

**Mr LENNOX** - Yes, it is price. You would also know how important experiences are to this particular market. This is what blew this company away. This is the seventy-third time they have done it. The first preference in both categories was the type of accommodation we provided. That was more important. For independent walkers, price was second. But for guided walkers - these are the people who are willing to pay \$400-500 a night - it was the fact that there was somebody at the hut that was more important than price.

The level of built infrastructure was more important to the independent walkers and the inclusion of a water experience was more important to the fully guided one.

**Mr FINCH** - That is the shower, is it?

*Laughter.*

**Mr LENNOX** - The average distance walked each day is still more important than price. In fact price was the sixth-listed variable when these people are out for a particular experience. Even with these people, this is the first time they had ever seen price not being the number one thing to determine choice. This is why I guess I am so enthusiastic about the project because when we did this research we actually portrayed to them what this experience would be like. They got cards with a photo and then a description and we packaged up a three-day walk, a four-day walk, a three-day hut-based walk, a four-day tent-based walk, and one with different prices. This is what this experience is going to be. We tried to portray it as best we possibly could to test all these variables. So they had a pretty rich idea of what we were trying to offer them and we have had people contact us asking to book. The response to the research was quite fascinating.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - In line with what you are thinking about, I suppose that if you get them here for the first one and then alert them to the fact that there is a second one, they may say, 'Why don't we stay and have five or four days in Hobart?' Or, 'Let us take our big four-week holiday to do Tassie.'

**Ms BARWICK** - They would probably want the rest in between.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - They would want the rest, wouldn't they? They would say, 'Okay, a five-day one and then the Overland', which is harder. They might actually say, 'We'll stay for another week, a couple of days on either side'.

**Mr LENNOX** - I am with you, other than the fact that when I talked to Cradle Huts who run the Overland Track and Bay of Fires they said that they did not get much mixing, which really fascinated me. Less than 10 per cent and most of the mixing is separate trips. It was the sort of question I was very keen to know. In fact they were one of the companies that we involved in the commercial process here so we were able to ask those sorts of questions and get that sort of feedback. My view is that it is unlikely to happen. There will be a few that will. My expectation is that people will walk this and then they say they want to do something harder and then they will go and do the Overland Track or they will do the Overland Track and say I want to do something different and they will come and do this.

**Mr FINCH** - How far away is this?

**Mr LENNOX** - Three years in the construction sense is our expectation, but we have one big dilemma at the moment and that is that we got caught in the Federal Government caretaker period. So the Australian Government through their Infrastructure and Employment Fund committed through Anthony Albanese \$12.5 million to the project and the State Government has committed through the budget process \$12.8 million. But the implementation plan that we have been negotiating with the Department of Infrastructure

was never completed prior to the declaration of the election and the caretaker period. We were probably that far away.

Had I had the same party returned with the same minister, they said it would be sorted in a couple days. Same Government, different minister, a couple more days. Different Government, different minister, who knows? Wait and see. Once the funding is done, three years is what we are suggesting.

**Dr GOODWIN** - You will be right. It is not that hard.

**Mr LENNOX** - I hope not.

**Dr GOODWIN** - The actual walking, I mean.

*Laughter.*

**Dr GOODWIN** - I am asking this question of Jill.

**Ms MANN** - I did the Overland Track when I was 55 and I did the South West Cape at the beginning of this year when I was 64.

**Mr LENNOX** - Magnificent! You would do it easily, Vanessa.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If you say the Overland Track is a 10, with 0 being really easy, 10 being difficult, where would you put Bay of Fires?

**Mr LENNOX** - Bay of Fires I would probably put at 4. It is shorter - shorter days - but it is on soft sand often and people aren't used to walking on the sand, but it is a very easy environment. You are not going to get what we have at the moment, and you can get that at any time on the Overland Track.

Three Capes, I think, would probably be about a 5, simply because it is still 65 kilometres but you are going to have a lighter track and a much more comfortable environment to walk in.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - And visually, of the three, which one would you put at the top?

**Mr LENNOX** - You cannot compare -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I know you can't compare apples with oranges but just tell us anyway. Is the scenery on this one comparable with the Bay of Fires?

**Mr LENNOX** - No, this is miles better than the Bay of Fires.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Okay.

**Mr LENNOX** - This is extraordinary because it has the beaches.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - And the bush.

**Mr LENNOX** - It has the bush component but the sea cliffs are just extraordinary. I do not know whether you have been to Kings Canyon in the centre. Most of you have probably been to the Blue Mountains and seen that beautiful sandstone escarpment. You would be familiar with the big dolerite stuff but there are places in amongst this where you get those big sandstone escarpments and they are just dramatic, especially a section just to the west of Remarkable Caves.

You have a lot more bush diversity here, I think, and the scenery here is just -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - And the gradient?

**Mr LENNOX** - It would be pretty good. We will design this as what we call a class 3 track and that means we will minimise the steps. You don't really have any substantial gradient in most of this.

I have walked most of it as it is - there are a few bits I haven't - but it won't have the sort of steep sections you get at -

**Dr GOODWIN** - Not as tough as the South Coast Ttrack or anything like that.

**Mr LENNOX** - No. The South Coast you would put probably at a 15 or higher on Mike's scale of 10. I would be interested, Jill, in what you think.

**Ms MANN** - I did the South West.

**Mr LENNOX** - Oh okay.

**Dr GOODWIN** - The South Coast Track is hard because of the Iron Bound Ranges.

**Mr LENNOX** - That is correct.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Yes, but it is a beautiful walk because of the coastal scenery - the beaches.

**Mr LENNOX** - Yes, it is stunning but I would think it is much more difficult there. It was one of the ones we assessed as part of this and it was right down the list, simply because of the degree of difficulty, plus a whole lot of other management issues.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Stuart, we are going to finish this one. Thanks for coming in, it has been very valuable though you have given me another thought because I think what we might do is ask you to come in one day and give me an update.

**Mr LENNOX** - That would be my pleasure, Doug.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thanks very much.

**Mr LENNOX** - No problems at all, any time.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Mayor JAN BARWICK**, TASMAN COUNCIL AND **Ms KATE McCARTHY**, TOURISM RESEARCH, TASMAN COUNCIL WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** (Mr Parkinson) - I presume you are going to give us your aspect on tourism in the region so fire away, Jan.

**Ms BARWICK** - Tourism is very important to our region, obviously, attracting about 300 000 visitors to the Port Arthur Historic Site. You have heard all about the Three Capes and we are pretty keen to have that in whatever form it might be. We are also gaining national significance as a deep-sea game fishing destination which is becoming quite big at Pirates Bay or the Blowhole, and Shipstern Bluff which is gaining international significance as a surfing destination. It has become the Mount Everest of the waves. We are pretty excited about the stuff that is here naturally and people are now finding out about it and all want to come and fish. I cannot be sure of the figures that are going to the Blowhole. The council did put a count on that road and they estimated 300 000 vehicles annually. Maybe half of the 300 000 visitors to Port Arthur each year would go to the Blowhole, Tasman Arch and those areas as tourists but not everyone who goes to Port Arthur would go there. It is nothing to have over 100 boats - vehicles and their trailers - trying to catch tuna during the tuna season down here every Saturday and Sunday.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Are those boats launching at Port Arthur?

**Ms BARWICK** - No, they are launching at the Blowhole at Eaglehawk Neck up at Pirates Bay. We received State funding for \$1.3 million to upgrade the Pirates Bay visitor zone. It was not enough of course, so we had to just do what we could at the time but there are still huge issues of enough room for people to park, et cetera. They do a bit of self-policing, I think, and tell each other what they think of each other if they double park. You can launch three boats at a time now - there is a double boat ramp and another single.

**Mr FINCH** - You get a few launching from Fortescue Bay, too.

**Ms BARWICK**- Yes, you do.

**Mr FINCH** - Does the council have a plan to help the area?

**Ms BARWICK** - We do. We have applied unsuccessfully in the past for funding to upgrade the Tasman Arch area, to draw more of the tourist traffic up that way, away from the Blowhole. The Blowhole, with the launching ramps et cetera, is on Parks land - it is a commercial fishing jetty and a big recreational fishing area. We were hoping to upgrade the Tasman Arch area - perhaps with a cantilevered walk - to get more of the tourist traffic and the buses up that way, out of the way of the boats and trailers down at the Blowhole, but we can't do that until we get funding. We have a submission planned and we have a dream, in conjunction with Parks, to set up a visitor and interpretation centre at the turnoff to Blowhole Road from the Arthur Highway. Currently there is no interpretation or visitor centre for the Parks' areas. People enter our parks for free because there is no way for Parks to collect money. We lost the shop at Eaglehawk Neck and we were hoping to combine a shop with our planned visitor centre. We have a huge

population of very clever artists, jewellery makers and craftspeople - we thought they could display their work and perhaps man the shop voluntarily. This is part of our vision, but again, it is dependent on grant funding.

**Ms McCARTHY** - We have put in a submission to the State, as part of the community consultation for the State Budget.

**Ms BARWICK** - We applied for funding for a feasibility study but we were unsuccessful. That doesn't mean we won't keep trying.

**Mr FINCH** - Did you think about having a working artist at that centre? I just throw that into the mix as well. People love to come and watch a glass blower or a jewellery maker.

**Ms BARWICK** - Absolutely, any of that sort of thing. I do not know if you read the paper a few weeks ago, when it spoke of the many niche industries we have down here. It is unbelievable how many we have, when you stop and think about it. When the *Mercury* rang me about it, I could not believe it myself when I was reeling them all off, and they still didn't print them all.

**Mr FINCH** - What do you think will happen now, Jan, with that plan?

**Ms BARWICK** - We will keep trying. We are about to sign off on a new partnership agreement with the State. We will just keep plugging away. Tonight we are upgrading our tourism development strategy. We have had one in the past that was written in conjunction with Tourism Tasmania and we have gone shares - council and Tourism Tasmania - in updating it. There is a public meeting on that tonight because we recognise the importance of our tourism and, interestingly, from the previous tourism strategy the need for a coastal walk to display the spectacular coastal scenery was noted.

**Ms McCARTHY** - Parks took that brief and ran with it.

**Ms BARWICK** - Ran with it, but as Stuart said we have a bit of a problem with Federal funding at this point, so we have to wait and see what happens there. There are lots of things we want, but you have to keep trying to get funding for them. We have high visitor numbers, and that obviously takes a toll on our infrastructure and we struggle in that regard - I would not be a mayor, would I, if I did not mention that. Shipstern, which is taking off now, is accessed by just a single lane track. We have had \$40 000 granted to us by Parks to upgrade the car park at the end of that road. Council will be matching that. But that will not go very far. So, infrastructure or funding for infrastructure is always high on our priority list as well.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Jan, you talked about an information centre here at Eaglehawk Neck, do you have an 'I' location for tourism information anywhere on the Peninsula?

**Ms BARWICK** - At the Port Arthur Historic Site they have -

**Ms McCARTHY** - A Yellow 'I'. A big one.

**Ms BARWICK** - Yes, that is it.

**Ms McCARTHY** - That is problematic.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes. Why don't they have that at Eaglehawk Neck?

**Ms BARWICK** - Because there really is nowhere to house anything at the Neck now.

**Ms McCARTHY** - The original strategy outlined the lack of a sense of arrival for visitors - a sort of gateway - and Eaglehawk Neck was the natural place for that. From that it was suggested that expressions of interest be put out for a visitor centre. Three came back. Federal actually won the go-ahead to explore the set-up of a visitor centre - they were planning to put it at the top of the lookout.

**Ms BARWICK** - Pirate's Bay Lookout.

**Ms McCARTHY** - They progressed that until the end of last year, but unfortunately another person who had put in an expression of interest was a landowner there, so in order for Federal to complete the deal, they were going to have to purchase land off that particular person, and you can imagine the rest of the story.

**Ms BARWICK** - The price suddenly skyrocketed.

**Mr FINCH** - I would have thought it would be more appropriate down where the dog is.

**Ms BARWICK** - I would agree absolutely. I was not rapt in Pirate's Bay, even though it is fantastic, spectacular scenery. The topography up there was going to make it really difficult to build something.

**Mr FINCH** - You are talking about people who are coming in and want to keep going. They do not want to deviate somewhere to get to an information centre.

**Ms BARWICK** - Yes, absolutely.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The information centre at Port Arthur Historic Site - isn't that where you pay Park fees? You don't?

**Ms McCARTHY** - No. It is as soon as you get in the door.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - You do not have to pay to get in?

**Ms McCARTHY** - No.

**Ms BARWICK** - No.

**Ms McCARTHY** - I think their statistics are about 3 per cent of people coming in annually just to book accommodation and leaving again, not going through.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Okay. They are fulfilling a role, I suppose, because there is information et cetera available there, and there is no other visitor centre.

**Ms McCARTHY** - Yes, but I think they would happily hand it over if something eventuated.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - If something else came up they would be quite happy to move that service away from the Port Arthur Historic Site.

**Ms McCARTHY** - It is something that is being looked at in the review of the tourism development strategy, but it has been put to one side because the strategy will not investigate site specifics. The budget did not allow for that with the consultations, and there are so many other variables - the commercial viability of the visitor centre, who owns it, who runs it, uptake of information, is Eaglehawk Neck too late, are we really capturing people for any longer? There is a lot to be examined.

**Ms BARWICK** - The Port Arthur Historic Site would be happy to hand over their licence if a visitor information centre was built at Eaglehawk Neck. They would be happy with a more appropriate spot. Kate is right - you need to be capturing visitors before they get to Port Arthur. Whether Eaglehawk Neck is soon enough, I do not know. I know Sorell offered us a room, but we did not - maybe capturing visitors there is too soon.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Probably at Dunalley there just over the bridge there is space there for parking and such. There is that opportunity there because there is the one-lane bridge, it is pretty open, there is a bit of space there, you could actually have car parking and stuff for a visitor centre and that would show the whole Peninsula. You would probably have fewer environmental concerns putting the building there than you would have at Eaglehawk, the Neck itself. You would have less criticism.

**Ms BARWICK** - It has certainly come up as a location with potential.

**Ms McCARTHY** - The little booth there at Dunalley does publicise quite a bit of stuff down here at the Tasman. The piece of land that we are talking is past the Dog Line so it is this side of the Blowhole Road turnoff and it is Crown or Parks land already. That is probably why it has been identified and employees of Parks do have similar dreams, but funding is a problem as well.

**Ms BARWICK** - Obviously we are looking forward to Federal Hotels, no doubt you have probably heard that all day. We are not sure what has happened to Dick Smith; Dick got approval but I am not sure where he has disappeared to.

**Dr GOODWIN** - Did you say Dick Smith got approval?

**Ms BARWICK** - Dick Smith's development was approved and then, due to the economic downturn, he walked away.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I was speaking to one of the Federal Hotel's people recently and they are interested.

**Ms BARWICK** - We are absolutely looking forward to them because of the promotion they provide; I think we do lack the promotion. Council have a bit of an issue with zone marketing because it flies a bit in the face of what we have been trying to achieve forever, which is to see our region as a destination rather than just a day trip. Most people just come down for the day to go to Port Arthur and drive back. We would like to



think that we are fairly important in the scheme of things to Tasmania as far as tourism goes.

**Ms McCARTHY** - There is certainly a sense that some people feel that the zone marketing was inflicted upon them, that they were not consulted at all and that the Tasman being marketed as Hobart and surrounds with Port Arthur as the prime destination or attraction for the region, plus it is a one-day trip.

**Ms BARWICK** - It certainly is the prime attraction but the problem is that there is so much more to see and we have always had that problem. We've joked that we are going to put up one-way sign coming out of Port Arthur so that they have to come back around this way because they drive straight down to see Port Arthur and drive back when there is so much more to do and see down here and enjoy; we are not just a day trip, we are a destination in our own right.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Do you get any rates, or who is responsible for the main road coming out of there, is that a State road?

**Ms BARWICK** - The Arthur Highway is.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So are there any improvements to that and where does that stop?

**Ms McCARTHY** - At the Port Arthur Historic Site.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Do you get any rates or recompense at all from Port Arthur Historic Site?

**Ms BARWICK** - We only get rates, Mike, on their administration building.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So it is not big bickies you get from them?

**Ms BARWICK** - No. Because all the historic site, the ruins are exempt so it is not huge bickies, no. There is the admin building; Kate, do you know, Kate, what else is rated?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I suppose they have 170 people who work there so it is a big provider and there are indirect benefits.

**Ms McCARTHY** - Absolutely, they also -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I am not having a crack at them, I am just wondering what their corporate responsibilities are.

**Ms McCARTHY** - They have financially supported the LTA in many shapes and forms. They are very involved with the local tourism association.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So they help you out there?

**Ms McCARTHY** - Most certainly. Stephen Large is on our Tourism Economic Development Committee, a subcommittee of council. They co-contributed funds for the review of the Tasman Tourism Development Strategy.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So there is a good rapport in the field.

**Ms McCARTHY** - Absolutely. They have a great social commitment -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Ah, good.

**Mr FINCH** - With that zone marketing who is your representative on that?

**Ms McCARTHY** - There is no council representative; Andrew Ross, who is the marketing manager at PAHSMA is on the board as the representative for marketing.

**Mr FINCH** - Andrew Ross who used to be on the council, did you say?

**Ms BARWICK** - No, Andrew Ross who works for the Port Arthur Historic Site. So the Port Arthur Historic Site will actually defend its own marketing but the council doesn't like it.

**Mr FINCH** - So you are not able to get a member on zone marketing? How many members do they have?

**Ms BARWICK** - I have no idea.

**Ms McCARTHY** - I am not sure how many are on the board. I know they just advertised and it was skills-based, marketing-specific. I am not sure, I cannot answer that.

**Mr FINCH** - Do you think that might be something the council should really achieve, trying to get somebody in the zone marketing area?

**Ms BARWICK** - We probably should because I know that Site will certainly defend the zone marketing and they think it is a great thing but there is the general feeling from those outside of the Port Arthur Historic Site that it is not a great thing.

**Ms McCARTHY** - It is about leveraging as well. It is in Port Arthur's best interest to have people stay overnight as well. They want people coming back through the doors exploring it and that is what they will say about the zone marketing and then as a site they are encouraging people to stay longer. They are packaging with Rob Pennicott of Tasman Island Cruises and I believe Stewarts Bay.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - And just to help out, there are only two elected members on the north-west coast zone marketing of the seven-odd councils that market covers. It is a skills-based board so obviously they have the skills based at Port Arthur because they might have a couple of other elected members from other councils on it, so not every council gets a guernsey.

**Mr FINCH** - So who chooses the makeup of the people - the ingredients - into the zone marketing operation? The minister?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No, from our group - I am not sure if it is the same - they send someone around asking 'who wants to be on it?' Three or four people might put their names in from each of the councils and then two would be selected and we vote on it, but usually it is whoever wants to up there. I do not know if it is the same down here.

**Ms McCARTHY** - I really have no idea. I assume it is probably similar. I do not remember it being advertised, I do not think there was anybody from council who tried to be on it even; suddenly this zone marketing document appeared. I am not really happy that we have been classed as being put into Hobart and surrounds because that then just promotes it as a day-trip driving from Hobart to see Port Arthur and driving back. As Mike said, probably nobody falls over themselves to be involved but obviously there was a representative from the Port Arthur Historic Site, not from council.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It did come up today about the funding for the Tourism Association here and they were very good about it. They said that they had had some issues last year and they had been trying to deal with that and they were talking about this brochure going back to council to look at, asking for a grant funding. So is your role mainly tourism economic development on council?

**Ms McCARTHY** - It is tourism and community development - economic development is in there with tourism anyway. So I can be spread fairly thinly at times because I also do events and administration for the independent living units and I have just gone on to the PATTA committee last night as their general manager's nominee.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Okay. So what do you do on Tuesdays?

*Laughter.*

**Ms McCARTHY** - That is when I go home to the two-year-old and the four-year old.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Do you need to be out of here at a set time?

**Ms McCARTHY** - I do have to run the consultation but I will get there. I have had the question from the Chair about whether there are any funds put aside. I have not had anything in writing. I have not had any formal application and I think it is really important. It is a business, ultimately, and I think it is really important that it is treated as such. That will be looked at in the structure of PATTA currently as an issue and I believe that everybody within the committee agrees so that is something also that the consultants looking at the review will have a look at.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Okay.

**Ms BARWICK** - Council did support it financially but I recall though that it was only meant to be seed funding and the Port Arthur Historic Site did contribute.

**Ms McCARTHY** - It was \$180 000. It was when there was a shop front at Salamanca - it was the Port Arthur regional market -

**Ms BARWICK** - They had one at Port Arthur, as well. They started at Port Arthur and then they spread to Salamanca and Port Arthur but, for whatever reason, the tourist industries in this area do not seem to want to support the association that is supposedly marketing them. When PARM - Port Arthur Region Marketing - was set up, council did provide some seed funding. We thought all the other tourist businesses would have contributed and that would have got up and running and everything would have been great. PARM finally fell over a couple of years ago and PATTA took over from there and PATTA has

never been able to get up on its feet. PARM fell over and that is when we withdrew our funding. PATTA has a committee of what?

**Ms McCARTHY** - Eight.

**Ms BARWICK** - Do they go regularly?

**Ms McCARTHY** - As far as I know. As I mentioned last night I was put on as the general manager's nominee

**Mr FINCH** - You said there were about 22 at the meeting last night.

**Ms McCARTHY** - It was a good turnout.

**Ms BARWICK** - Okay, so they are picking themselves up. They have had a court case over the brochure that they paid for but was never printed.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, they went through that. The only thing with the zone marketing is that if they come up with \$20 000 they can go to the zone marketing and say dollar-for-dollar. Instead of coming to council as their first port of call, if industry comes up with that money they should then be able to go to the zone marketing group and say, 'We have \$20 000 but we need \$50 000. If you give us \$20 000 -' and then the industry has to come up with another \$10 000. I hear what you are saying and I think you are exactly spot on.

**Ms McCARTHY** - It is the usual LTA business, it is fatigue. These are people running their B&Bs or their apartment units or whatever they might be. It is what they do, it is their livelihood and then the rest of the association business.

**Ms BARWICK** - I am not saying we would not support them again.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - They were very good. They said they understood and they said council has been supportive in the past so there is no moan mentality or I did not pick that up when they spoke.

**Ms BARWICK** - Tourism is vitally important to our community but, people being as they are, they were saying we have Tassal and you do not go and give them money and you do not go and give the fishermen money and you do not go and give the farmers money. So it has always been a little bit of a problem but that is not what has stopped us.

When PARM fell over, PATTA never really have quite been able to get up on their feet and if they had a really good tourist association we probably would contribute. But their own industry never seemed to want to support them down here. They have just never been able to become self-sufficient and their own industry will never contribute to make them that way.

**CHAIR** - Thanks for that. If there is anything else that you think of later that you think you would like to have put in, feel free to write to us if there are any other issues or ideas - to Tom, the Secretary of the Committee. That would be useful.

**Ms McCARTHY** - Okay. There was probably initial angst about the Three Capes Walk when it was first mooted, in that people saw that there was probably no money for this community in it with the accommodation. Then KPMG, commissioned by Tourism Tasmania, did a financial study into the day walks and what that would mean to this community, which then brought the council on board. We would not sneeze at that. So you will still find that there are a few people who say they do not want this infrastructure building in the parks. They are not against the Three Capes Walk but they do not want the infrastructure built in the park. The vast majority of people would want the Three Capes Walk. I believe David O'Byrne had a meeting last Friday down here and I think they might have even suggested something about building infrastructure out of the park, which is something totally new to me. I do not know whether Stuart can shed any light on that. He was apparently at that meeting on the Friday.

**Mr LENNOX** - He didn't mention it.

**Ms McCARTHY** - It is pretty much supported.

**CHAIR** - Thanks very much for coming.

**Ms McCARTHY** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for the use of your premises.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**