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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION B COMMITTEE, MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON 2 JULY 2015

BUILT HERITAGE TOURISM IN TASMANIA

Ms MELINDA ANDERSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DESTINATION SOUTHERN TASMANIA, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Valentine) - Melinda, thank you for coming. We are taking sworn evidence. All evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege. That is not the case when you are outside the hearing.

Ms ANDERSON - I am the CEO of Destination Southern Tasmania, which is the regional tourism organisation for the south. We cover 11 municipal areas, including Greater Hobart, up to Lake St Clair, down to the Tasman, far south and into the south-west. We are the largest regional tourism organisation in the state.

I used to be the tourism manager at Launceston City Council; I know Ivan from that time a few years ago. I have worked in tourism for 20 years and I was the marketing director at Sovereign Hill. I have had a strong interest in heritage tourism through that experience and through other tourism roles.

We have our own destination management plan for the southern area. History and heritage, including built heritage, form a core driver or a core attribute for the region and for the state as well. From a tourism point of view, heritage is significant as a major motivator to tourism in the state. We certainly have nature and wildlife right up there, but heritage and the stories that surround that and preservation and interpretation are a key motivator, particularly for getting people out into the regions. That is our biggest job; how do we get people to move around, from a tourism point of view, and spend more, experience more, and really make the most of everything that is in this state?

We see built heritage as vitally important from a community point of view, but also incredibly important as the motivator for why people would explore more in this state. They may not come here specifically for that purpose, but the reason they will experience more and get out more is certainly driven by that. It really is important for us.

CHAIR - What percentage of the business in the region with the organisations you deal with would be driven by built heritage, as opposed to built heritage being used as a premises? The core purpose of the events or activities that take place, focussing on built heritage, what sort of percentage of the activity in the south?

Ms ANDERSON - We have major players in that space, being the Port Arthur historic site, also National Trust has a number of properties. From a regional point of view, we do not have a full understanding of the actual number. Whether it be Geeveston Heritage Centre or museums in the local community, we do not have those statistics.

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CHAIR - You do not have the statistics around that?

Ms ANDERSON - No, however we do know that they underpin as complementary experiences in every case. Port Arthur is a classic example of how built heritage can drive tourism and make a significant difference to a community. Also, the great example of partnerships and government support. Similarly, the Penitentiary in Hobart has undergone quite a revival recently through taking a more commercial approach to its business, so they now have a booking reservation system. They have put on commercial activities, activations, where they have brought in partners and they have doubled their visitors - that is in the last few months - and doubled the revenue from that. That is a really good example of how a non-government, with some assistance, but commercial partnerships is also using it as a driver.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is partly what we are on about. We understand that you cannot possibly spend money conserving and preserving, unless there is some purpose to it. All of them, in the long term, need to be somehow sustainable. That is exactly the kind of thing we are looking at. Are you actively promoting or is there some way your tourism association is actually helping people to do that? We have been through a few places like Redlands and Shene as well as Port Arthur. As you say, Port Arthur is doing it fantastically well. There are a lot of places that are constantly using money to upgrade or preserve them, but without, as far as we can see, any long-term commercial capacity. How do you solve that problem? Because your experience at Sovereign Hill is another one of those.

Ms ANDERSON - One of the things Sovereign did - which I will never forget - was have a very long term plan. They always had a long-term vision about what they would do next, where the opportunities might be to drive the rejuvenation. With any tourism development there needs to be continuous improvement or else you will plateau with visitation. It is very important to continue investing. That is what we have not seen perhaps in a lot of built heritage tourism ventures at the moment. You see grants being given with great intentions but perhaps not the overall strategic vision of where it might go. Often you will find a grant for an information centre or a roof or something like that, but what is going to happen next? Where is that commercial sustainability going to come in? It is a balance because heritage needs support and there needs to be some public/private partnership there.

CHAIR - A bit piecemeal, is it?

Ms ANDERSON - I think so.

Mrs TAYLOR - Who helps people if they ask for grant? Does whoever gives the grant ask, 'How does it fit into your long-term plan?', or could they possibly do that to make people think about that before they get the grant?

Ms ANDERSON - One of the things I have noticed happening through the government recently, particularly from a generic approach to tourism and grants, is making sure everything fits in strategic priorities for the region and the state. That is quite a new approach. Previously individuals, a council or a business will put in a submission for a grant and they have to say why it is important and where it meets the criteria, but

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ultimately you have to pick the experiences that are going to make a difference to a community, the state and the region. That sits in an overall vision. We do play a role there, in partnership with local government, about identifying where key heritage assets might be, and also with state government and private businesses. We are probably lacking at the moment in that coordinated effort. We work with our region in advocating and providing advice around how you might approach it.

CHAIR - How do you work with all the different organisations or providers in your area?

Ms ANDERSON - We are only three years old, so we are evolving as to where we might play in this space. We are a membership organisation and at the moment we work particularly well with our members, which could be Port Arthur or the National Trust. We would work with them and perhaps provide advice, or connect with appropriate businesses or grants, on how they might leverage off where the strategic priorities are. If someone is not in that space and not connected - a smaller community opportunity that might go to local government - they are probably not tapping into that wider strategic network.

CHAIR - The councils are members?

Ms ANDERSON - They are.

CHAIR - They are integral to your organisation, so one expects that perhaps the councils would see the benefit. If councils are trying to get a project up in their area, do they approach you to ask for help in developing a plan?

Ms ANDERSON - Generally they will, but we can do better in setting a bigger strategic direction. Sometimes we all look in our own backyard and not at where we fit in the bigger picture. That is an evolutionary thing, being a new organisation and where you fit in that. Willow Court is a good example. There is a mountain of opportunities there but where does it sit in the strategic vision for the state? What is the best opportunity to leverage off that? It is very interesting heritage but how do we develop that to be a game changer? We would like to play a role in that.

Mrs TAYLOR - How could you play a role in that?

Ms ANDERSON - It's in the coordination of the strategic vision. There are a number of partners that need to be brought in on that. Sometimes those things were developed years ago, so getting involved now is what we need to work on. Regional tourism organisations generally are the glue to bring these things together.

Mrs TAYLOR - You could provide that coordination role?

Ms ANDERSON - We could.

CHAIR - It's not always easy, though. You don't want to muscle in but by the same token if there is some encouragement.

Ms ANDERSON - I think so. It is about helping understand what the game-changers might be. Obviously, you need the assistance of the Heritage Council and local government

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with the significant stories that sit around the heritage buildings or experiences. It really is a partnership approach. If you are looking across the state, do you need to bring in an independent coordinator? I think that is what is lacking. There is lots of interest and there is lots of desire, but where is the coordination of effort to make sure that it is strategic and you are not just putting money into something that in two years' time is not going to deliver?

Mrs TAYLOR - That is exactly what we saw at Willow Court.

Mr DEAN - First of all, Melinda, who are your representatives? Who is in your team?

Ms ANDERSON - Do you mean in my membership?

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Ms ANDERSON - We have about 200 members and we cover the whole south. So it is more than half the state. It includes Port Arthur Historic Site, National Trust - we are up to Lake St Clair with Pumphouse Point as a classic example of adaptive reuse of a heritage building - and all the way down to the far south. Eleven councils are in our region - pretty well all the southern councils, except for Glamorgan Spring Bay.

Mr DEAN - When you say Glamorgan Spring Bay, that is Break O'Day. Is Glamorgan Spring Bay not in it?

Ms ANDERSON - No. We go all the way up the Sorell Council. Then the next one goes to the east coast.

CHAIR - There is an east coast regional tourism organisation which we will talk about.

Ms ANDERSON - Yes.

Mr DEAN - I see.

Ms ANDERSON - You have got Tourism Northern Tasmania. You have got Destination Southern Tasmania, the Cradle Coast and the east coast.

Mr DEAN - Okay. Thank you for that. I don't know whether you have finished speaking or not, but my question was going to be just how do you connect with Tourism Tasmania? How do you get your position through to them to ensure that they take on your issues and your concerns, and promote your area?

Ms ANDERSON - We work very closely in partnership with Tourism Tasmania. We are partly funded by them in a grant deed. Their job is to market the state interstate and internationally. They have quite a clear directive now to only work in marketing. Our job is to do more localised marketing, which is the storytelling and the support going up to Tourism Tasmania so we understand what is going on at a regional level. Also our job is industry development; it is capacity building of industry, which includes skills, investment, and those types of things.

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We play a role at the regional level to make sure we are building that. This is why this is very important. There is also advocacy. We advocate to Tourism Tasmania if we feel it necessary, but their area is marketing. Give them the right experiences in heritage and they will market them; but their job is no longer around development. They do not really play in that space any more around actively looking at product development and advice so much. That would fall more to the regional tourism organisations in their space.

We would definitely let them know about experiences. We would say, 'This is what is happening here. Let us take an operator in to meet them and make sure that they are connecting and understanding what the developments are, and giving due consideration and recognition to them'.

Mr DEAN - One of the reasons this committee was set up was that there was concern that the heritage of this state was not playing a strong enough or a big enough role in tourism. In other words, Tourism Tasmania was not using that in a way that it could do to promote the state to bring people here. From your point of view, is the heritage within your area being used in the right way by Tourism Tasmania to bring people across your whole region?

Ms ANDERSON - At the moment, I think we can get better at giving them the right information to put out there. The things that really stand out at the moment that are attracting visitors centre around nature a lot. Certainly arts and culture are growing through the likes of MONA and other experiences. Port Arthur has done a wonderful job, particularly in the Chinese market, and Tourism Tasmania is certainly working very hard in that space.

What we probably do not do well enough around experience development is to make sure the experiences are active and telling the stories in a way that can be sold to visitors. Pumphouse Point is a great example at the moment. You might not put it up there as heritage but, to me, it is. There is an adaptive re-use of a building and that is very important and you can access it. We need to be giving Tourism Tasmania the accessible experiences that can be presented as tourism experiences, and that is the job we need to do to make sure. We look at Shene which is doing a great job. We look at other places like that which are putting what we call commissionable products out there. They need to be able to be bought by travel agents and those things.

The National Trust is a classic example. You might go the Clarendon and it is a garden tour or it might not be open. Now, they are working on a daily tour that can be bought online and has commissionable rates. That is what we need to be doing - working with the industry to make sure the heritage products can be sold by Tourism Tasmania.

Mr FINCH - Melinda, how many paid staff do the regional tourism bodies have?

Ms ANDERSON - Not very many - two to three on average.

Mr FINCH - Three in each area?

Ms ANDERSON - Yes. Some might only have two but generally it's an average of three to four.

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Mr FINCH - Destination South, how many do you have there?

Ms ANDERSON - I would have three full-time equivalent.

Mr FINCH - How are you feeling about that provision of personnel within the organisations? I am curious as to whether you are able to strategise and look at different priorities and to do your work with the number of people you have? Are you under the pump?

Ms ANDERSON - We are, Kerry, yes.

Mr FINCH - Am I quoting you correctly? I have made a few notes here and I want to make sure I have this statement correct. I think you said, 'Strategic priorities are not evaluated as well as they could be'. Is that a fair statement?

Ms ANDERSON - Yes.

Mr FINCH - Thanks. I wanted to clarify that to make sure I was on the right track. What are the shortcomings that you can see of the tourism industry in respect of heritage? You have told us some, but are there others that you might elaborate on? Just the shortcoming of the tourism industry in its connection with our built heritage and heritage opportunities.

Ms ANDERSON - I think access is key and I will use Launceston as an example. In the most preserved Georgian streetscape, how does one access that? How does one live the experience that Launceston has in spades over anywhere else in Australia? It is access not necessarily in the sense of opening up and having queues of people, but looking at things in a creative way that is contemporary. That might be with technology or with interpretation. Too often, a lot of our heritage assets are locked up and are not accessible or encouraged to be invested in, in a commercial way. It is that balance between tourism - and I mean this in a really positive way; I am not talking about commercialism - and being sustainable, having that preservation balance with commercialisation.

Accessibility is key and that is where we have locked a lot of things up or we have not thought about the experience that appeals to the consumer. If you go to Woolmers, what is the experience you receive that will make you come back and rave about it again and again? There is rich heritage there, and an amazing convict story; but the investment in the contemporary interpretation, which Port Arthur does very well, we have not invested in that in enough of our assets. That is at the localised level as well.

Mr FINCH - Are your organisations discussing that? Are you talking about that key word of access and doing something about it?

Ms ANDERSON - We work more in an advocacy way, Kerry. We have highlighted it as a strategic priority. When it comes to grant opportunities or new investors, we would be highlighting and encouraging investment in those areas and working to build the capacity. In terms of preparing a heritage strategy where we have identified where we need to be seeking investment, not at this point in time. But it is a key motivator for travel here and there are definitely a lot of opportunities to be working in this space.

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Mr FINCH - If I am reading it correctly, from the evidence we have received - there hasn't been a formal submission but little bits and pieces that people say - the various organisations within this space are working in silos and there is not that coordinated effort. You have this great idea about access but where do you present that? Does it gestate correctly? There needs to be a coordinated effort with ideas and the way forward.

Ms ANDERSON - I definitely think so, particularly with heritage and the resources that are required to conserve, preserve and look at balanced ways of presenting access. It definitely needs to build off partnerships and coordinated effort. It can't stand alone. There may be some private enterprise, such as Pumphouse, where you turn it into accommodation and that works well, but a lot of them need that partnership. It will not happen when you work in isolation so we do need a more coordinated effort.

CHAIR - We have three or four regional organisations. The Government sees its role as bringing people to Tasmania, but once they are here they leave them alone. It is up to the organisations or any part of the island that has an attraction to try to grab the attention. There seems to be something missing, from my observation, and that is the coordination Kerry was talking about, not just within each region but across regions. Do you have much interaction with the other regional organisations to develop product that is holistic end to end? As an example, in the south there is the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority. They developed their particular development and now it is going to include the coal mines and the women's prison. You have Brickendon and Woolmers telling their story, the on-farm experience of convicts just prior to ticket-of-leave perhaps, but the end-to-end story is a combination of those two. Brickendon and Woolmers would have to benefit because they are going to get more visitation if that happens. There are 300 000 or more going to Port Arthur; I do not know how many are going to Brickendon and Woolmers but it is not in that street. There is a lot of benefit if there is cross-regional talk. Can you give us an understanding as to how the regional organisations work together strategically to make things better?

Ms ANDERSON - We work pretty well together. We are all quite new, coming into our third year, and we have identified some statewide projects we would like to work on together. This is the type of thing that would work well as a statewide project. All the themes or iconic experiences for Tasmania are generally consistent across the state in terms of motivators, with some slight differences - such as the east coast with the beaches and the south with the waterways - but generally history and heritage is something that is consistent across the state. There are opportunities and we share information and look at opportunities to work together.

CHAIR - The east coast has history, too, and there are possibly convict connections there that could feed into the story. This is just the convict story and obviously there are other areas outside the convict story, general heritage and history of free settlers and what they have done for this island, that would prove an interesting story, and the farm villages around the state. It is that holistic thing, isn't it?

Ms ANDERSON - Yes. We have changed our roles probably in the last year. With Tourism Tasmania changing to be more marketing focused, you will find that now the regional tourism organisations have a greater role around product industry development, where previously we did not play as much in that space. We always had a role but it is more significant now. That capacity building and looking at opportunities across the whole

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state is now here and it wasn't there two years ago. We are now, through a relationship with the Department of State Growth, going to be working a lot more together. The opportunities around industry development are very important. Heritage is a key part of that and it is our motivator.

Mr FINCH - What I was talking to Melinda about was the silo effect, but trying to bring the organisations together to be better coordinated. Can you give me your thoughts on what you think that organisation or that group or that lead body would look like? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms ANDERSON - I have been thinking about it but I don't think I have the answer. Whether or not it sits best with a state body that can bring us together to identify strategic priorities and actions moving forward, that probably would work best. It needs to be not just in the heritage realm; it needs to be covering the tourism aspect as well. Sometimes just tourism and heritage act completely in isolation and we need to have that commitment to be across. It has to rest at the state level. It is not going to be Tourism Tasmania that does it in terms of where their focus is.

CHAIR - Do you think their focus is wrong?

Ms ANDERSON - No, I don't think so, as long as we fund appropriately in terms of making sure the capacity-building is there. They have a job to bring people into the state but we want to see heritage as a major motivator and that is what we need to be able to provide them.

Mrs TAYLOR - Melinda, is there a gap between Tourism Tasmania doing the marketing for the state, which is fine, and the regional tourism associations doing the capacity building and the coordination and the promotion of members? What about those people who are not members - and we are talking about heritage in particular - who own heritage? Is the only way they can get into the whole scheme of things by becoming members, because Tourism Tasmania is not looking at the small picture now; it is looking at the big picture?

Ms ANDERSON - We are the only membership-based organisation of the regional tourism organisations. The East Coast, which is coming next, will tell you they have a relationship with their chambers, but the other two are not membership based. Whilst we are membership based, that is a funding model for us. We don't have the same level of funding from local government that the others do, so we have to secure funding in other ways. We represent the whole industry but we do some different things for our members. If you look at our website, we list every single tourism product and experience in our region. We don't ignore anyone, as long as they have put themselves forward through the right channels. We make sure we do a lot more work with members and we actively encourage that because it is all about bettering the industry. There is not a gap in that way.

Mrs TAYLOR - Do you encourage non-members to become members?

Ms ANDERSON - Yes, completely. This would be the same in any of the regions, but active engagement is hard at the best of times for people who are not really interested in the industry. If someone has a great heritage experience, but it is part-time with

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volunteers on a weekend, they may not see themselves in the tourism space, so they may not be actively engaging. That is a challenge around where we are trying to say, let's look at it; these are great stories, so can we make it a more active experience at the local level and within the region? That is where the partnership with local government is very important and how important is that story to this region or to that town and how we encourage that engagement. That is what we can work with local government to achieve that.

CHAIR - Thank you for coming in again. It has been really interesting to listen to things from your perspective. Let us hope we can look forward to a brighter future in terms of communication and coordination.

Ms ANDERSON - Thank you for the opportunity.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

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Mr DAVID REED, CHAIRMAN, EAST COAST REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and is protected by parliamentary privilege. I must remind you that any comments you make outside of the hearing may not be afforded that same privilege. The *Hansard* will be published on the committee website when it becomes available. We thank you for giving us your time.

Mr REED - I am currently chairman of the East Coast Regional Tourism Organisation; that is the organisation on whose behalf I appear in front of you today. I have significant experience in the built heritage area of the whole cultural heritage and natural heritage spectrum. I have been the general manager of Port Arthur for some years and I have also been chair of the Runnymede National Trust house for many years. That is where I have been professionally engaged.

The catalyst of all this, and why I decided to look up your work, was my responsibilities as the chairman of the east coast region. Our most non-performing asset is Maria Island and we need to do something about that in a big way. It is fair to say that there is market failure - and all sorts of failure - about Maria Island, not the least of which is that the management plan hasn't been changed for 17 years. That tells a story in itself about its currency in tourism and its practices of heritage conservation and a whole range of things, including its natural opportunities. It has become somewhat of a haven for different species over the last 30-40 years, including the fact that it is now a devil sanctuary. We have a particular failure about our region.

My region involves three major brands. The first is Bay of Fires. It is being visited like fury and the numbers are going up. We have some work to do there but it is terrific. Freycinet is the same - everything is fantastic; it is the most visited national park now in the state. It has taken over from Cradle Mountain with 230 000 visitors last year. Yet here we are at Maria Island with between 17 000 and 30 000 people a year; it is appalling. There are a whole lot of reasons for this and I don't want to comment too much about the history. We really need to consider what we can do to go forward. This has been at the top of my mind for some months. Some major intervention work needs to happen to make a difference to Maria Island. If we fiddle around the edges, with all due respect, we will not get anywhere. My initial view was to visit the idea that the Port Arthur Historic Site should run Maria Island, and that is not a bad idea. It has some currency and probably has a lot of good ideas about it.

Mrs TAYLOR - Not if you talk to the Port Arthur management people; already have more responsibilities than -

Mr REED - I have spoken to them. They came to the island recently and are very worried about taking on extra responsibilities without a budget. If we say 'without budget', that is a difficult discussion. They have been a little stung from their experience with the Female Factory where they were given the responsibility and no extra resources. If you are expected to do more and more with less and less, obviously it will not work. Yet somewhere there must a budget for Maria. It sits within Parks, so one would assume the Government could manipulate it, though I don't know how. If I get myself out of the 'why it will not work' thing to 'what the future might look like', I then thought, 'This is

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not just about Port Arthur and Maria; this is about the convict sites within Tasmania'. I am wondering about how Sarah Island is managed. I was the general manager for Simon Currant - Macquarie Holdings, which is Strahan Village and the Gordon River Cruises - and then for Federal Hotels, where I ran the railway as well. Gordon River Cruises pays a per-head fee for the use of Sarah Island for part of its convict interpretation. That has had some real benefits for that island. However, there is still a disconnect between Port Arthur and the large repository of convict artefacts. The Ross Female Factory - nothing happens with it at all. The Cascades Female Factory has a significant amount of resources attached to it now. These are all World Heritage sites. Maria at the Darlington part is linked in this World Heritage site and there is no thread of management. I am thinking to myself, have I stumbled? I do not know.

If I think about it from a very high perspective then I am thinking that if Tasmania has such a convict history, such an extraordinary start to our statehood, then a convict site authority makes eminently good sense. How it is put together and managed afterwards, I am not quite sure of that detail, but I see that all of the relevant skill sets are held currently within the Port Arthur Management Authority. They have got marine contract, so they are used to Maria and Sarah because of ferries and goodness knows what. They understand the business of tourism, food and beverage, day and night products. They do that as a matter of course every day. They are a multi tourism-award winner. They deal with concurrent tourism issues, local and state. They deal with concessions within the private sector and private operators all day. They understand and lead interpretation. They have great linkages with federal heritage agencies for convict-site restoration. They are the repository for the majority of the Tasmanian convict artefacts in their sheds down there, and they have a relationship with the Tasmanian University and other institutions concerning the Tasmanian convict story databases, digitalisation of that information et cetera.

The difference about the whole serial nomination was Brickendon and Woolmers as the private sector element, the farming sector element of the beginning of our state. They are still in the private land holding, as opposed to these others which are all owned by the state.

CHAIR - Yes, it is an end-to-end experience.

Mr REED - It is. There is no reason why there cannot be a significant amount of common marketing and common story, common thread, common interpretation. If we take the responsibility of the state, what the state has responsibility for, we have these other five sites. They all have this common theme of being our convict history. If we were to add Sarah Island, which is a critical part of the end-to-end story, then I believe that a Tasmanian convict sites authority would be an excellent idea to investigate.

The catalyst for all of this is the current dreadful state of affairs, not in the state of affairs of the true buildings of Darlington, but how many people are going, how under-performing it is for the region of Triabunna, how that is more and more important with the demise of other serious industries there. This is the focus of immediate attention that is required, as far as built heritage is concerned.

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Mr DEAN - I was approached late last year in relation to this shemozzle. That is the best word I can use in relation to the contract that was in place for getting tourists across to Maria Island.

Mr REED - Yes.

Mr DEAN - It was an absolutely tragic situation. I spoke to the Government in relation to that, and they told me that they were arresting that position, that they were going to get on top of it and fix it up. Is that, to your knowledge, being repaired? Is that situation now much better, where the contract is being honoured as it should be? How well is Tourism Tasmania promoting Maria Island and Darlington to tourists in this state? Are they promoting the place? I don't see that they are?

Mr REED - Ivan, the factual situation, as I understand it, for the ferry is that the tender process was withdrawn and a licence for 12 months was given to the existing operators.

Mr DEAN - They were the ones that stuffed it.

Mr REED - The amount of material in the public domain is simple. Parks have an awful lot of complaints about the ferry operator. The local council has an awful lot of complaints about the local ferry operator, and the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, where I am going next, has an awful lot of complaints about the ferry operator. It is self-evident that the ferry operation is not successful. It is holding back the visitor industry considerably. We will not need to go into why these things are happening. Kerry, you asked whether the Government is on top of this. The answer would have to be no. The current situation is exactly as it was prior to the tender process. The tender process did not work so we are back to two years ago. The worse thing is, there is nothing on the horizon for the following 12 months.

Our industry is sitting there saying this is three years wasted and it is really difficult to work on the three to four to five-year time frame. This is bizarre.

CHAIR - There could be two sides to the story from the commercial end.

Mr REED - Of course and I would not dream to talk about whatever the ferry operator might have in his negotiations with Parks, because I am not in the confidence of that.

Mr DEAN - The contractor was leaving 20, 30 and probably more at times, people stranded at Triabunna, wanting to get across to Maria Island because they were leaving early, not sailing to time at all. There were complaints galore and there was almost mutiny by the staff in the tourism centre at Triabunna because of what was happening.

Mr REED - Ivan, those situations have not abated. Your assumption, I am afraid, is wrong, that the Government have it under control. It is exactly the same ferry operator, exactly the same ferry, exactly the same problems and circumstances that the customers faced this year as they did last year and the year before.

Mr FINCH - David, there two ferries there. Is one not operating?

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Mr REED - Kerry, there are two. The other one is not a ferry; it is more of a charter operator and they go when they have been chartered or commissioned by someone. They don't run to a timetable. Sometimes that business is working with a number of people and it is very busy and for some months he will not be there, for reasons of his own business that I don't understand.

Does Tourism Tasmania promote Maria Island? No. Tourism Tasmania very rarely promotes any product that is not a partner product that they will be in market with. Partner products mean Jetstar, Flight Centre, and commissionable product; Tourism Tasmania will certainly be promoting those products - TT-Line, for example. They have a wholesale rate within those programs. Flight Centre - there is a new project or program of advertising within the next couple of months. I saw the itineraries yesterday. We as a regional tourism organisation are asked to make sure that they are accurate, and we vet them to make sure they are feasible and sensible and we have not made any terrible mistakes. With Tourism Tasmania, most of this marketing is online on their website. They are driving people to a website and the website has the itineraries. Their itineraries do not mention Maria Island, mainly because it is not a commissionable product.

Mr DEAN - Oh dear, tragic.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is exactly the question I was asking Ms Anderson about Destination South. What happens to those people who are not commissionable products, if you like, or who are not members. If you are not a member and they cannot sell you, then how do they get help to do their strategic plans and to find ways of making themselves commercially viable? Darlington in a sense is part of that.

Mr REED - I heard the last part of Ms Anderson's evidence and she was outlining how Tourism Tasmania have focused entirely on the demand side. The supply side of bringing good product to the marketplace used to be their call and it is now off their radar entirely.

CHAIR - Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Mr REED - That is a good thing because Tourism Tasmania may not have been the best people to do it, but that is not necessarily to say therefore the things in its place are better or worse. At the moment there is a lot of settling because State Growth have been given some responsibilities in this area. There are two full-time people in what we call the supply side of tourism in State Growth. They have been at it a month or two only; this is really early days. I think Ms Anderson was talking about how all four regions are looking at what common elements are there in amongst our destination management plans that may form a whole-of-state approach, and that might be to B&Bs or to a market segment like -

CHAIR - Is this driven from within government?

Mr REED - No, it is being driven by us, mainly the four RTOs and the industry council. Luke is particularly involved in this. What are the key elements across all the regions that need to be handled on a statewide basis rather than a regional basis.

CHAIR - That is good to know.

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Mr REED - I am playing around with Maria Island. I can play with all these things, but there are lots of other things, like wine tourism, which is not just us; that is for the whole of the state. Backpackers, that is for the whole of the state. There are a number of elements which are statewide and a number of elements which we should be focusing on individually. There is a lot more clarity around that, than there was six months ago.

CHAIR - So the organisations are talking?

Mr REED - Yes, and we are across that and getting across it to a much more detailed level. There has been someone engaged to draw all those common issues out of our various destination management plans to form the agenda for State Growth for the next two years, as to what we think, collectively, are the things we should be focusing on.

CHAIR - Do you think the built heritage product that exists on the east coast and within your purview is being used enough? Do you think there is potential or do you think it is not so important for the east coast, apart from the Darlington issue.

Mr REED - Unless I am mistaken, if we take Darlington and Maria Island out of the discussion, because we have just had that call, then I believe the east coast built heritage includes mainly accommodation product. Ten years ago, staying in a convict-era building was extremely sexy. It was highly promoted as an authentic experience and one of the great things to do. Over the last 10 years Avalon, Safire, and on our coast, Rocky Hills Retreat, have taken over.

That is an organic natural way of the world. That is not because the convict-theme operators suddenly were doing it to death, or served cold tea. It had nothing to do with them. The world changed. The world has moved. Our visitor experience is different. I think the expectations of our visitors are entirely different from what they were 10 years ago. We are seeing people driving up and down the east coast who would be delighted to stay in a cottage built in the 1860s, but it is not the trigger for them to come. That is the difference. They will do it while they are seeing Devils Corner, or while they are doing all sorts of other things, like having cake and cream and jam. They will do all sorts of other things. They will do a cruise to Wineglass Bay, but the accommodation is not the driver as it used to be.

CHAIR - What about the experiences of the Trail of the Tin Dragon, for instance, or the St Helens History Room? They are not built heritage as such, but there are elements of built heritage that are actually in the north-east. We saw a wonderful video presentation there in that history room; it was very professional, from my perspective.

Mr REED - Yes.

CHAIR - Then we saw the other one on that very long, wide screen. How much of that has actually been woven into the east coast experience?

Mr REED - None.

CHAIR - Is there work to be done there?

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Mr REED - I do not know because the infrastructure was put in but there was no marketing for it at all. The Trail of the Tin Dragon is an absolute nonentity. It does not appear anywhere. In any research that you would like to Google about coming to the north-east coast, you will never find the Trail of the Tin Dragon. It is just not search engine-optimised. It does not have its own website stuff going on. It is not in social media. It is not part of the living, breathing product up there at all.

CHAIR - Yet, it is an essential part.

Mr REED - It is an essential part. Yet if you think of the emerging market of China, this could be the biggest thing they have ever seen. It could be frightening.

CHAIR - That is exactly right.

Mr REED - At the moment, nobody owns it. There is no-one saying, 'Come on, we have got to do this today, everybody. Here is the team'. Nobody owns the Trail of the Tin Dragon. They had a government grant of \$100 00 to do this. Then the grant went away and so nobody owns it. Nobody owns the product, so no-one is driving the product. There are no performance measures about it like, 'Well, we only had eight hits last week; we should have had 36'. Nobody is talking about it, so it just dies.

Mrs TAYLOR - Does that belong with you, the east coast?

Mr REED - No.

Mrs TAYLOR - Who does it belong with?

Mr REED - It is a joint Break O'Day-Dorset venture.

CHAIR - Yet there would be value in working with your organisation - the northern organisation and yours working to somehow stitch it all together?

Mr REED - Sure. It would be. Again, it is probably not a trigger for why people would wish to come to Tasmania, unless we are talking about the Chinese.

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes, absolutely.

Mr REED - That could be a trigger for the Chinese, but so could Chinamans Bay on Maria Island, because they sent a whole range of Chinese to go fishing there.

CHAIR - There is Little Chinamans as well on the inside of the -

Mr REED - Yes. I might be way off, but didn't they have a fishing plant, a factory of some description, at Chinamans Bay?

CHAIR - I do not know. I cannot tell you that. I should know. My father used to run the fish cannery at Dunalley.

Mr REED - Well, over to you, then.

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Mrs TAYLOR - That is the whole point in a sense of what we are trying to do here, David. There is no point in giving money to someone just to set something up. How do we make those experiences that people are looking for, then get someone to drive them?

Mr REED - It is driving. We are currently spending a lot of money on Great Eastern Drive which is a little separate project from the region.

Mr FINCH - Fantastic.

Mr REED - Thank you. Have you seen the signs?

Mr FINCH - No, but I love the idea of it.

Mr REED - It is going pretty well.

CHAIR - Except for the marking on the sideling at the Scottsdale stop.

Mrs TAYLOR - It only goes as far as St Helens.

Mr REED - It only goes from St Helens to Orford - not guilty for the sideling!

Mrs TAYLOR - I know, but why does it only go St Helens to Orford?

Mr REED - Also not guilty. Madam, I am in charge of only what the poor government me - a couple hundred grand and off I go.

Mrs TAYLOR - We have been asking that question. It doesn't make sense. You go all the way to St Helens and then what do you do, go back again?

Mr REED - Yes, and we would like you to constantly go up and down from St Helens to Orford and back again and never get off it. The economic benefit by the time you have your pension and moved there and everything is settled, it will be terrific.

CHAIR - The honourable member for Apsley was espousing the benefit of going further.

Mr FINCH - You may have heard me talk to Melinda, David, about what a tourism authority or an overseeing body might look like. You have had many years of dealing with the private sector and bureaucracy and trying to make your way through those areas. What do you think an overarching body, an authority, might look like and constitute?

CHAIR - This is not just for convicts you are talking about, is it?

Mr FINCH - No. I am thinking about heritage tourism.

Mr REED - I don't know. I hate to answer a question with another question but I did have a question of the chairman of Tourism Tasmania, James Cretan, the other evening, when he and I sat down and my first comment to him was, 'James, what is the mechanism by which Tourism Tasmania engages with the tourism industry?'. His immediate answer was, 'That is a work in progress, David; I will get back to you'.

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There is not a mechanism at the moment for the government agency of Tourism Tasmania to engage with the tourism industry. The tourism industry, especially the smaller operators, are fully engaged with their RTOs, to a lesser degree in various areas. They are fully engaged with the four of us at different levels. I am very pleased with what has happened to the new regions, the north and the east coast.

The Cradle Coast Authority have been in business 14 years or something. I was on their board in 2002, so it is at least 13 years. They have a very good constituency of operators who know what they do and understand them. The one down here is a new business which is based on membership and that is a difficult model for Melinda to handle. On the east coast we don't have a membership model. Anybody in or outside the industry - it does not matter who you are - can advertise on our website, get involved with us, and be part of the team.

CHAIR - Do you actively go out to work with them?

Mr REED - Certainly, with every chamber of commerce.

CHAIR - Do you engage them with development of product or not?

Mr REED - Yes, and with every chamber of commerce we put on product development workshops. We have put on skills improvement and workforce development workshops for them; anybody is allowed to join. Nobody is disenfranchised because we do not have a membership model. Coming back to you, Kerry, I honestly do not know what an overarching one would look like.

Mr FINCH - One of our recommendations might be to the Government that they might need to take a stronger lead in this area to pool all the disparate groups, operations and silos under State Growth. It might be expanded and built to pool everybody together so we are all on the same page as far as heritage tourism is concerned.

Mr REED - Yes. That could well have some legs. My immediate reaction is, why not?

CHAIR - People come to visit Tasmania; they do not come to visit just the south. They might have an icon thing like MONA or Saffire, but it is Tasmania they come to visit, but it such a disjointed experience when they get here, often regionalised. Mr Finch is talking about trying to have that organisation that brings the threads together so they get a more holistic experience that builds into the brand of Tasmania.

Mr FINCH - I am thinking more about pulling the National Trust in with the regional tourism organisations, with Woolmers and Brickendon, with PAHSMA. Something that makes everybody feel as if they are working for the same goals, and not overlooking some things that might not grow because people feel they are not being recognised.

CHAIR - Getting rid of the parochialism somehow.

Mr FINCH - As well. 'Leadership' is probably the key word I am looking for.

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Mr REED - Yes, dialogue and leadership; to get everybody on the same page is very important. It is a good idea but I do not have a view about how that might construct, I am sorry.

Mr DEAN - Mr Reed, how do you get your position and what is happening in your regional area through to Tourism Tasmania? Do you go to their board meetings?

Mr REED - There is an open invitation for an observer from Tourism Tasmania to attend every one of our board meetings. In the past 12 months we meet every six weeks, so that is probably 10 board meetings. I think we have had someone there five or six times so there is not a good formal relationship. There is an exceptionally good informal relationship. What happens is that my chief executive, whose name is Ruth, is in and out of Tourism Tasmania, metaphorically speaking, on the phone et cetera, every day. There is a very big working relationship. From a strategy and governance perspective there is not a great connection. I do not know whether that is necessary. I am not noticing any deficiencies in that, but on a daily working basis we have a very close and mutually satisfactory arrangement with Tourism Tasmania. Maybe that is because Ruth is very good at that. I do not know why, but it is a very good relationship. It is a working relationship, it is about down to earth things we both need off each other every day. From a governance point of view there is not a mechanism there yet, but we do have a good relationship with them.

CHAIR - Thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

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Mr CHRIS GRIFFIN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TOURISM NORTHERN TASMANIA, WAS CALLED BY TELEPHONE, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and is protected by parliamentary privilege. I must remind you that any comments you make outside of the hearing may not be afforded that same privilege. The *Hansard* will be published on the committee website when it becomes available. We thank you for giving us your time.

Mr GRIFFIN - As one of the four regional tourism bodies - as probably the southern and the eastern mobs have probably already mentioned today - we are governed by a destination management plan that essentially spells out the priorities of what we are here to do and what we are trying to achieve. Within our destination management plan we identified very early on - realizing we are an organisation not quite three years old - that heritage and the interpretation of heritage was a critical component of what we needed to do. We define heritage as an all-encapsulating statement. It is not convict or built, it is both our European heritage as well as our indigenous heritage. That is something we would love to see in the future - a commonly understood definition of Tasmanian heritage as the complete story. For the purposes of this exercise, under built heritage we have undertaken a number of marketing promotions that have included our heritage assets alongside the other appeals of the region. It is a complete destination rather than having heritage marketing versus other types of marketing.

In September last year, we pursued an exercise between UTAS and the heritage site custodians of workshopping what the challenges were and where tourism, the university and heritage sites could actively work together. We discovered that the job was bigger than we had originally defined in terms of progressing this area. Since then, we are pursuing federal grant funding to resource of project which allows each of our primary heritage sites - and we are picking on the larger sites only - the ability to work with specialists to profile and to find a blueprint for the way in which they interpret their stories, the history and their relevance to visitors.

We have discovered in those workshops of last year that none of the heritage sites in northern Tasmania have that fundamental blueprint of how to evolve with the visitor, and our visitor market has evolved remarkably over the last 10 or 15 years.

Mr FINCH - Chris, here is the northern regional body looking to get that funding to interpret the stories for the north. This seems to be something that is intrinsic to the development of heritage tourism; we should be looking for funding for the whole state. We were talking earlier about the silo effect we have in Tasmania with the different operators, when they should more working more in tandem to have that state result.

Mr GRIFFIN - I cannot agree more. To work toward how we are putting forward this project, the idea of it has come from what we are illustrating as best practice through National Trust with some of these southern properties, particularly the penitentiary and the work they have done there in contemporary interpretation. It is also leaning heavily on what everybody has been learning and gaining from the leadership of Port Arthur.

We need a better and more unified approach as a tourism industry, addressing and amplifying this need. We would even go as far as to say that if we can secure the

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funding for these five to six sites in the north and that it be used as a pilot for a statewide rollout perhaps. From a regional perspective, we will often take the path of least resistance. We can initiate a project regionally more quickly and concisely than a statewide project that needs a great deal more collaboration and alignment of partnerships.

Mr FINCH - Do you see a benefit, when it comes to some of the aspects of built heritage tourism, in a more holistic approach from the Tasmanian perspective, as opposed to a regional perspective?

CHAIR - Yes, I do, absolutely.

CHAIR - Witness, say, Port Arthur and Brickendon-Woolmers - like an end-to-end experience where you have the incarceration of Port Arthur and the on-farm experience prior to the ticket-of-leave at Woolmers. Do you know what I am trying to say there?

Mr GRIFFIN - Yes, absolutely; there is a connection of narrative between sites. When we first entered into this exercise with the destination management plan and understanding the condition in northern Tasmania, if I were to isolate the UNESCO-based sites at the moment, the disparity between the southern assets of the Female Factory, Cascade, and Port Arthur particularly, versus the resourcing of the potential being lost at Brickendon and Woolmers, there was a fundamental and really noticeable gap between the resourcing and capability of making the most out of that UNESCO listing. I cannot speak on behalf of those sites but it is down to us at the time. That was actually more of a liability to them than as an asset because the tourism and/or the economic value of being part of UNESCO was not being realised and they did not have the resources. This was a common understanding. They did not have the resources to adequately keep up with preservation and curation, let alone interpretation and gaining an advantage from tourism. I think you are right. Regionally, we have seen a gap in the area that needs attention to bring us up to the speed of some of those other southern sites. That can be blinkering sometimes against the statewide imperative.

CHAIR - It is pretty obvious when you are seeing Port Arthur with 300 000 or more visitors, while Brickendon and Woolmers get 26 000. It is a huge difference.

Mr GRIFFIN - I would also mention that it included the most recent visitor data coming out last week, which illustrated significant growth across the state and for northern Tasmania. Anecdotally, when I talk to Woolmers, they are not on the same cricket team; they have not been for about 18 months in comparing their data to the growth at a regional level.

Mr FINCH - Do you think their new centre might help rejuvenate or help them pick up on the numbers?

Mr GRIFFIN - I think so. We are working with Peter Rae and Damian in terms of the Trust and the management to consider that investment beyond the architecture, construction and interpretation of the site. That site has the unique advantage of attracting Chinese visitors, not for its heritage but for its rose garden. We working to understand how to deliver an Eastern-orientated experience against the traditional western heritage experience; they are fundamentally different.

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Mr DEAN - In relation to Tourism Tasmania and the value of heritage in promoting tourism in this state, are you of the view that Tourism Tasmania is doing enough in that area? They certainly are on Port Arthur and some of those very strategic areas, but do you think they are doing enough on the other places to bring tourists to this state?

Mr GRIFFIN - In the frame of considering using built heritage regionally as an attractor, I think perceptually there is a lower level of that use, versus Port Arthur and some of their primary imagery in marketing and campaigning. If you had asked me what I think they should do with heritage sites, it is not so much the presentation of the site that they should be exploring as much as going behind the scenery. They should be going behind those buildings and finding out all the good, bad and ugly stories that have happened there and bringing them to the fore because they are the compelling elements of the proposition of our heritage that attract people. We candidly say old things and old buildings will not turn everybody on in the 21st century. You have to bring out the story from those places and that history and re-enact it. From a marketing perspective, that goal is to present Tasmania as a compelling, challenging place to visit, rather than just being, if you like, selective about how you present the heritage in a positive way. Talk about the bad things that happened as well. People are not stupid and that is what they are looking for on a holiday - to know what happened rather than just see a pretty picture.

Mr DEAN - I agree with what you are saying. It is getting these stories out and it is an extremely interesting side of our history and unique to Tasmania. I think you are absolutely right and in fact we need to promote that and bring it out more.

Mr GRIFFIN - I cannot speak about Tourist Tasmania but I think they would be quite enthusiastic about that challenge. I do not think you would find resistance there. It is probably about giving them encouragement and motivation to take a leap.

CHAIR - Would you suggest it is the stories that are almost half the equation? Having the built heritage is one thing but it is the fascinating stories that go with it that builds the interest.

Mr GRIFFIN - Absolutely. Going back to the project we are still seeking federal funding for interpretation, that interpretation is things such as exploring how Woolmers could have night-theatre product where you can re-enact bushranger stories and narrative that are relevant to the place. You can put more energy into theatre training for volunteers, things like that which make narrative and storytelling relevant to that particular site, versus the story down the road which is obviously in that cascade.

CHAIR - A bit like the ship that was, only a different take.

Mr GRIFFIN - Exactly. It is funny when you say things like that because you sit there and you knock yourself in the head saying, but we have achieved that in one place and yet we let it go or we forgot that was a successful example. We should be carrying the same philosophy into our other places. Sometimes in Tasmania we do something brilliant but we forget to share it.

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CHAIR - If we had a number of those similar experiences around the state they could link up. They could tell the other part of the story.

Mr GRIFFIN - Absolutely. It would be a fascinating piece of research to delve deeper into the visitor motivation connected to heritage and discovering that. We looked at other places. We have looked at Northern Ireland and the way in which they present the heritage. It isn't on a heritage trail philosophy anymore. They pick on three or four key locations with primary castles or assets. Then they concentrate on those places and allow the smaller heritage sites around them to be the halo effect rather than a connected trail. Other places still have very viable and successful heritage trails. So I think we need to explore a whole bunch of different combinations against what the visitor is looking for and against their behaviour.

Mr FINCH - For people who are coming for heritage tourism, are they starting their visits in the south of the state? Do you have empirical evidence on that or do they start in the north? When they come to Tasmania, where is their gateway?

Mr GRIFFIN - There are two parts to that question. One is that existing visitor statistics are not very good at illustrating the motivation for you to come to Tasmania. So for people who are motivated to come to Tasmania to explore the history versus, say, motivated to be in a car with their loved ones for two weeks to reconnect, versus coming here for a golfing escape or whichever, that data is very hard to ascertain within the existing visitor statistics we have available. I have yet to see even an identified volume of visitors whose primary motivation is to come to the state for heritage, let alone their point of entry. We find for travel motivation that heritage is one of a number of things, so it could be our intriguing heritage against our natural landscapes and our great food and wine is a combination motive. Singularly, as one driving motive, heritage I do not think has the highest percentage of our visitation.

CHAIR - Ivan has the statistics on that. Was it 60 per cent?

Mr DEAN - Yes, it was in the high 60 per cents of people here looking at our heritage sites, compared with wineries at about 16 per cent. The visitation to heritage sites is high.

Mr GRIFFIN - I probably interpreted the question differently. That data is an exit survey which asks you what you did when you were in Tasmania. I heard the question from Kerry as heritage being a motivator to come to Tasmania.

Mr FINCH - Yes, that was my question; it was quite different.

Mr GRIFFIN - Different, as against the activities you partook in whilst here. That is not always a direct link to your intent to come to Tasmania.

CHAIR - In capturing those statistics, they need to be longitudinal and you cannot capture absolutely everything from a visitor in terms of category. It may be a bit too complex in a visitor survey to try to capture all those things. You need a longitudinal survey, don't you, to see how it changes over time.

Mr GRIFFIN - Yes, absolutely. There are some very viable and contemporary means available to research people's behaviour and how they utilise things like social media, pre

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and post visits and what they are talking about, versus what they tick in boxes in a survey.

To answer Kerry's question on port of entry against visiting heritage sites, there is not any definitive information that would argue one port over another. There is some very broad perception research that suggests many people coming here on holiday do not have a pre choice in terms of port of entry. It is a bit fluid against price and frequency of flights but also proximity to attractions or icons. In the sense of heritage, Port Arthur would probably win and therefore the south.

Mr FINCH - If they came in through the north, how do we disseminate information to them to let them know about the bigger picture of Tasmania and what is occurring in other areas? Conversely, if they come in for Port Arthur, which would be one of the big attractors, how do we get them to assist the rest of the state by promoting what else is here, so that visitors might be encouraged to come again?

Mr GRIFFIN - Much of it will reside in some of the existing websites - the state website, Discover Tasmania, being a primary asset. There should be a valid challenge as to what and how much heritage information is presented on that site and the way in which it is presented. That is our primary platform when you think that about 1.2 million unique users go to that site annually. That is basically the number one site in terms of being used by visitors coming to the state.

Mr FINCH - Did you say 1.2 million hits?

Mr GRIFFIN - It is unique visits. I do not have the recorded number in front of me, but it is well in excess of 1 million.

Mr FINCH - Unique visits; what do you mean?

Mr GRIFFIN - To the website. As far as Tasmania is concerned, that is probably one of the largest sources of information people use when planning to come here.

Mr FINCH - Is that a Tourism Tasmania generated website?

Mr GRIFFIN - That is correct - discovertasmania.com.

CHAIR - Part of our inquiry is to look at the role of heritage organisations and tourism organisations like yourself and to delve into the operations and how that all works. Can you give us an understanding as to how your organisation communicates with its stakeholders up there and the government in particular? Is it like every other tourism organisation that meets from time to time or has forums?

Mr GRIFFIN - I will try to give you some structure in the north first and then our communication structure. As an organisation, we have mostly a funded relationship with the state government via Tourism Tasmania predominantly, and secondarily through State Growth. We have similar agreements with the seven northern councils that make up our region. That is the northern economic region with the exclusion of Break O'Day.

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We have six local tourism associations who represent the tourism industry across that particular geographic area representing some 478 registered tourism businesses at last count. Inherent within those businesses are the heritage sites or the major built heritage sites who have recognised themselves as tourism businesses or in the business of tourism. As for our communication with those bodies, we obviously have the regular electronic e-newsletter and dedicated Facebook pages for our industry to talk with us.

We are communicating constantly on those platforms. We have a quarterly local tourism forum whereby the local tourism associations meet with us to talk about the performance or activities of the last quarter and forward-plan and discuss activity in the next six months. Those local tourism associations are membership organisations and thereby represent the interests of the members when they come into that forum with us.

That is by and large the structure of communications. I am also participating in probably about three of the local tourism association networking meetings per year, so that is 18 the last time I counted, as well as our own networking opportunities and functions and incidental communications. The communication structure is adequate; it is not perfect. We seldom meet with a sector, such as the heritage sector, acting in unison.

I see no issue with that. In fact, if that was to be something that was pursued more thoroughly, that as a sector the built heritage Tourism entities wanted to be able to work together to have a better or a more unified voice talking with organisations such as ourselves and others, then that would be a relatively useful thing. Generally speaking, with the exception of the UTAS heritage forum last year, we have not had all the heritage sites in one room together.

CHAIR - Do you feel that there could be some benefit in doing that? Or do you think that would serve to derail -

Mr GRIFFIN - I will just unpack the forum for you of last year. It was about 5 September. We had representation from all of the sites in the north. We also had Port Arthur there, plus the primary researcher's interest in the area of heritage for technology communications in one forum. One of the most obvious things that came out for me was that these guys need to meet more often because one of the first things that people said was, 'We have not had this type of collaboration with UTAS over seven years'. There must have been some level of change in structure or team, and some of these connections had been broken.

Apart from us learning about the need for interpretation over technology use, one of the other key outcomes was that Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, I think, organised a very similar forum to occur in the south of the state before the end of September. He had replicated the same forum in the southern area on that aspiration of reconnecting heritage with the university, and also on the premise of tourism.

Since then, my major concern is that I haven't a line of sight as to where some of those partnerships and connections have taken heritage sites. That is the academic sector, let alone the tourism sector. I think a suspicion of some of the heritage sites coming into the forum was, 'This is just going to be a talk fest. We have heard this before'. I think some of those suspicions have actually come true because there has not been a dedicated follow-up to ensure that a network of communication continued.

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Mr DEAN - If you were looking around Australia, who is doing this better than what we are? That is, promoting our heritage in a way that will attract tourism? Is there any other place that is doing it better than us in your view?

Mr GRIFFIN - I think your immediate reaction would be Sovereign Hill but they are dedicating and focussing around a very large heritage site not dissimilar to Port Arthur in that way. In terms of having a heritage trail or connection of sites, nothing comes to mind immediately as best practice. That is not to say it is not happening; I probably do not have line of sight upon it.

Mr FINCH - We hear a lot of talk about the credibility of PAHSMA - the Port Arthur people - and what they are doing. If we are doing something right in Tasmania, probably Port Arthur would be the classic example.

Mr GRIFFIN - Yes. Interestingly, when we had some of the key people at the forum of last year, each of the sites had the opportunity to talk about their story and what they were doing. Port Arthur was very insightful, but they also evidenced that they feel they are not on top of where they should be or could be in terms of interpretation. They were also able to talk about some of the lessons they had learned about technology use in a heritage place, and some of the things they had done wrong as well as what they would love to do.

It was pretty obvious that as a sector leader they had a lot to contribute. Most of the sites represented there knew each other at the forum. However, I had a distinct feeling that leadership and mentoring inside the heritage sector could be pursued further.

CHAIR - Yes, they have a lot of experience and expertise from all sorts of perspectives in that place. We have talked to them about how that might be more effectively shared. They mentioned forums and that is one of the forums they had participated in. It has been expressed that they feel in taking on extra sites they might be working outside their legislated jurisdiction. Do you see an advantage in having a more holistic approach, from a Tasmanian perspective, where their knowledge and experience - obviously with extra resources - could be shared and would be of value to organisations like your own?

Mr GRIFFIN - Absolutely, and also to some of the other sites. I would fully embrace that concept of more collaboration and leadership that we can learn from. This project has not been funded yet so I am quite open-minded as to how broad it is. A lot of the reasoning for funding that project is for us to get a better understanding of how to collaborate with sites in the future and what our role is as a regional tourism body.

Mr FINCH - Where you talked about leadership, Chris, do you think the Government is perhaps not doing enough to provide that leadership to draw the heritage sector of Tasmania and linking it into tourism?

Mr GRIFFIN - I think there is room to improve, yes. As to what and where that amplified support or resourcing would be, I am probably not expert enough to give that advice. I think it would do with further attention in the area of support.

CHAIR - Chris, it has been valuable to talk to you.

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DISCUSSION CONCLUDED.