



## **Legislative Council Inquiry into Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania.**

*The South Hobart Progress Association Incorporated (SHPA Inc.) is grateful for the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee on the topic of Cultural Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania with specific reference to the following:-*

- The current and future potential contribution that built heritage makes to tourism in Tasmania;
- The role of Government;
- The role of tourism organisations;
- The role of heritage organisations;
- Any relevant considerations in other jurisdictions;
- Any other matter incidental thereto.

It will be obvious to the Committee, already, that heritage tourism is big business and has been for many decades. Visitors to Tasmania, in past ages, were astounded at the wealth of history to be found all over the Island in the form of quaint colonial towns and villages almost intact from the nineteenth century. Tasmanians – whether they are aware of it or not - live their history on a daily basis, rather like those from the “Old Country” and Europe. This is a distinguishing and important difference between those Australians who are born and bred on the Island: it is part of what it is to be Tasmanian.

It is an important – and growing – section of the tourism market which aims to satisfy what has been a long-established aspect of Tasmanian tourism. Tourism related to our built heritage vies with eco-tourism and the Arts for the visitors' dollar. One of the comments heard frequently from visitors to our shores relates to the fact that a clear, unbroken line can be drawn which demonstrates the evolution of building in Tasmania – taking into account such events as two major depressions, which required the reuse of existing building stock rather than its replacement with more modern (and often inferior) buildings. An example of this can be seen in Macquarie Street, Hobart which contains an almost unbroken line of colonial buildings (from Molle Street to Cascade Road): the longest stretch of such architecture in the World. The intersection of Macquarie and Murray Streets is one of the few – if not the only – intersection in the World with Georgian buildings on all four corners. The architectural heritage of Tasmania, then, is something to celebrate and promote; it is a major point of difference in the tourist market.

It is vital that Government leads by example and promotes and protects what remains of our built heritage assets – something which no one can claim past governments have done! Much of our heritage stock has been lost over the years – especially since the 1960s. It will be necessary for Government to strengthen and reinforce heritage protection for built heritage – not only in the cities and townships but also on the land and with regard to industrial heritage. The latter two and cultural landscapes are virtually unrecognised by legislation which appears to favour the developer over the conserver (public) at every turn.

Hobart, in particular, has fared very badly (in comparison with, say Launceston) when it comes to preserving the past. The mania by local governments for "Big City" solutions to Tasmanian planning issues needs to be addressed and curtailed. When cities of similar scale to Hobart can limit building heights to a maximum of five storeys (for example: St. Petersburg, Bath and Vienna) why is it that this City continues to replace heritage buildings with multi-storey car parks and architecturally-moribund developments out of scale with just those features which attracts the tourist interested in our built heritage and unique colonial past.

In Britain, a large proportion of funding to preserve and promote built heritage comes from *The Heritage Lottery Fund* (National Lottery Act, 1993). *The Heritage Lottery Fund* (HLF) supports projects ranging from museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environments and cultural traditions. Since 1994, HLF has supported just over 35,000 projects, allocating more than 5.3 billion pounds sterling across the entire UK. Many important landmarks – such Stonehenge, the Giant's Causeway in Ireland, and Cardiff Castle - have benefitted from the Fund's support. Additionally, thousands of community heritage projects are providing opportunities for people to explore historic buildings, protect the environment, learn new skills, delve into archives and discover untold stories. This would reduce the financial burden of responsibility of Government, which is currently hard-pressed for funds for other important public services, and, more importantly, future-proofs built heritage against similar depredations in future. A similar fund, established in Tasmania, could provide a lasting bequest, which could breathe new life into our towns and cities.

Tourism promotion in Tasmania has suffered in recent years since the loss of expertise and corporate memory of the Government owned and run *Tasmanian Tourist Bureau* and its later iterations. Whilst the current position with regard to promoting Tasmania's image is adequate, a really professional approach, perhaps with one over-arching organisation co-ordinating the tourist dollar, should be investigated.

The position with regard to heritage protection in Tasmania would be laughable if it were not so serious. The lack of teeth and paucity of funding for *Heritage Tasmania* and the *Heritage Council*, in particular, makes Tasmania the laughing stock of the wider Australian architectural and heritage communities. The issue of funding and supporting the work of the *Heritage Council* needs to be urgently. With over forty-five per cent of the heritage buildings of the Nation, Government should be proactive in making the sure that generous funding is forthcoming from Commonwealth sources. It is not acceptable that one state alone should bear the financial responsibilities for what is an incomparable national legacy.

If Government wishes to encourage volunteer contributions to the built heritage industry, thought should be given to bolstering the *National Trust of Australia (Tasmania)* financially, as it is, otherwise, a toothless tiger. There is a groundswell of goodwill in the community towards the preservation, protection and interpretation of our inestimable treasure trove of colonial heritage buildings. It only requires a spark from government agencies to kindle a community response.

**Dr. Rosemary A. Sandford.**  
President. SHPA Inc.

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