

SUBMISSION TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INQUIRY INTO BUILT HERITAGE TOURISM

Dr Dianne Snowden & Chris Tassell OAM

Please find attached our submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry into Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require further information.

Dr Dianne Snowden

Historian

2011-2014 Chair, Tasmanian Heritage Council

2012– Chair, Cascades Female Factory Historic Site Community Advisory Committee

2008–2012 National Archives of Australia Advisory Committee

2008 – Member, Tasmanian Library Advisory Board

2006-2011: Director, National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) Board

Author of 'Heritage tourism in Tasmania: a guide for Historical Societies', Federation of Australian Historical Societies, 2008.

Chris Tassell AM

Cultural Heritage Manager

1978 – 2006 Director, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery

2006 – 2013 Managing Director, National Trust of Australia (Tasmania)

2011 – 2014 Member, Tasmanian Heritage Council

2013 - Member, Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council

Author of 'Realising the Potential – Northern Tasmania's Heritage Assets', National Trust of Australia (Tasmania), 2011

Contact:

Dr Dianne Snowden

Box 4659 Bathurst Street PO

Hobart TAS 7000

Mobile: 0409 140 657

Our submission is based on the six points referred to in the advertisement for the Inquiry:

1. The current and future potential contribution that built heritage makes to tourism in Tasmania

Built heritage is an important cultural, social and economic asset for Tasmania and it makes a significant contribution to the Tasmanian tourism industry.

Visitor numbers to Tasmania are increasing. The 'Tasmanian Tourism Information Monitor Snapshot' for December 2014 noted that 70% of visitors indicate that they like to visit heritage and historical sites. This level of visitation has been constant over many years. Substantial work has been done, including by Tourism Tasmania, which identifies heritage as one of Tasmania's key appeals for visitors coming to the State.

Despite this, there is limited acknowledgment of the importance of built heritage to heritage tourism in Tasmania, particularly within Government.

2. The role of Government

Government has an important role in the promotion of best practice built heritage tourism, across key agencies, including PAHSMA and Parks which has a significant portfolio of heritage properties. In addition many other government agencies are responsible for the management of heritage assets such as the Department of State Growth, Inland Fisheries, Forestry Tasmania and Hydro Tasmania.

Government has a leadership role in developing an understanding of the extent and depth of the State's heritage assets and how they are managed, in the same way it does with the State's natural heritage values. Critically, unlike the example of natural heritage values where Government has assumed responsibility (including costs) for a significant part of the State, much of the management of built heritage assets in Tasmania is because of the commitment of community groups. Unlike natural heritage, there is essentially no government support, financial or otherwise, for these groups in achieving this.

Local government has a critical role in the identification and protection of heritage at the local level throughout the state. As well, local government plays a very significant role in the management and presentation of the State's built and moveable cultural heritage. It also increasingly demonstrates an understanding of the need for an integrated approach to the management of moveable and built cultural heritage, unlike many state government agencies where heritage management is incidental to their principal purpose.

In summary, heritage management in Tasmania is highly fragmented and dominated by financially-challenged community organisations. The State Government lacks a cohesive approach to an integrated and cost effective strategy for the management of built heritage in the State.

3. The role of tourism organisations

There is a fundamental disjunct between Tourism Tasmania and the community heritage sector.

Community organisations play a key role in the development and management of heritage assets and in recognising history and heritage values. Many volunteer organisations, which do

not receive any government funding, play a valuable role in the promotion of heritage tourism. The scale of these community contributions is significant. For example, in northern Tasmania they are of the same magnitude in terms of visitations as Port Arthur but in contrast to PAHSMA, they receive essentially no government support, financial or otherwise.

Tourism Tasmania's *Historic Heritage Tourism Strategy 2012-2015* was released in 2012 but it has not been implemented: 'The strategy outlines a plan to grow Tasmania's historic heritage tourism and increase the diversity of quality historic heritage tourism experiences. It also aimed to enhance the integration of historic heritage products and experiences into the marketing of tourism experiences.' (*Tourism Tasmania Annual Report 2011-2012*) The strategy failed to recognise in any meaningful way the contribution of community organisations to the management of the State's built heritage and the importance of those places they manage as a visitor attraction.

The *Strategy 2012-2015* has been largely ignored by Government. It is essential that consideration be given to a revised and updated strategy that reflects both the richness and complexity of Tasmania's heritage and the realities arising from the important role of community organisations in managing heritage attractions. Importantly, there is not only a need for government leadership in this process but also adequate resourcing.

4. The role of heritage organisations

The general functions and powers of the Tasmanian Heritage Council (under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*) include:

7. (g) to assist in the promotion of tourism in respect of places of historic cultural heritage significance

However, because the Heritage Council is underfunded, it is rarely able to fulfil this function. Most of its time is spent on fulfilling its statutory obligations almost entirely associated with state's planning processes.

The fundamental problem with built heritage tourism in Tasmania is that it is totally fragmented with multiple government agencies responsible for aspects of the State's heritage often incidental to their principal purpose. In addition, there are a very large number of community organisations committed to documentation and management of the State's heritage, generally without any support from the State. Consequently, the existing approach to the management of built heritage assets is ineffective and *ad hoc* and neither capitalises upon the existing level of State funding nor realises the potential of community support for heritage in the State.

What is needed is for the State Government to develop an integrated State-wide approach to heritage management which capitalises upon the high level of community support for heritage and makes more effective use of existing government resources.

A peak heritage committee that has the capacity to get people together to represent the fragmented heritage community is required. It needs to be resourced in a way that enables it to facilitate participation in built heritage tourism. No existing government agency or community group currently fulfils or achieves this.

5. Any relevant considerations in other jurisdictions

Western Australia's heritage lottery provides a model for funding of cultural heritage. Tasmania has no designated heritage funding similar to this; we consider this a major shortcoming.

6. Any other matter incidental

The focus on 'built heritage tourism' is too narrow.

Moveable cultural heritage is an integral part of heritage tourism and indeed more often than not the management of built heritage sites.

Heritage tourism has multiple layers including oral, local and family history, all of which add value to the visitor experience.

An increasing number of community buildings, especially churches and schools, are being sold and developed. We acknowledge the importance of adaptive re-use but not at the expense of insufficient protection of heritage buildings and sites. Cemeteries, which are rarely considered 'built heritage' are particularly vulnerable but are an important part of heritage tourism, particularly family history tourism.

The Tasmanian community includes a number of highly skilled professionals whose expertise could be used to promote built heritage tourism and provide authentic, high quality best practice visitor experiences.

The problem for heritage management and heritage tourism in Tasmania is that no-one is able to provide leadership because they are all struggling to survive. The development of an innovative approach that capitalises on the strength and depth of community support for Tasmania's heritage across the entire State is needed, instead of the existing *ad hoc* fragmented one. Importantly, we believe that this can be done within the current government's resourcing levels for built heritage.

Dr Dianne Snowden & Chris Tassell OAM