

## **PUBLIC**

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

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### **BUILT HERITAGE TOURISM IN TASMANIA**

**Mr SIMON CHRISTOPHER CURRANT AO**, WAS CALLED, MADE THE  
STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Valentine) - Good morning, Simon. The committee is taking sworn evidence, as you are probably aware. All evidence taking at the hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. I remind you any comments you make outside the hearing may not be afforded that privilege. The evidence you present is being recorded and the *Hansard* version will be published on the committee website when it becomes available.

**Mr CURRANT** - I have various hats. One of them is chairman of the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, a position I have held for a long time. That is a voluntary position, but in some respects, I am giving evidence here more in my role as a tourism operator and developer over many years. Luke can give a much more generalised view on things. I am obviously supportive of what comes from him. It might be more relevant for me to make some observations to you.

Having been an operator here since 1984 and deeply immersed in tourism in all of its facets, I have watched various attractions, if you like, or market niches that have over time become more or less important. I am assuming around heritage it relates to any built heritage? Anything that is listed under the Heritage Act or commission or whatever it is? Is that correct?

**CHAIR** - That is right.

**Mr CURRANT** - In that regard, I have also noticed that things get added to the heritage list. In some ways, you question what exactly they are doing there. It seems to me that, over different times of the heritage commission with different people involved, different chairs of heritage, different members around the table, they sometimes go one way, and sometimes go another. There is not a huge consistency. The only consistency I can see is the anti-everything brigade, who believe buildings should be preserved in their exact state, and as a consequence of that, nothing happens. That seems to be still continuing to a degree. It is an interesting thing that when different people were involved on the various commissions and committees, you get a different emphasis.

As an attraction, the last work done, that I know about, around heritage was looking at our visitors and what are their activities. I just forget now, but heritage was fairly high.

**CHAIR** - It is around 60 per cent.

**Mr CURRANT** - They touched on it.

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**Mrs TAYLOR** - It is something like 60 to 65 per cent actually visit a heritage site while they are here.

**Mr CURRANT** - Obviously, a huge contributor to that would be Port Arthur. That would sway a lot of the figures around. They are very much pushed towards that. What other precinct is there? Does Salamanca count as a heritage precinct, or not?

**CHAIR** - You could say that. While you make reference in the first instance to built heritage being those things listed, we have not put that constraint on people. It is built heritage per se, and there may be some heritage areas, like Salamanca as a precinct, which is definitely in the Hobart City Council's purview as a heritage area, whether or not all the buildings there are listed. I would imagine they are.

**Mr CURRANT** - In that regard, obviously visitors touch on it a lot. In terms of getting them to come here, I am aware of other research that was done that showed that heritage was not necessarily one that made them sign up, buy an airfare, and come here. It was certainly a part of the matrix that motivated them, so it does have a role. We had a quaint brand image, which involved older heritage, built heritage, history, et cetera, which is of great interest to Australians, but internationals, you can forget it. Our history is so young comparatively to Europe, for instance, they would be a bit 'ho hum'. We tend to over-emphasise the importance of our history. It is important to us as Australians.

**CHAIR** - Two hundred years is not like a thousand, when you go to Britain. Nevertheless, I suppose we do have heritage in Tasmania in comparison to the rest of Australia.

**Mr CURRANT** - Some of this will be completely out of context, because it comes to mind as I am speaking. One of the constraints I see, for instance, around Hobart, around this precinct, there is some absolute attachment to having to replicate the old. I am very sceptical of the modern buildings that have been built here. Starting with the IMAS thing here, what an atrocity that is, in a prime position to put up a building of that boring nature. Also its role, but that is another matter. I do not think that is worth commenting on. Then you come around and you have the new Brooke Street Pier, the floating pier. Again, it has some attraction, but in some ways it is just a replication. Then you go to Mac 1, and from what I have seen of the design work it looks like it is going to be another replication. We have to stop using the same architect around here. That should be a banned thing. It is just ridiculous to have so much being driven by one architect. I see the opportunity for someone to do something different, to do something outstanding in a building here, is swayed by this adherence to the old values.

I find it interesting that for the *Mercury* building they are promoting a tower. I have no doubt that various people are going to stand up and scream and yell about what a terrible blight this would be on our city, whereas I see that as an opportunity for something interesting and new. Why do we keep having to replicate the same sort of approach to our buildings? That is just old-hat thinking. Preserve what we have; I agree with that. That brings me to reuse of heritage buildings. The difficulty and cost of building and return on investment et cetera is enormous now. If you then have to conform - as they did, for instance, at the Henry Jones - to preservation of things that have very little value to the majority of people but a high value to someone on the Heritage Commission, it contributes to massive costs for the developer.

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**Mrs TAYLOR** - Can you give an example of that, Simon? What are you talking about at Henry Jones?

**Mr CURRANT** - Some of the bits and pieces in there that were 'sacred' and had to be preserved -

**CHAIR** - Like the canning weights and stuff like that?

**Mr CURRANT** - Yes, parts of that. It is more about a general footprint. In that case, someone did it and was able to afford to do it, but in some other areas people don't do things because it's too onerous to work around the Heritage Commission and their desire to keep everything in its pristine condition, particularly inside buildings.

I get it that some parts of a building might be of great significance and therefore preserved, but in the main they need to think about the reuse of a building. It won't occur if you put too many constraints and have to work around costly preservation of things which don't add to the amenity or use of the building. For instance, I don't know what is going to happen with these buildings up here on the corner.

**CHAIR** - The old St Marys Hospital in Davey Street?

**Mr CURRANT** - Yes. I have always felt that was an absolute sitter for a beautiful hotel. You need to preserve the facade and then go for it inside to get a cost-effective and beautiful five-star hotel.

**Mr DEAN** - Simon, a good example of what you're talking about is the CH Smith building in Launceston. Everybody wanted to retain everything and therefore developers would not develop because it was too costly and it would not give them a reasonable reuse of the complex.

**Mr CURRANT** - Exactly - so it will rot. Someone needs to take control of this. As I said, sometimes the Heritage Commission has had some enlightened people around the table but most of the time it's driven by people who seem hell-bent on preserving for preserving's sake. I guess we are in violent agreement on that one, Ivan.

The role of government is to lead. Whoever the minister is needs to lead and be aware of contemporary conditions, such as will this create more employment if we allow this building to be used in a way that you can get a developer to come in and redevelop it while at the same time preserve the outside or whatever part needs to be kept. Government needs to provide that leadership. Government needs to have a role; in other words, you can't let the commission have total power. Ministers should have the ultimate say.

**Mr DEAN** - That is the situation in South Australia, and we've just visited there, where the minister has absolute control virtually in relation to it.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - It is not exactly necessarily a happy arrangement there.

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**Mr CURRANT** - It might not be a happy arrangement but you have to have regard for other things other than this manic desire to preserve everything to the exclusion of any other public benefit.

**CHAIR** - Is it fair to say there needs to be a balance there? You might get one minister who is totally anti-heritage and another who is absolutely pro-heritage, so for consistency do you think there needs to be a middle ground there as to the principles under which they operate so they can't go too far one way or the other?

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Is there a different style of heritage commission that might have other interests represented on it?

**Mr CURRANT** - There should be, because in the end public benefit should rule the roost. You might have to knock some of them down for a bigger benefit. Someone has to be in charge, you can't do everything by total consensus. People will decide at voting time if you have the wrong approach. In our society that is what I see as being the way to go.

**CHAIR** - That can lead to a situation where you get that yoyo effect, especially if there is an election in the middle of a major set of projects, with one set of views from the minister and another from somewhere else and you end up getting a disjoint perhaps.

**Mr CURRANT** - You could. Who makes the appointment to the commission? The minister?

**CHAIR** - I imagine the minister does.

**Mr CURRANT** - If he does, he could appoint a whole lot of people around the table who were at one end of the spectrum - and I think we have seen that.

As to the role of tourism organisations, I have noticed some of the evidence you have been given is based around the notion that we have an entitlement to be promoted. Tourism Tasmania had its budget cut 47 per cent by the Labor government. Scott Bacon called me a liar in Queenstown over that, and he was wrong. That led to Tourism Tasmania dropping a lot of its supply side role, which was looking at things such as heritage and a whole lot of other matters which were not demand focused. In order to get visitors to come to the state we have to have a minimum amount of spend on tourism so tourism drove itself away from the supply side and now focuses on marketing almost 100 per cent. It still has some role there. That was driven by economics. You can't spend millions of dollars in matters such as heritage and a whole lot of other developmental things. You have to bring people here and ultimately the more people you bring the more economic activity there will be - and you can see that now with the 700 new hotels rooms on the drawing board here in Hobart.

**Mr FINCH** - Do you consider we have a better situation now with Tourism Tasmania compared to the previous iterations?

**Mr CURRANT** - We definitely do because we have stopped spending money on the supply side. The focus is on the market.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Some of the funding has come back as well, hasn't it?

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**Mr CURRANT** - A bit, but not much. A lot of this is smoke and mirrors.

**CHAIR** - Give with the one hand and take with the other.

**Mr CURRANT** - Exactly - \$4 million turned into \$1 million.

**CHAIR** - That 47 per cent cut you were talking about, when was that?

**Mr CURRANT** - The Labor government did that - Scott Bacon's time.

In the context of bringing visitors here, Tourism Tasmania finds out what it wants to do, what it wants to look at. If it is MONA, they will use MONA to leverage to get people to come. If it is nature, it will be nature; if it is heritage buildings, it will be heritage buildings; if it is Port Arthur, it will be Port Arthur. You have to use the things that attract people to get them to come here. It is absolutely pointless saying, 'Because I've got Clarendon House you should have me up there. You should be promoting me'. Sorry, that isn't the way it goes. If the market demands a lot of heritage buildings, you could rest assured Tourism Tasmania would be pushing down that route. It is just the same with my business at Pumphouse. In some ways - and I knew it and it is what spurred me on a lot - people want heritage and nature and here is a wonderful connection; it is quite unique. That is a good thing for me but, whilst the nature side of it might be something that would definitely make them come, the heritage is just an added bonus. We are doing a lot of work around trying to work up stories for our guests around that.

**Mr FINCH** - Do you have a balance there with nature and heritage or do you sway more towards one or the other?

**Mr CURRANT** - Very much towards nature, because that is the driver. It is being inside the national park, inside a World Heritage Area, in a most beautiful place. That is where our emphasis goes, but we are working hard on the heritage side of it - the history of Hydro and things such as that. We are constantly adding to the story and looking at ways to engage with our guests. At the moment we are exploring doing a small tour for our guests around the whole Hydro experience, running from Pumphouse right the way down some of those power stations. It is a lovely drive; it is a four-wheel drive trip through the bush for a couple of hours and it is quite extraordinary. That is the sort of thing we will ramp up on and it is unique to that place.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I think that's what we heard everywhere, Simon, and to some extent here, that heritage buildings sitting on their own with no story are not either an attractor nor do people rave about them. So we seem to be hearing more that where a building can tell its story or be reused in a fashion that will preserve its heritage, but be used for some other purpose - whether it be restaurant or accommodation or whatever - that that seems to be a better link. I suppose we're looking at how to do it - that is why we asked you to come because you are an example, it seems to us, of exactly that. You have heritage and tourism linked and I suppose that is what we are trying to get at. How do we do that better?

**Mr CURRANT** - It's a difficult proposition.

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**Mrs TAYLOR** - How do we encourage that? Heritage buildings need a lot of money for maintenance and they need to be used. We think they need to be used.

**Mr CURRANT** - Again, you will find that if you are allowed to go in and do something with them and you're not constrained by these incredible costs around preservation that there is a minimal amount of that. If you go out there and say, 'Right, we have this wonderful building, which is costing us money to maintain. Is there anyone who would like to do something else with it?', but don't put a cap on them. That is what frightens you off from even applying. Don't put a constraint saying, 'You are going to have to do total preservation of this thing'. Let them come to you and say, 'Look, if you let me gut this and keep the facade all the way around it, then I can do something. I will invest. I will put my capital in. Then I have to preserve the bit that remains.' It has to be that sort of approach to it. Not the other way around that immediately puts on these clampers of 'Why should I go through this torturous process?'.

I had many hearings on the Pumphouse. I had objections and I had that. At the time we had a commissioner - chairman of the Heritage Commission who was enlightened enough to say, 'You guys, if we don't approve what he wants to do, it won't happen'. He believed me, and thank goodness, because it wouldn't have happened. There has to be some kind of push-back.

**CHAIR** - It's a balance, though, isn't it?

**Mr CURRANT** - It's a balance.

**CHAIR** - Obviously allowing someone carte blanche doesn't always work out either. You might end up taking the heritage fabric and making it very secondary to that site.

**Mr CURRANT** - It might do, Rob, but the building might still be there and not a ruin and not costing the taxpayer a lot of money to preserve. It was up there nobody was paying much attention. In fact, the people of Parks at the time wanted it to go and be a ruin.

**CHAIR** - The balance is like the issue of helicopters and float planes accessing, say, Pumphouse Point. You have a nature focus. It is that balance of how one might impact on the other.

**Mr CURRANT** - It is, and you do you just have to balance that up, but in the end unless you have the money and you can preserve these buildings without any constraint, then you have to approach it from the point of view of what someone would like to do with this. Adrianna had a foreshore around there and I once said to her about her foreshore up the river there, 'You have to open it up completely, put no constraint on it and invite people to come and say, "What would you like to do with this? Tell us".'

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Instead, what happened was that we asked for expressions of interest, but so curtailed that there have been no expressions of interest, basically.

**Mr CURRANT** - That's exactly what is the problem.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - It is still sitting there doing nothing.

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**Mr CURRANT** - Exactly, and you might recall our conversation around that.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Certainly.

**Mr CURRANT** - Again, I guess it is this holier-than-thou kind of approach to it.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - That wasn't heritage, of course; the issue there was but it is also related in a sense to the restraints we put on development just by probity issues and bureaucracy, red tape and that sort of stuff. We are so careful to dot all the i's and cross all the t's that we go overboard. It is a bit like political correctness.

**Mr CURRANT** - It has got worse. The so-called new planning laws have made it worse. Nobody is verbalising that yet, but it has made it worse.

**CHAIR** - What, the single planning scheme?

**Mr CURRANT** - Yes, it's added process on process on process.

**CHAIR** - That's an interesting view.

**Mr CURRANT** - And it hasn't lifted one process. There is only one thing that they can put their hand up and say that it has made it clearer what you can't do. Discretion goes out the door. It is a nonsense, I have to tell you, and somewhere along the line someone will start bleating. They have achieved nothing. There is no lessening of the process you have to go to or the cost - it has added to it. You talk to some of the council planners who are having to deal with this and then people who are approaching to try and -

**CHAIR** - The single planning scheme is not in place yet. The interim planning schemes are. Is it the interim schemes you are talking about?

**Mr CURRANT** - Well, it is the same thing. They have not lifted any process. You still have to go through all the incredible - I could go on but I do not know that is what you are doing -

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Have you had a conversation with Mary Massina about this?

**Mr CURRANT** - No.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Perhaps you ought to because one would think from her previous position she would be interested in making sure that did not happen.

**Mr FINCH** - Simon, while I have been listening to you talking, and talking about Pumphouse Point as well, my mind goes back to your development on the west coast at Macquarie Harbour with Strahan. Would you like to draw a comparison between what you set out to do there and what you achieved? It seems to me that Pumphouse Point is along similar lines - capitalising on nature to get that heritage preservation as well. In the case of Strahan, you built on that opportunity with the Weymouth Hotel and then the accommodation along side it.

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**Mr CURRANT** - Yes, Kerry, perhaps I will go back to the process I use when I look at a possible project. I start with an idea. My idea around Strahan was there was a demand there that was not being met in various things. I spent a lot of money on testing my idea against the market. That was the first thing I did. I spent nearly \$100 000 on a demand study for my idea. I tested Wilderness Railway, which was not in place, probably thought of but nothing happening; I tested different sorts of accesses to the Gordon River; I tested helicopters - on and on I went - in the marketplace. The marketplace being mainland visitors. From that I calibrated that demand, in other words I translated that, into a business case that said invest \$8 million here in a precinct in all the vacant land that was around Strahan. You might not remember it but that area where I built all those cottages was vacant. There is another story as to why I built them the way I did but the fact is, it was market-driven.

So was Pumphouse. I did the same thing with Pumphouse. I tested it. The first time I was given the opportunity on it, the first thing I did within six weeks was do a demand study which cost \$40 000 and I handed it back within six weeks. The concept I put up and put to the market did not stack up financially at that time.

The market subsequently changed and I changed my approach to what should be there. I am so glad I did because it is what is there now and it is really successful. The demand study showed me it would be. That is what drives me in all my stuff.

I do some consulting for various people and that is where I start with them. You have an idea, you test it in the market, and from that you calibrate what it means. Then you do the business case that says invest this much and you will get this.

I do not know if that helps you, but that is something around this heritage thing. It is all very well to say yes, this beautiful building and there are about six people in the state who love that building because of its heritage values. There could be a lot of other people who would like it for another reason. It could be a wonderful restaurant or - I do not know what. I would suggest you can keep a lot of facades and put industrial things behind. A lot of facades were industrial anyway - warehouses, factories or whatever.

**Mr FINCH** - Is there a role for the government to play there, perhaps? Don't shoot me down, I am just trying to think out loud here, but to help with demand studies, or people with ideas to get that sort of assistance from the government? Would you suggest they do what you did and cough up your hard earned to do it yourself?

**Mr CURRANT** - In recent years there have been grants that can enable you to do that sort of work, and that is terrific. It is a role that government can do something in. Remember, this is supply side stuff, not Tourism Tasmania. I get very irritated by this attitude of entitlement that people seem to think they have, particularly around heritage. I have spent a lot of time at Woolmers with those people there and I have never heard a bigger load of bullshit about entitlement. They do not have an attraction people want to go to; about six people out of 1 000 want to visit it because it is as boring as bat shit. Those guys sit in there and demand - including Peter Rae -

**CHAIR** - This is on the record.



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**Mr CURRANT** - I don't care. I think it's time people spoke up truthfully about these things. Go and do the demand study on it and then think about different ways you might present Woolmers so it is engaging with people. What a boring thing! Then they go off and spend massive amounts of money on the wrong things. It is a beautiful place, I love it. It is great. Brickendon and the people in there are a different kettle of fish to Woolmers.

**CHAIR** - I would like to ask a question on collaboration. Seeing as you have mentioned Brickendon and Woolmers, and we know about Port Arthur and how much attraction that has - 300 000 visitors a year or something like that, and Brickendon and Woolmers get about 27 000. Do you think there is an argument there for greater collaboration? There is the incarceration story of Port Arthur, and the on-farm experience of convicts, that the two could be brought together and greater collaboration could bring benefits from both ends.

**Mr CURRANT** - I would not know. I would ask the demand people. That is how I do it.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - That is a very important point you have made today, that it needs to be demand driven. If there is no demand, it is never going to be successful.

**Mr CURRANT** - Exactly. Don't constrain the demand by putting ridiculous impositions on them about what they have to do. People won't destroy things that are an attraction. Like us in nature tourism, the last thing we would do is spoil it.

**CHAIR** - It is the stories that make it live. Is there anything else you want to add, Simon?

**Mr CURRANT** - The heritage tourism strategy that was done some time ago was never tested, not in the proper way I am talking about.

**CHAIR** - Do you think it needs to be redone or it simply needs effort put into it?

**Mr CURRANT** - It probably does, but there isn't much money to do this sort of thing any more until we get more funding into Tourism Tasmania and an approach around the supply side, that isn't quite defined yet, there has been more resource put into it.

**Mr DEAN** - Have you looked at the current bill before our place in relation to the single planning scheme?

**Mr CURRANT** - No, but I have talked to people who have and I have made my own judgment without reading it in detail, because I hate reading things like that. It is very difficult for me. My take on it is what I said earlier; it is actually going to be worse, not better. The processes in order to get stuff done are going to be added to, not decreased. The only thing it does provide is apparently some certainty, which means there is bugger-all discretion. I find that ridiculous. The discretion side of it seems to have been pushed back. We seem to be driven into more processes that you have to go through, not less. On top of that, there has been no reduction in all the other things you have to do.

I have a metre-and-a-half of veranda around my house. I want to put a doorway and build a walk-in wardrobe 3 metres long. How much do you reckon that cost me in fees, before I even started anything? Try \$7 000 for something that cost \$3 500 to build. I could go on about this; it is absolutely ludicrous.

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**Mr DEAN** - What did you say the fees were?

**Mr CURRANT** - \$7 000. There was all sorts of stuff - bushfire and everything. It was just ridiculous.

**Mr DEAN** - Throughout the hearings we have held, there have been issues raised in relation to how should we fund the maintenance of our built heritage in this state. Do you have a view on that? There have been things put forward - we should have a lottery; we should probably impose a dollar on every tourist who comes into this state and every accommodation they go into should pay an extra dollar or \$2, which would go to the maintenance of our heritage and so on. There are a number of other schemes as well. Do you have any view on this at all because that is a sticking point where the government obviously cannot continue to fund the maintenance that is necessary. We are looking at what is realistic in that area. Do you have a view?

**Mr CURRANT** - The government obviously has some role to play in preservation but I say to you that if the government does not have the money and they need to put more nurses and police on, that is for them to decide. Again, people have to accept that you cannot preserve everything. It is just a ridiculous notion. I say to you what an absolutely stupid idea to be taxing visitors, most of whom would only have a passing interest in a heritage building. That's a nonsense.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I think Simon has already expressed his view about the fact that we have crumbling heritage stuff. It seems impossible to spend money just to preserve everything. I like what you have said about being market-driven, and that unless we can find a good use for it - a re-use or a re-configuration maybe, a good story or being marketed as an attraction - then how far down the line do you think we can preserve everything? We obviously do not have the money to do that. For me what you have said about being market-driven is probably the really important thing.

**Mr CURRANT** - Market-driven and if it is not important, I am sorry, it might have to go. There might be a better use for that site.

**Mr VALENTINE** - So you are saying it is not a competitive edge unless there is a use you can find for it. Like people say, heritage is a competitive edge for us.

**Mr CURRANT** - The use might be that it is something people visit because of its heritage values. Do not forget that I am not saying that that isn't a natural thing. It might be that someone else wants to put a bakery there and you say, 'Okay, go for it. Keep the front'. You see that happening. I've seen it in cities everywhere where the front wall is kept and behind it they build something new that works.

**CHAIR** - There is a whole heap of people that say facade is not respecting the heritage. But you get that.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - We saw in Adelaide in the same street in the same block a place where a heritage building had just been totally torn down and a new modern building put in, set

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back a bit from the pavement, which just looked like a gap in the facade, and another building where they had retained the facade and built another building behind it and that seemed fine.

**Mr CURRANT** - It is pretty sensible, isn't it?

**Mrs TAYLOR** - The streetscape was maintained, but I suppose it depends on the building.

**CHAIR** - Thanks Simon, we appreciate you taking the time to come here.

**Mr CURRANT** - I hope it helps your deliberations.

**CHAIR** - We're here to get views from all quarters. You are someone certainly who has a lot of experience in Tasmania.

**Mr CURRANT** - I have very strong views on this sense of entitlement that people around the heritage area seem to have that I think is wrong. They need to contribute themselves and work out other ways to do it. Certainly, on the market side of it, they have to do their own thing like I do.

**CHAIR** - Just to remind you again before you leave what you said today is protected by parliamentary privilege, but if you go out there and talk to the media -

**Mr CURRANT** - There is no media here.

**CHAIR** - If you do, they know it is on because it has been advertised; it may not be protected in the same way.

**Mr CURRANT** - Thank you, Rob; I'm quite conscious of that sort of thing.

**CHAIR** - I'm sure you are.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

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**Mr LUKE TERENCE MARTIN**, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL TASMANIA, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Welcome to the table, Mr Luke Martin. All evidence taken at the hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. I remind you that any comments you make outside the hearing may not be afforded such privilege. I am sure you are aware of that. You have read the information for witnesses document that has been provided. The evidence you present is being recorded and the *Hansard* version will be published on the committee's website when it becomes available.

**Mr MARTIN** - By way of introduction, the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania is the peak industry body for the Tasmanian tourism industry. We are a not-for-profit organisation owned by industry. We have a democratically elected board - a council more than a board - of no less than 24 directors. It never ceases to amaze.

**CHAIR** - You are the CEO of that?

**Mr MARTIN** - I'm the CEO of the TICT and in the context of what you have just heard, Simon Currant is the chairman. I think he made it clear that he was presenting evidence this morning in a personal capacity.

**CHAIR** - He did. That is exactly right.

**Mr MARTIN** - I think it is a point of distinction, without assuming anything we may or may not think differently on a couple of matters.

Ordinarily TICT would have a detailed submission to this process but there is a combination of factors, one being that we have a pretty intense agenda at the moment around Parks and also we are drafting T21 and I didn't think I could do the process justice. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to come in late like this.

The other interesting thing in the context of what we would have contributed is that it would have been difficult. Expanding on the points I made in the email I circulated, one of the problems of the heritage sector is that it is so broad and driven by individual, competitive interests and perspectives of individual operators and groups of operators that it is really hard from our perspective as a uniform body for the industry to get a sense of what those priorities are. When you look at some of the evidence you have received, it very much reaffirmed to me that a lot of it was designed to represent an individual issue that certain operators or groups of operators had, or grievances or ambitions for investment or the marketing approach a lot of the operators had. Perhaps we have fallen for the mistake in Tasmania of looking at heritage as this broad conglomerate sector of the industry when the reality is that the individual interest are perhaps a lot more micro for groups and individuals operators and parts of the industry.

We lose sight of the fact that heritage captures everything from the Henry Jones Art Hotel to Pumphouse Point, to the 250 B&Bs I think we have on heritage listings, through to the Woolmers and Port Arthurs, and trying to capture them all around some common

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areas of interest has been a challenge and perhaps that is why we don't see the relevance and the pointy-end policy agenda that other groups have.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Do you think there is a void there in that heritage tourism industry doesn't have a voice?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes. Heritage operators have a voice for their own agenda.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Individually, but not a common voice?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, that is right. I make the common comparison that I think there is a clear contrast between the heritage sector and the nature sector. If you look at the motivation survey - and I know you have seen that motivation work - nature and heritage are the two spaces we own with competitive advantages and the contrast between the approaches of those two sectors is unique and interesting. The nature tourism sector is quite organised, despite the fact that sector has -

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Organised by whom? How is it organised?

**Mr MARTIN** - Us, themselves, collectively. It is always us. We have the nature-based tourism operators forum that meets twice yearly. We have Parks 21 that is being developed. The sector works together and you wonder how that happens, how that gels. The reality is that there is a common denominator which is that they are all CVS licensed. They all have commonality of -

**CHAIR** - CVS?

**Mr MARTIN** - Commercial Visitor Services licence. They all have a licence to work within Parks. The thing that brings that sector together is that they all have a common interest of having to negotiate and deal with Parks around the CVS licence on an ongoing basis. It makes the communications, the marketing and the cooperation within the sector almost natural. They also have this view that we know generally that sector is a lot of market sharing, so they will come down and do one walk and they will do another. Pumphouse Point's market is the same as Tas Walking Company's market, so there is that commonality.

The heritage sector is very different. You have people who are specifically tied to wanting to come to the state for a particular heritage experience, such as the Abt Railway or a passion for heritage buildings or wanting to do a particular heritage experience like sleep in an old Hydro pumphouse building, but at varying different levels. There is also not that shared commonality of mass tourism.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Can you see there could be the same structure or system that nature has that could also apply to heritage, and how would people go about that? Do you manage those committees?

**Mr MARTIN** - We do, but something needs to bind them together. The only thing we have at the moment is that they're all heritage listed. If you look at where the cycles have fallen down, the one thing that has tried to bring that sector together has been Heritage

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Tasmania through heritage listing. Perhaps what we need is an industry approach that brings them together through some form of annual cross-forum.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - An industry council of some kind, yes.

**CHAIR** - But not to tell them what to do?

**Mr MARTIN** - No.

**CHAIR** - Not a controlling body as such?

**Mr MARTIN** - No.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - That doesn't happen with the nature-based -

**CHAIR** - I am alluding to some of the previous evidence and about what that body should look like. Should it be a controlling body or simply an information network?

**Mr MARTIN** - Networking information advocacy and engagement with Parks. Where the nature-based tourism operators forum started from was the fact that Parks were daily fielding calls from operators about the same issues - no prioritisation or shared information. The sector was essentially bound together so we could talk to them as one because they all had that dialogue with Parks on an individual basis. If they come together and all share the same interests, Parks can start hearing the consistent messages and priorities can be identified. That has led to dialogue that is a bit more -

**CHAIR** - It is collaboration.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, rather than adversarial. There is nothing that happens in the heritage space.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - The heritage sector has the same commonality in the sense that they are all registered heritage so there could potentially be a group there.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, that's the thing. We've got something. Whether that's the model that will achieve it, I don't know. I am probably talking myself into having to do some work here but for the nature-based operators forum, it is us who calls it on behalf of the industry. Parks cooperates at every level. They come as guests. They share it, but it is still industry. If Parks did it, it would be everything the Government knows it is going to do when it does that, whereas perhaps if Heritage Tas did that there would be the same problem. Again also you bring into question what is the mandate of Heritage Tasmania and the Heritage Council?

**CHAIR** - That is right. It is more a statutory authority, isn't it?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, essentially to regulate the act.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I am really glad to hear you say that there is that void, if you like, and that space, because that's one of the things we have been saying. You said in your submission that the nature-based tourism is organised from an industry point of view, and heritage

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tourism is not. We have looked at a lot of properties and it is that thing about they are all individuals trying to do their own thing.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, with very different perspectives on what they think needs to happen. Simon alluded to that. You have a couple of operators with very clear views of their own interests and what it needs, whereas there are a lot of other sectors who do not perhaps value the heritage component of their business as much as they could.

**CHAIR** - Your email covered a heck of a lot of information. Is that to be your submission or are you providing another paper?

**Mr MARTIN** - Sorry, I have committed to it and will do it ASAP. I will rewrite that in a way that is a bit more conducive for public discourse.

**CHAIR** - It will go on the public record.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes. Accept that as our formal response.

**CHAIR** - I just wanted to clarify that. You mention a lot of things in there. Do you want to expand on any of that?

**Mr MARTIN** - I reiterate the point Simon made. I think when you see the evidence that has been given to you it shows where there has been a breakdown. It seems to be that that sector is stuck in the past a bit in terms of the process. I read some of the submissions and there was the notion that tourism has ignored them and Tourism Tasmania has not done that well. The rest of the industry has moved on in their understanding of Tourism Tasmania's role. The classic example we talk about is our sentiment survey that we do twice a year where we basically provide a forum for the industry to get anything they want off their chest.

When I started five years ago there was this notion of mother Tourism Tasmania, the all-encompassing parent of the industry, Tourism Tasmania knows best, and the operators all referred negatively to Tourism Tasmania. Now Tourism Tasmania doesn't get mentioned. It has moved on. The industry now understands and that is such a healthy place for the industry to get to, yet when I am reading some of the heritage strategy components, it's like, 'We need someone to help us and we don't know who. It's got to be Tourism Tas.' Well, they don't have the resources or -

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Or the Government or government funding.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I think you have pointed very clearly to a gap there. You are quite right, people do not know how to do it.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Tourism Tasmania may well be in a position where you can do for heritage industry, for what you have done with parks with nature tourism. One of the difficulties - Simon made a very valuable point about market driven is the only way to make it work.

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Individual operators do not have the capacity to do that, especially small operators. I cannot see how they can do market studies. They cannot afford \$40 000. You might do that. As a joint group they might be able to afford that.

**Mr MARTIN** - That is the other issue about the capital arguments. Perhaps Simon is alluding to the point that there is a list as long as your arm - the infrastructure needs, the Government needs to help fund this, the Government needs to fund that. Is the argument being done on visitation? If so, show us the demand study.

The classic example I will give you is the heritage rail. You cannot walk into the industry at the moment without the passionate advocates of heritage rail talking about funding for their five tracks. How many heritage rail experiences can the Tasmanian tourism product support? I do not know how many visitors are likely to come and want to do multiple heritage rail experiences. That is the demand study that needs to happen. In case of the inevitable, ever-increasing ask on, ultimately, the public purse to invest in heritage tourism, show us the demand study and demand forecasting. Otherwise, we are going to have to make some tough decisions. Or run your argument on things other than tourism. Heritage is a lot more than just visitation. That is always the argument I run with the heritage rail guys. Do not just run it on tourism. If you run that, you are never going to get enough demonstration and market demand from tourists to justify the investment you want, compared to the opportunity costs of investing that money in 20 different other places.

Willow Court is a classic example. The number of studies that have been done on the potential of Willow Court over 15-20 years. No-one has done a demand study. Tasmania is passionate, it is part of the heritage and they are great buildings, but the argument is always around this hypothetical tourism demand, 'Build it and they will come.' Yes, but for the level of investment they want, as opposed to the opportunity cost of spending that money multiple different ways - turn the Derwent Valley into the food bowl and the food tourism experience of the state. It seems we have this infrastructure need for investing in capital of the heritage - the capital investment to invest in the heritage asset - let us use tourism as the argument, but it is never demonstrated if there is a demand.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - But no business plan to show how you are going to make it sustainable. Ivan will ask you the question, as he has every witness, about how we fund heritage preservation. It is a bottomless pit in a sense. My angle on it has been very much as to how we help it to self-fund.

**Mr MARTIN** - The argument is absolutely applicable about the nature reserves and reservations - 50 per cent of the state and the demand of capital investment is going to go into that space as well. This is a debate the state needs to have. It is wonderful that we have these competitive advantages. There are wonderful assets - heritage or nature - and they have the constant political pressure from every corner of the state and every individual operator or community that wants their particular priority to be up the list. The resources do not apply. How do you fund it? There are interesting models. I have heard the suggestion about the lotto. The one model I think always deserves some more warranted meriting is levies onto car registrations. In Victoria, you do not pay parks passes. You pay a levy off your car registration. That goes directly to the Parks



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authority. That is a potential income stream for some component of either nature or heritage investment in Tasmania that could be considered.

**CHAIR** - What about the levy on bed nights?

**Mr MARTIN** - The problem of a bed tax in Tasmania - and we looked at this in the marketing funding for Tourism Tasmania - we have this \$2.1 billion tourism investment funded out of \$13 million that Tourism Tasmania markets with every year. It is extraordinary under-investment. Every other state is triple or four times as much. The demands for investment from the public purse in our sector is extraordinary. We get called a mendicant industry all the time, but the reality is the state's investments for the return is quite disproportionate to any other place. The bed tax idea, you cannot do it because the reality is the east coast of Tasmania is the sixth most tourism dependent economy in the country. Every single business up and down the east coast benefits from tourism. To penalise the accommodation operators only is unfair. Unless some of these councils might start cracking down on their planning schemes for illegal accommodation operators, it is just going to multiply.

You could perhaps do it on commercial rates. A levy on rates for every business in some of these areas. Councils can have individual debates about how much they should be levied, and how much visitation goes into their council. To put it directly on accommodation operators - in other jurisdictions it is generally found that the notion is everywhere a tourist stays, we know 30 per cent would not be. A lot of people staying with Auntie Mavis or Uncle Joe do not necessarily stay in paid accommodation.

**CHAIR** - What about departure tax?

**Mr MARTIN** - Departure tax has also been suggested.

**CHAIR** - It has happened before. Do you have a view on that?

**Mr MARTIN** - Not one that I would put forward as TICT policy. From what you are saying, there are two or three financial levers that the state is going to have to look into if we are going sustainably -

**Mrs TAYLOR** - It needs to be simple to administer. If you put \$1 on everybody, it seems to me that is a lot of administration.

**Mr MARTIN** - The departure tax; I think the model that was put to me was you put the levy on entering the ports. It is parking, or ultimately the taxi passes it on. Everyone leaves the ports, whether it is TT-Line, in some way. That would be the model, but that would be a brave tourism lobby that would put that forward, because it looks like a tax. Also, Tasmanians would pay it. It is a tax on entering your own state.

**Mr DEAN** - I have heard what Luke says, and Adriana's comment there about the administration side of \$1 bed tax on every tourist coming into the state or staying at an accommodation place. That has been suggested. There has been other suggestions put up as well, as to how it should be funded. The fact is, we do not have sufficient funding to maintain our heritage buildings in this state. Our heritage buildings are vital to tourism in this state, and we have to do something about it. The Government is

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expecting us, this committee, to at least come forward with some ideas on how it should be funded. It is all very well to push aside all of these things, saying, 'People might not accept that, tourists should not have to do that', but somebody is going to have to pay for it. The Government does not have the money to do that.

**Mr MARTIN** - Sorry, I will rephrase that.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I think Luke actually has made some suggestions.

**Mr MARTIN** - I have a couple of ideas how you would fund it, but they are not popular. That is the point. The simplest model would be a levy on your rates. If you want to do it on heritage, then again, I will leave it to you guys to run the argument of the poor residents of the Central Highlands.

**Mr DEAN** - Why should the ratepayer have to pay it? Not everybody is a ratepayer. The ratepayer is already paying fire levies and all of these other levies. Why should not the tourist coming in to this state? Why would they object to paying an extra \$1 or extra \$2, if they knew what it was for? Every other country that you go into - I have recently come back from another country, Vietnam, where you do pay departure taxes and other taxes, and you know where the money is going. You pay it knowing that this is what it is.

**Mr MARTIN** - Do not get me wrong. I am not being negative about the idea that there needs to be some income stream. I have the opposite view. I think it needs to happen. There are pros and cons on every model. The cost of administering it - you almost need a BAS statement from every accommodation operator that is done to state revenue. It is not practical. To me, the simplest model is either rates or cars, a rego on your cars. Victoria does it. They basically get all the income from car registrations in every year, and they siphon off whatever the levy is, the total income, and that goes straight over to their parks authority to be managed by them. You could do it through heritage.

**CHAIR** - That only taxes the people living in the state generally. Is there not an argument, and I am asking you the question, not telling you it has to be this way, in terms of the tourists coming here.

**Mr MARTIN** - They certainly have a very different level for car registrations - leased for commercial use -

**CHAIR** - Hire cars?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, hire cars, buses, taxis. Again, that is the one model around Australia that is used for parks rather than heritage but it does generate a steady income stream and would be relatively light to administer than perhaps some of the others.

If you want to have a debate about bed tax, we could probably point to five different things they would rather have the money spent on than heritage. If you want to talk about demand - marketing - there is always the argument the state should contribute to the marketing budget; that would be an effective way to do it. You would need to make the tax quite healthy to make it administratively justified as an investment to generate the term.

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We have 1.1 million visitors so if you multiply that out the figure of \$10 per person would be \$10 million. How much is that going to cost to administer?

If you can come forward with ideas and suggestions and perhaps push the agenda along, the sector does need a bit of a light and I don't think it is being self-generated by the industry. So if you can put a few of these things out there. Certainly, explore the role of heritage. I think that has been every frame of discussion and probably around this time and place and what the role is of Heritage Tasmania.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - So you would not be upset if it was recommended that Tourism Tasmania were in it together?

**Mr MARTIN** - We have them all accredited; that is why. If the industry wanted it, we would do it like we did for the parks guys. I am not sure. I do not know what the hook is for them to participate. I could almost guarantee what would happen if we ran one of those sessions. We would have two or three diehards and it would be dominated by the diehards. It would be hard to try and bring all those sectors together.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - You have done it with the nature-based tourism.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, but they are all tied by the CBS licence. They discovered their issues are very similar. A lot of that is personal agenda.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - No, it seems to me as we have gone around, whether it is here, in Melbourne, in Ballarat, in Adelaide or around the state here, most people are saying, 'We don't know how to do it. We don't know what to do.' Other states are looking at exactly as we are - 'How can we do it?'. We went to Burra which has a local shire council who have almost no roles in heritage tourism there and Burra is a total conservation area. They have a gem of a little town there with a relatively small local group of people -

**CHAIR** - A high level of heritage.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - A high level heritage and an enormous amount of volunteer work that has gone into making the buildings usable again. They have put bed-and-breakfast into the railway station and all those kinds of things. It is a very small group of people. You have to consider the age profile of them as well. One day it is going to fall over.

**Mr MARTIN** - Have they considered rates as their income stream? Do they have a model in mind?

**Mrs TAYLOR** - No, I think they basically do it with volunteer work and the odd grant they get. Would that be right, Ivan?

**Mr DEAN** - It is true, I think. In fact, we gave them some ideas - you did, Adriana.

**CHAIR** - We provided ideas as much as they gave us. You learn from wherever you can in this job.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I was surprised they were not doing it better than we are.

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**Mr MARTIN** - It is like so many things in our industry where we think across the ditch or across to the mainland there are better examples. What we usually discover is that generally we are not doing too badly.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - That is right.

**Mr FINCH** - Chair, the point that was made to us quite often by operators was the viewing of the way PAHSMA operates with Port Arthur and that perhaps their expertise could somehow be shared to support other sectors of the industry - the heritage side of things.

**Mr MARTIN** - Absolutely. We don't give Port Arthur enough credit for what they have been able to achieve over the last few years. From a tourism perspective, and it showed when they won those awards this year, they are a government agency. We all know the structure - financially they have been under immense pressure on their infrastructure - and what they are doing is extremely - the China engagement, the way they are reinventing the product and keeping it current. That highlights the issue that Port Arthur's role is so critically important in their own way at the moment that they need to be coaxed almost to come along with you. There is also this issue of them getting too much support over what we get.

**CHAIR** - Do you think there is room, though, for their expertise to be applied in a lot of other areas in Tasmania? Maybe that is something the state ought to be looking further at?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, absolutely. Perhaps it exposes that there is what you have identified as a clear skill gap. There is a clear strategic gap and that is going to end up a resourcing issue to fill a heritage tourism component.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - What is happening at Oatlands with skills training and how to preserve et cetera, is fantastic but it is not accessible almost to the whole of the industry because there don't seem to be good links.

**Mr MARTIN** - That's right, isolation. Most of these guys' engagement would be through their local tourism association. The standard and quality output of LTAs from one council to the next is like night and day; so there is no consistency. The change in Tourism Tasmania has been good but at least there isn't that obvious person to point to to run around the state and deal with something on heritage tourism, which is one of the recommendations from the strategy. Someone needs to fill that role. It is a bit of a mess in the sense we have all these various bodies and entities within the industry now trying to define their patch. Trying to do a holistic approach around some of that heritage is hard.

**CHAIR** - So you see the regional bodies as almost in competition with each other?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes. That is the challenge of doing it regionally. The RTOs' mandate is to look after their own operators in their own region. That is why we have had to take the statewide approach to nature. Reading between the implied messaging, I suspect we might have to do it with heritage at some point. The RTOs are supposed to be doing that product development work but their mandate is to do it in their own region. For some

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areas, say Latrobe and Woolmers, Tourism Northern Tasmania has very much focused on that as a priority. They are doing some good on-ground work and it is fantastic but it is very much specific to their region; so then you get that inconsistency. Trying to get that together at a statewide level is going to be a challenge.

**CHAIR** - It is an island story that is needing to be told rather than a regional story being told. That points up that collaboration that needs to happen to make the story stand up and be heard, doesn't it?

**Mr MARTIN** - There are good examples of getting together to engage. There is money for this. Simon mentioned that there isn't money to go out and fund feasibility studies and strategies any more, because we know that model hasn't worked. However, the State Government committed \$1 million a year to supply-side priorities, which is in State Growth. It is not defined how that money is going to be spent but if the work that comes out of T21 and this and other things identify two or three clear priorities for sector development, clearly one of them is going to be Aboriginal tourism. There is already work happening in that space. If there was a clear couple of priorities that could influence how that funding was directed, that money could be stretched quite some way to get some proper, grounded collaboration happening and again some expertise to spread around.

**CHAIR** - So it is general Aboriginal tourism you're talking about there?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, that is one sector, and there will potentially be two or three others that will clearly be identified as priorities. It is all based on demand and competitive strengths of sectors that we know have offered something. If heritage comes out of this process with a really clear specific priority so that everyone thinks, 'Let's do this at least', there is money, it is just getting the mandate and the will of industry and government to clearly do it.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - We had an interesting comment from the Mayor of Adelaide, who is interested in heritage. He said he came to Tasmania to do a heritage tour but he had to find it for himself. He did a lot of properties around the state, but he said he had to research them himself to see where they were so he could do that tour. There is no overarching or any kind of structure, I suppose.

**Mr MARTIN** - Heritage can be everything from a day experience at Port Arthur or Woolmers to spending a night in a B & B and then discovering it is Heritage-listed. It is the idea that you capture it all. In the nature tourism sector most people choose that they want to do that particular experience because they would capture the market, whereas heritage is a bit more subtle. A lot of people who do that come to Tasmania because they have a particular passion for that area but a lot are just exposed to the sector without knowing it.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - It is subliminal. It is something that they know exists in Tasmania but they have not really researched it enough to think they want to go here or there. They get that through immersion.

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**Mr MARTIN** - The Tourism Tasmania market demands pretty much confirm that. Part of the brand? Absolutely. Conversion to come? Not so much. That is the trigger point. That is what Tasmania is known for. They will get down one day and see that heritage is part of it but they do not know that there is a specific thing they want to see.

**CHAIR** - Which could mean that the stories associated with those heritage buildings really are not being sold.

**Mr MARTIN** - No, that is right.

**CHAIR** - Something that has come through is that the stories are almost as much if not more important than the fabric itself. It is what happened there that matters as much as the fabric.

**Mr MARTIN** - Heritage is now moving beyond sandstone and convicts. I think the sleeping giant potentially for southern Tasmania is Lake Pedder and Hydro and we have attempted to do it, obviously not to the high degrees of success of Lake Margaret's issues, but certainly that whole industrial heritage story.

Then you look at other options such as EZ. I think everyone who goes past it is fascinated by the EZ story and there is a whole twentieth century heritage that is going to come through there. It's slightly different to the agenda you are looking at but I think again it is a competitive opportunity we have as an industry of the state. Clearly it is going to be a different market of people who are coming and if we really wanted to step up the heritage product development we would certainly have to look at some of those options.

**CHAIR** - Even art deco is something people are taking an interest in now. I did a tour here maybe three years ago and there is a significant amount here in Hobart and I am sure in Launceston and other places. There is a significant interest in that.

**Mr MARTIN** - Someone doing a daily tour is suddenly a job for two people. These are the strengths that we need to build on; it is just harnessing it.

**Mr FINCH** - I am wondering, Luke, if you might make a comment on the heritage tourism strategy.

**Mr MARTIN** - I think if we were to start with the immediate priorities rather than starting with a clean slate, there was a considerable amount of work that went into that strategy with a lot of the common themes we are discussing around responsibilities, information sharing and market product development, it is a very strong body of research work that is still relatively current to look back on. I think the inevitable outcome would be, 'Let's start heritage again, clean slate, let's do another strategy.' My understanding, particularly talking to the people involved in developing that - it was just before my tenure - was that they were pretty passionate that was going to be a bit of a circuit-breaker for this debate. If you look at it it's a considerable body of work.

That came at a time when Tourism Tasmania were doing a lot of things in this space that over the last few years we have suggested that perhaps they should focus their energies elsewhere. There were a lot of strategies. The heritage rail strategy was another one but

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they are still sitting there. They are still bodies and if we were going to go down the process of a Parks 21 action plan for heritage, a very pragmatic group of priorities for the sector to get money out of that supply funding, I think the first thing you would look at would be that heritage tourism strategy, but someone needs to own it and that is where it fell down. It was done by Tourism Tasmania, owned by Tourism Tasmania and fell off the truck as soon as Tourism Tasmania were told they were not doing this space anymore.

**CHAIR** - It doesn't mean the good work has to be thrown out, though?

**Mr MARTIN** - No. The next incarnation, whoever picks it up, hopefully would be industry-led through a vehicle with some resourcing to go with it and we would define the roles and responsibilities of State Growth, Tourism Tas and the RTOs to take that forward. I would certainly reiterate that is the view I've had. A lot of people were pretty disappointed that in the context of all that change the heritage tourism strategy fell over, and similarly the \$100 000 heritage rail strategy. All the issues we're talking about that you are hearing from the heritage rail sector are looked at in that report. A lot of questions and answers are still there, so we don't need to start again. There are some immediate opportunities in there that could be picked up on if the mandate was there to do it.

**CHAIR** - It's an interesting thing, isn't it, with some of the legislation recently being dealt with the 'prudent and feasible' clause when it comes to looking at heritage. I am not just talking about heritage buildings here, it might be rail, but if you cannot demonstrate there is something is prudent or feasible to do with it it is fair game for getting rid of. Do you have a view on that in terms of the tourism sector? Is it possible that in the future you can get a use for it, like our rail system?

**Mr MARTIN** - This is where the demand argument is going to come in. Do you want to bank it on the basis that at some point -

**CHAIR** - Someone is going to come up with a use?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, that's the challenge. The state is going to be under pressure to counter the desire of Tasmanians to have access to, protect and use this stuff with developer resources and -

**CHAIR** - Commercial gain.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes. I will go back to the point I made at the start that not everything needs to be about tourism. It is great that we're the shining star on the hill at the moment, but the argument is always about whether tourists are going to come to this. Maybe not in the numbers you need them to to justify it, but that doesn't mean you give up on your fight. Not everything needs to be about it. Certainly if there are tourism opportunities they will be identified clearly. The beauty of the EOI process for nature reserves is that if you create the legislative regulatory framework, the industry is full of entrepreneurs who have ideas and might come forward and create an environment for people to want to use it.

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**Mr DEAN** - Luke, one of the reasons this committee was set up was that it was the perception of people involved in heritage sites and heritage activities that Tourism Tasmania was not placing sufficient emphasis on the value of heritage to tourism in this state and that there was a lack of effort by Tourism Tasmania to promote it. I note in the sixth paragraph of your submission you talk about heritage not being a major trigger for conversion and you refer to golf and cycling and all of these other things. The survey that was done - and I don't have a more recent one than 2008 or 2009 - said that 60 per cent of tourists were visiting our heritage sites and heritage buildings, whereas only about 16 per cent-17 per cent were visiting wineries and so on. What do you say to that? That tourism was letting heritage down?

**Mr MARTIN** - The motivational survey that I referred to and Tourism Tasmania referred to is the survey you are referring to. What it told us is that people identify heritage as alongside nature and our coasts as the brand of Tasmania, the things that people know about Tasmania. When you ask them what is going to trigger you to come for a holiday, it drops down significantly and that is where you see the art, the culture, food and wine and golf come up. That does not mean that 67 per cent experienced heritage. When we get them here, they do these things; they experience them; they stay in a heritage property or they go to Port Arthur and that is part of the Tasmania experience.

The market is telling us that marketing those things, promoting those experiences, is not necessarily as effective in getting people to choose to come to Tasmania on a holiday as opposed to things like wine, golf and MONA.

To bring it back to Tourism Tasmania, they have \$13 million a year to market the state. Their mandate now is to firmly do what is the most pragmatic and practical, in the cheapest way possible, to get as many people here as they can. They are investing their money into those things in terms of the marketing promotions that are going to achieve that. If you look at their current campaigns, they are all about the stories of Tasmania, the quirkiness, the nature. Heritage is part of that but the days of promoting people wandering down the streets of Ross with sandstone buildings in the background is not the marketing we want to see happen because it has not worked. That is the reality.

It does not mean the industry is any less important in how you develop it. Theoretically we, as taxpayers, spend a lot of money to promote these experts in Tourism Tasmania to do this marketing work and their view is that the marketing approach they doing is the most effective. When we have the highest visitation growth of any destination in the country, we cannot criticise them too much right now. It does not mean that will not change quickly and we can criticise them as we want if the numbers start turning. Is that a fair answer, Ivan?

**Mr DEAN** - That is it. Thanks, Luke.

**Mr MARTIN** - Heritage Tasmania needs to stop making the heritage brand look like listing as a bad thing. If you are talking about their role, perhaps they could start by their mandate being to market, promote and regulate the heritage list. That needs to start and this is an issue for tourism operators or residents - to not view heritage listing as a bad thing. That starts by having a great logo that says, 'We are a Tasmanian heritage-listed property that every tourism operator on that list can display next their brand that reaffirms that brand'.



## **PUBLIC**

Heritage Tasmania, it is not their job to market the sector. They can start by marketing the heritage list.

**CHAIR** - Heritage is their primary focus, not tourism, so you are saying it needs to be a more positive message coming out of Heritage Tasmania?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes. They have to address the fundamental perception that is shared by almost every person on the heritage list that it is a limitation or a bad thing.

**CHAIR** - This is not the first time this has come up. It has come up before as an observation, that this is what needs to happen, not just with Heritage Tasmania. We have been hearing this generally.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Other operators do it in other sectors, like if you in the food and wine business, you have a logo that you can put up, saying, 'We are part of this'.

**Mr MARTIN** - Share the Wonder is a classic. Every accredited CVS licence holder - Commercial Visitor Service Licence in Parks and Wildlife - is licensed to display the Share the Wonder logo, which is Parks' corporate brand which importantly includes the shield. That is a powerful, effective thing. It shows you are official. It makes the operators feel good about the process they have to go through.

**CHAIR** - Part of the team.

**Mr MARTIN** - Part of the team, doing the right thing, certified. It is not the role of Heritage Tasmania to be doing ads, or promoting people to come and visit Tasmania and do heritage. They surely need to start by addressing the current perceptions of the heritage label and having some kind of communiqué, or marketing effort with the operators and property owners, that being on the heritage list is a competitive advantage for you.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Rather than a disadvantage.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, and here is the brand or the logo you should own and be proud to display.

**CHAIR** - They might say it is not their position to do either. They are there simply as a registering authority. Why is it they should be a promoter?

**Mr MARTIN** - They have taken that role. I do not think they can say that because they seem to be pretty parochial about wanting to talk about the heritage list.

**CHAIR** - Being that it is a statutory body -

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Maybe TICT may take that on when it starts to get the industry going.

**CHAIR** - I think you are in for a lot of work.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, no resources. Please recommend that TICT -

## **PUBLIC**

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Your industry partners do provide some income stream for you as well.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, we do. It has to be the mandate for the industry.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I see that individual operators such as heritage bed and breakfast or houses spend money on marketing. It is an isolation thing which makes their dollar go far less than a shorter distance it would do if they were doing it together.

**Mr MARTIN** - That is right. I am not suggesting they should get into a marketing role but I look at their legislative role and their corporate - I actually looked at this because I wondered what is the role for heritage and it seemed to be every little thing. I looked at it and it is pretty defined around the list. The Heritage Council's role is to govern the list so it is very defined but I do not think it is just to regulate. Regulation also means they could support and promote it and say this is a good thing to be involved in. I think starting that would be a very sensible, pragmatic approach.

**CHAIR** - It would be interesting to have that debate, yes. Thanks very much Luke.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**