

ENACT – submission to Legislative Council Inquiry into Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania – February 2015

To the Committee Secretary:

The following submission is respectfully put forward for consideration by the sub-committee.

Addressing the terms of reference of your enquiry:

Our built heritage in Tasmania is representative of the diverse nature of our growth from early settler days to some of the iconic buildings of today. Nowhere else in Australia is this diversity so abundant and compacted into such a small geographical area with matching natural beauty. It is unique to Tasmania and we are squandering much of that heritage and the opportunity that goes with it.

This seems to be, in part, due the inability for all stakeholders to talk to each other and work together for the common good and realistic outcomes.

Your reference points – government, tourism organisations, heritage organisations, other controlling bodies (eg – PWS) each do their own bits of research and work and prepare extensive reports that are printed, read, possibly mentioned in the media and are promptly filed for some future reference. Unless someone in an influential position picks up an idea or project, little happens.

Then there are anti-everything groups and NIMBYs that seem to be able to stop any idea, good or bad, in its tracks.

No one body seems to be responsible for collating the various reports and agreements (and disagreements) that occur over time. Such a body could facilitate the prioritisation of those projects have support from multiple agencies and stakeholders and bring those parties together to make them happen.

A case in point is our own town of Eaglehawk Neck. It includes the historic convict site, proclaimed in 1994, which covers an area of approximately six hectares; extending from the edge of the Arthur Highway to low water mark. (Ref E)

- This followed recommendations in a comprehensive report entitled **Eaglehawk Neck Military Station Conservation Plan 1992** prepared by

Dept. of Parks, Wildlife & Heritage. [Hard copy only - available from PWS or proponent]

Despite several reports alluding to the sites potential, and agreements to make Eaglehawk Neck the '**Gateway to the Tasman Peninsula**' and have feasibility studies done, nothing much has been achieved and development decisions over more recent years have resulted in the loss of vital infrastructure such as public toilets, shop, restaurant, tourism information etc.

Background, reports and agreements:

Eaglehawk Neck is rich in convict history; with a military garrison in place between 1832 and 1877. Tales of desperate attempts by convicts to escape to freedom across the Neck abound, including those by Martin Cash, Lawrence Cavanagh and George Jones; plus the fictional Rufus Dawes in Marcus Clark's 'For the Term of His Natural Life'. (Ref: B – Book 111 Ch - 20, 23-25)

At its height around 1850 the military station included the officers' quarters, military barracks, a guard house, sentry box, store, semaphore, 300 metre jetty and the infamous Dog Line. One officer and around 25 men manned the Garrison.

Today all that remains is the Officers Quarters', remnants of the original garden, some old farm sheds, a modern bronze statue of a savage dog near the original Dog Line and some traces of the old jetty. (Ref: C - P1 – 1.2)

The historic Officers' Quarters, which is **the oldest timber military building remaining in Australia** (Ref A –P 20), is currently in a poor state of repair. PAHSMA personnel have inspected the building and agree that unless urgent restoration is carried out there is a serious risk that the building will be lost.



Officers' Quarters – Eaglehawk neck - 2014

Repairs over the years have been limited by lack of funds, personnel and expertise, the garden is overgrown and interpretive signage is outdated; making the visitor experience nothing like the promotional material suggests. Opening hours can be erratic and access is obscure; making the site hard to find, and access difficult, for visitors.

When we enquired about the Officers' Quarters of the Heritage Council we received the following reply.

The Officer's Quarters at EHN is indeed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register and therefore subject to the provisions of the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995. The intent of this registration is that the place be protected and conserved in perpetuity.

Copy of our register datasheet is attached herewith, however, it does not contain much historical detail. Main extract:

'The Military Barracks is of historic heritage significance as a rare survivor of a weatherboard military building from the convict period.'

The place occupies Crown land and is managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service. If you wish to obtain further information on the history of the place or its management, I recommend that you contact Peter Rigozzi of the Historic Heritage Section of the PWS. His email address is:

peter.rigozzi@parks.tas.gov.au

In our view this reply indicates a lack of active participation in the preservation of an historic property or active interaction with the manager of the property.

(The local community, under the guidance of personnel from PAHS (Naomi Jeffs) and PWS, have recently commenced working toward restoring the

gardens around the Officers' Quarters on a voluntary basis – a simple example of how a cooperative approach from various interested stake-holders can get things done).

The rest of the historic site is dilapidated, has poor and inaccurate signage and very limited facilities for tourists. There are no public toilets and much of the historic site is subject to periodic flooding and poor drainage.

The Tasman National Park Pirates Bay Visitor Service Zone 2007 states that:

- 'The Pirates bay Visitor Service Zone is to be the main location for the development of facilities in the Tasman National Park and reserves'
- 'The Tasman Tourism Development Strategy 2005 (Tasman Council 2005) has a key strategy of creating an iconic natural area destination. It chose the Pirates bay area for that destination'

The Tasman National park and Reserves Management Plan 2011 includes references to:

- 'Implement an integrated site development plan for the Pirates Bay Visitor Service Zone as the major visitor destination in the park and reserves'
- 'Implement the Eaglehawk Neck Military Station Conservation Plan 1992'
- 'Prepare and implement a garden planting plan for the Officers' Quarters within Eaglehawk Neck'
- 'Implement the Pirates Bay Visitor Services Zone 2007'.

The Second Partnership Agreement between the State Government and the Tasman Council – 14th November 2010 states –

- "(1.5.3) Agreed Action – Explore the concept proposal to develop a 'Gateway' facility at Eaglehawk Neck and seek necessary funding to carry out a feasibility study – within 12 months."

The Tasman Tourism Development Strategy 2011-2016 states:

- ---the general opinion was that the VIC is not well situated within the (Tasman) region. The strongest suggestions indicated that the VIC should be at a gateway location such as Dunalley, Eaglehawk Neck or the previously identified site at the Tasman lookout. (P19)
- (Tasman Council will) Establish a dedicated paid position to support the local tourism industry within 3 months (of January 2011) P6. (This position was created but has since been abolished.)

Roles of main stakeholders:

- **State Government** has a vital role to play in ensuring that our tourism visitors have an experience that they enjoy, learn from and encourages them to come back or refer others.

The Tasmanian government over recent years has helped develop and promote attractions such as the Port Arthur, the Three Capes Walk, Pennicott Cruises and so many other attractions on the Tasman Peninsula.

However the upgrade and development of basic infrastructure is not keeping up with the demand that is heading our way and the government has a responsibility to ensure it does.

Dilapidated, hard to find built heritage does not fill the bill when most tourists visit our region for that purpose.

There is also a lack of basics facilities on the Tasman Peninsula – accommodation, picnic facilities, public toilets, signage, parking, roads, food stores and fuel outlets.

Some of these services are not necessarily provided directly by government, however government needs to encourage and foster development of those facilities it does not directly provide.

Apart from twelve self-contained apartments built about ten years ago at The Lufra Hotel there has not been a major new accommodation project on the Tasman Peninsula since the Fox and Hounds Inn was built 35 years ago – it is therefore not surprising to see that most tourists make a day trip of it.

There have been lots of B&B's developed, however a mix of accommodation to suit all needs is vital – and Government needs to actively encourage such development.

Local Government role is to work with State Government to develop strategic plans to grow tourism throughout their municipality, and to actively support local tourism bodies in the promotional and planning activities.

- **Tourism Organisations** need to serve their purpose – Tourism Tasmania to promote the state, DST to promote regional tourism outside Hobart, PATTA to promote local tourism, working with all stakeholders. Then the experience needs to live up to the promotion!
- **Heritage Organisations** such as the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) and The Heritage Council have a vital role to play in ensuring that Tasmania's built heritage is identified, preserved and restored where practical and possible.

Neither organisation should need to be invited to inspect the built heritage so they can actively pursue and be involved in the restoration and preservation of important Tasmanian built heritage.

- **PAHSMA** have indicated interest in the project, but only on the basis that the project of restoration and ongoing management is appropriately funded. A feasibility study would enable the costs to be analysed and quantified.

For more information about Eaglehawk Neck see our local website at:
www.eaglehawkneck.org.

Proposal:

There is a unique opportunity to integrate the rich Aboriginal heritage and unique natural environment with current and restored built convict heritage infrastructure.

This proposal was submitted as 'The Dog line Convict Trail Tourism Infrastructure Project' when the Government called for submissions under the Forest Compensation Package in June 2013. (Copy attached). A grant of \$400,000 for a feasibility study was sought but was unsuccessful.

We proposed that all stakeholders work together to restore the built heritage on the Historic Military Station at Eaglehawk Neck before it is lost forever; and to improve the local tourism infrastructure to generate a significant tourism asset.

To achieve this we recommend that the Eaglehawk Neck Historic Military Station site be transferred to the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, with appropriate funding, with the objective of restoring and managing it to form a vital part of the Tasman Peninsula Convict experience. (Ref A – P21,22)

The restored Eaglehawk Neck Historic Site, together with the Port Arthur Historic Site and the Saltwater River Coal Mine Site, would unite the Peninsula as a total historic experience for visitors; rather than a one-stop, one day visit to Port Arthur. Eaglehawk Neck could be promoted as “The gateway to the Tasman Peninsula” (Ref A - P22)

Appropriate marketing of the sites as a three stage, heritage journey would lead to visitors staying longer and generating economic growth throughout the region.

The proposal would ensure that a vital part of the state’s built heritage is not lost forever, whilst an integrated approach would provide an improved visitor experience plus growth opportunities for local tourism operators, to generate many new jobs throughout the municipality and leading to a more sustainable local economy.

Details of the proposal were:

- The restoration of the existing historic buildings on the site. As additional funding becomes available this could be expanded into a partial or complete rehabilitation/restoration of the original military garrison to display it as it looked and worked during the convict era. (similar to Sovereign Hill).
- The restoration of the famous Dog Line in its entirety, including the dogs on wooden platforms in Eaglehawk Bay.
- The restoration of the original wooden jetty that stretched 300 metres out into Eaglehawk Bay. This would have the additional benefit of providing a safe means for visiting recreational boats and yachts, and tourist craft such as ferries, to get ashore and explore the historic site and surrounding natural features.
- (Marine travel around the Peninsula could also be enhanced by the construction of a jetty at Saltwater River Coal Mines and a daily ferry run from Hobart that stops at all three historic convict sites).

Additional infrastructure considerations:

- The construction of safe pedestrian walkways along either side of the Arthur Highway plus a safety crossing over the highway to the restored jetty, with appropriate traffic calming infrastructure.
- The construction of a tourist information centre. This could be expanded into a colonial convict museum, interpretive centre, Aboriginal heritage centre, local art and craft gallery - housing commercial stakeholders to provide a total visitor experience and commercial viability.
- A redevelopment of the site would need to take into account the impact on local ecosystems such as sand dunes and nesting birds, Aboriginal and convict heritage issues and the Burra Charter.

Project Management

Parks and Wildlife Service currently has responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Eaglehawk Neck Military Station Historic Site plus the surrounding Coastal Reserves and adjacent National Park.

Whilst their efforts are commendable and appreciated by the local community, they have neither the financial resources nor enough suitably qualified personnel to carry out this responsibility.

The Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHSMA) has the expertise to restore and manage this site and, with appropriate resourcing, would be able to undertake the work. (See attached letter from Stephen Large)

The management of the historic site at Eaglehawk Neck could be transferred to the PAHSMA with appropriate capital and recurrent funding to restore the site and provide appropriate visitor infrastructure.

A feasibility study would need to be conducted to ascertain the costs involved. We have been advised that this would cost around \$400,000.

Benefits – addressing the terms of reference of your enquiry:

- **Our built heritage** at Eaglehawk Neck is on the verge of disappearing while lack of funding and expertise leave it vulnerable to nature. A transfer of management would ensure that this built heritage is secured in

the near term and restored to contribute to the growth of the Tasman community over time. The potential to develop Eaglehawk Neck as a gateway to the historical experience throughout the Tasman Municipality is enormous.

- **Government** has a vital role to play in ensuring that our tourism visitors have an experience that they enjoy, learn from and encourages them to come back or refer others.

Summary:

Investment in built heritage at Eaglehawk Neck will benefit an area impacted by the restructure of the forest industry and a region that traditionally has high unemployment.

High quality built heritage and visitor tourism infrastructure at Eaglehawk Neck and an integrated approach to tourism on the Tasman Peninsula will encourage longer stays for tourists and generate growth and jobs in the local economy.

There are broader benefits for the Tasmanian economy with a greater capacity to attract tourists and create jobs.

The proposal aligns with the goals of the Southern Regional Economic Development plan, in particular Goal 2 and the Three Capes, Arts Tourism Strategy, Heritage Tourism and Convict Story marketing Strategies.

Ref: D

There are aspects of this proposal that could be implemented quickly such as signage and tourist information. Discussions are currently underway between the Eaglehawk Neck Action Community Taskforce and Parks and Wildlife Service regarding the construction of some basic facilities in the area.

Eaglehawk Neck Action Community Task Force (ENACT) is an active sub-committee of the Eaglehawk Neck Community & Hall Association Inc.

References:

Ref A: Tasman National Park Pirates Bay Visitor Service Zone Site Plan 2007. <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/file.aspx?id=6815> P8 – P20).

Ref B: For the Term of His Natural Life, by Marcus Clark. <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/clarke/marcus/c59f/>

Ref C: Eaglehawk Neck Military Station Conservation Plan 1992 – hard copies available from PWS or the proponent (Executive summary and recommendations: P1-5 - attached)

Ref D: Southern Regional Economic Development plan

<http://inform.regionalaustralia.org.au/process/regional-development-processes/item/regional-economic-development-plan-southern-tasmania>

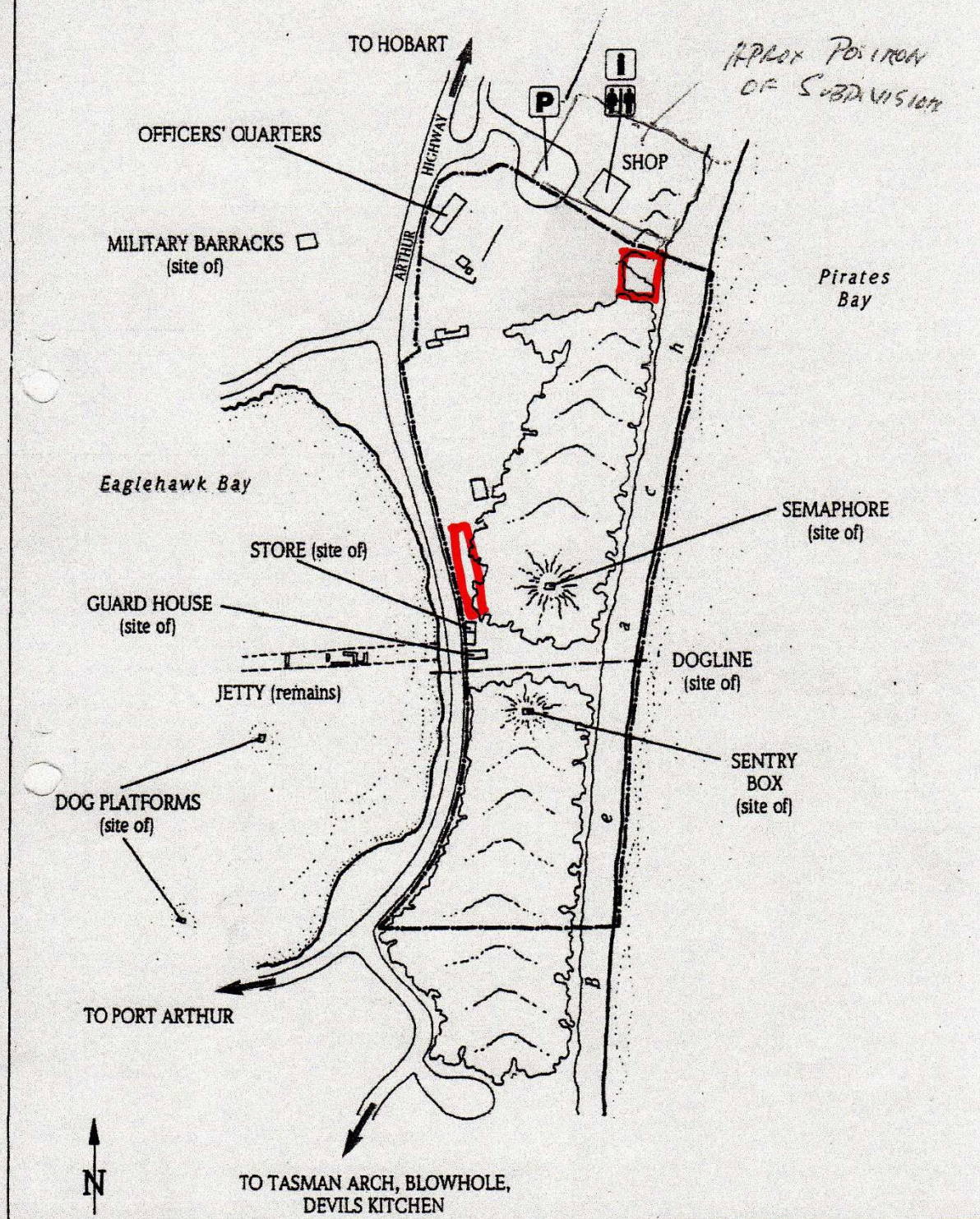
Tasman National Parks and Reserves Management Plan 2011.

<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/file.aspx?id=7040>

Tasman Tourism Development Strategy 2005 and 2011-2016.

file:///C:/Users/arthu_000/Downloads/tasman%20tourism%20development%20strategy%202011-2016.pdf

EAGLEHAWK NECK SITE GUIDE



Map of Eaglehawk Neck. Site Guide from National Parks and Wildlife leaflet.

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