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Mr Stuart Wright
Committee Secretary
Legislative Council
Parliament House
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Re: LAND TRANSFER AT EDDYSTONE POINT

In reference to the proposed transfer of Eddystone Point, the Eddystone Light Station, three stone cottages and the existing grave of Master Kirkwood to the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania. It is my understanding that **'the amendment proposed that daylight access to Eddystone still be made available to the public, but only when there is no significant indigenous events taking place.'**

I would like to raise my concerns in this matter.

While there has been general acceptance of the handing back of land to the aboriginal community, I struggle to see how this could include heritage listed, European infrastructure of a light house and the three stone cottages. While there has been successful argument raised about the cultural significance of particular regions of Tasmania I would ask what cultural significance a 100ft granite light station has to the aboriginal society? Aboriginal Affairs Minister Cassy O'Connor may well be right when she said *"Many in the aboriginal community have a deep connection with these parcels of land"* But again ...a lighthouse?

Time and time again we have heard Michael Mansell as the spokesperson for TAC, vilify and condemn the European occupation of Tasmania and the associated infrastructure, and yet in this instance are only too keen to take possession this land mark property. This is blatant hypocrisy.

I moved the East Coast of Tasmania over thirty years ago to go fishing. My work experience, as a crew, has spanned crayfishing, abalone diving, scallop fishing, trevalla fishing and commercial diving. I have recently returned to the role of a commercial diver for local Angasi Oysters and the long spined sea-urchin. I worked with an abalone diver for about 12 years which included working out of Eddystone point to harvest our winter fish.

This was when we made the acquaintance of lighthouse keeper, John Denman. I came to understand John's role as a keeper went far beyond just providing weather reports but a passionate commitment to the maintenance of the light, the houses and the surrounding area including the grave site of Walter McFarlane KIRKWOOD (18 months old). The property was post card perfect at all times, currently it is but pale shadow of its former self.

The Eddystone Light is part of my heritage as a fisherman. This light and all those around Tasmania have provided a beacon of safety and security for all the fishermen of Tasmania both past and present. This is part of their history and heritage.

Some years ago the then Minister David Llewellyn, put forward a proposal to open the site to 'expressions of interest' as a tourism enterprise. I was one of about 30+ people to attend the open day only to be confronted by a well orchestrated, banner waving protest by the TAC, making the most of the Television exposure. There were many I spoke to on that day, who had some very exciting ideas for the future of the area, but alas the politics of appeasement won out and subsequently a number of aboriginals took up occupation of the houses.

The idea of a tourism venture including guided tours of the light station is an obvious one as per the example of the Cape Leeuwin light in the south-western corner of Western Australia. I had the pleasure of a tour of this light last November and was delighted to find the mechanics of the light were identical to that of Eddystone where the enormous brass frame and multiple glass prisms that project the light, float effortlessly in a bath of mercury. While the mechanics of Eddystone are in perfectly good working order, the 'light' has been replaced with a bolt-on model on the upper rail.

I quizzed the tour guide on how their system worked and he explained the proceeds for the tours pay the wages and the surplus is reinvested into the maintenance and restoration of the site.

What is the primary motivation of TAC in this instance? The comments of Clyde Mansell in the Examiner in Dec 2012 are rather telling when he said *"We'd be in a much better position for funding if we owned it"*

This idea is not a foreign one to Clyde Mansell and he expressed as much on ABC talkback radio last year and in doing so put the Government on notice for a \$750,000 hand out as part of a proposed tourism venture. He also went on to say this was a down grade from the \$1.2mil they had considered seeking.

The Aboriginal Land Council has had a lease (40 years) over this site since 2006 and over that time the overall presentation of the historic site has deteriorated significantly and there is no greater example than the neglect of the grave of master Kirkwood which, up until very recently has been covered with weeds and boobialla. This is but another indication of the contempt held for our heritage.

If there is to be an opportunity to open the site as a serious tourism destination, I believe, the infrastructure of the houses, the Light and immediate surrounding area, should be removed from this process of the land hand back and hand back, just that...the land. As a means of attracting the best operator for such a venture, the heritage site should be offered through an open and transparent Tender Process. Only then can we be assured of a competent and experience operator which include measurable guide lines for the ongoing maintenance and restoration of the area. I addition the original light should be restored to full working order to maintain the integrity of its historic and cultural value.

I have included a series of photos which will give some weight to the argument of neglect for this site while under the current management.

If there was a need to address the committee I would be delighted to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Paulsen