

Natasha Exel

From: Robert Ravens <robert@bridestowelavender.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 2 November 2018 4:55 PM
To: ner
Subject: Submission from Bridestowe Estate

Dear Members of the Select Parliamentary Committee,

I am writing to you as Managing Director of Bridestowe Estate to express our comprehensive support for the preservation and enhancement of the North Eastern Railway corridor.

The rail line reflects the innovation, engineering excellence and wealth that underpinned Launceston's pre-eminent status at the end of the nineteenth century. It is a fitting complement to the fine buildings and architecture heritage that remain visible in Launceston today.

Regrettably, much of that has been overlooked in the recent discussions as to whether to tear up the rail line to facilitate the installation of a bike track.

I am not a historian, but rather a pragmatist and have come to the realisation that the rail line and infrastructure, properly reincarnated, represent a remarkable opportunity to attract and delight a significant number of visitors to North East Tasmania.

Regrettably, the analysis of the options has become mired in misinformation and (often) deliberate obfuscation.

Let me say, at the outset, that Bridestowe Estate has no commercial or vested interests which would bias our decision to offer our support for either the Heritage Rail or bike track options. We have tried to distance ourselves from the politics of the moment and have tried to embrace the most likely option to endure, attract and enchant visitors to the North East of Tasmania. We have also looked for the option most likely to bring a broad based community together.

We believe that the decision should be made for and on behalf of a properly informed and supportive community.

With that in mind we have taken the time to listen to the broader community and have consulted with our significant customer base.

We have travelled widely and enquired broadly, across Europe and the Americas, and have viewed at least six major and successful heritage rail projects.

We have also taken time to consult with the community in the North East.

When we took ownership of Bridestowe Estate in February 2007, it recorded 16,000 visitors per annum and was closed for 5 months of the year. We have worked with the various stakeholders to create a marketing proposition which will attract, this year, over 85,000 visitors to our location on full year basis.

Part of our "value proposition" and presentation has been the preservation and enhancement of the heritage of Bridestowe Estate. Our visitors relate to the history, the passion and the achievements of the Estate over nearly 100 years. They comment on and commend the likelihood of the Bridestowe legend being preserved for future generations.

Heritage sells.

As referenced above, the rail line from Launceston to Scottsdale is an irreplaceable example of engineering excellence which presents an opportunity to become the key tourism attraction in the North East.

It can create real economic value and provide impetus for new and exciting community based business to prosper.