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The Hon. Rob. Valentine MLC
Chair, Legislative Council Inquiry
Legislative Council of Tasmania
Parliament House
Hobart, TAS 7000

Submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry into Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania by the *Professional Historians Association (Tas)*.

The Professional Historians Association (Tas) is a professional body representing the interests of qualified and practising historians in Tasmania. It is affiliated with the national body *Professional Historians Australia*. Many of its members are directly involved in working in the historic heritage and tourism areas and have considerable expertise in researching, writing and interpreting Tasmania's built heritage. In this submission our organisation would like to draw attention to the following:

1. The value of Tasmania's historic cultural heritage to the tourism sector is unequivocal – it is a major draw card for tourists coming to Tasmania from interstate and overseas. It is not only the Port Arthur Historic site and other iconic historic sites that attract tourists, but also our historic precincts and streetscapes, such as Salamanca Place, Battery Point, Launceston city, Richmond, Oatlands and Ross, and our west coast mining towns. The economic and social importance of Tasmania's heritage needs to be reflected in state and local government resourcing, planning and administration, including the development of local heritage schedules across all local government areas. The resourcing of state government bodies involved in heritage management, such as Heritage Tasmania, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority and the Parks and Wildlife Service, should reflect the importance of this asset to our community. Adequate funding, together with a professional approach to managing and interpreting this heritage,

will ensure that our heritage is adequately protected and appropriately managed, thus enhancing the visitor experience.

2. It must not be forgotten that built heritage places also have significance for the local community – for their sense of history and belonging. Tasmania's historic heritage can be found throughout the island and may take various forms, including convict sites, agricultural heritage, industrial places, archaeological sites, humble worker's cottages, as well as remnants of forestry and mining and hydro development. These all have value to the local communities to which they belong, as well as to the wider Tasmanian community, in informing an understanding of our past and heritage. It is important that the local and Tasmanian communities are not overlooked or excluded in the process of managing these sites and any potential impacts. Connections to the local community give historic places meaning. Members of the community can add to our understanding of a place's value through their stories and knowledge, and may play an important role in a place's ongoing maintenance.
3. An increasing number of community buildings, such as churches and schools, are being sold and developed for tourism or private interests. PHA (Tas) has concerns that in this process there is currently insufficient protection for the moveable cultural heritage items that they contain. These items, which may include church fonts, lecterns and other fittings, honour boards and plaques, are often sold or auctioned for private benefit instead of being retained by the local community or organisation and preserved for future generations.
4. Of concern would be the loss of the cultural significance of a place through inappropriate management in order to cater for tourist amenity (which may provide a short-term financial gain, but be damaging to the place in the long term). Tasmania's historic heritage must be conserved appropriately and to best practice principles to ensure its survival for future generations. Cultural heritage is a non-renewable resource. Use and development of heritage places must be sustainable, a measure which is a cornerstone of Tasmania's Resource Management and Planning System, recognising that a duty of trans-generational equity exists so that our natural and physical resources will meet both our current needs, and those of future generations. Adaptive re-use is an important way that this can be achieved where the future of a building is uncertain, but must be done in such a way that the cultural significance of the place is not lost in the process. Tourism may provide one example of an economic use for a disused historic place, but there may also be other options of benefit to local communities that are worthy of consideration.

The role of professionals with expertise in researching, conserving and interpreting historic heritage places also needs to be widely valued and respected and

incorporated into decision-making regarding Tasmania's historic places. The ICOMOS Burra Charter guidelines should be followed to ensure best practice in the conservation and management of places of cultural significance. The employment of professional historians is an important step in this process. They are skilled at archival research which is important to understanding how a place has changed over time, its origins and phases of development, notable associations, as well as the wider historical context and cultural significance. They can best identify the important historical themes that are connected with the place to inform interpretation to a wider public. Effective training of tourism guides is also paramount to the visitor experience.


5. A co-ordinated approach to Tasmania's history and heritage would highlight the important themes and connections between places and regions enhancing the visitor experience and understanding. The government (state and local), in association with heritage and community organisations, could best achieve this through collaboration on the publication of tourist literature and guides, web pages, the organisation of heritage events and festivals, and in the development of heritage trails.

In summary, in this submission we urge the following:

- Proper resourcing, planning and administration for Tasmania's heritage across state and local government agencies.
- Acknowledgement of the wider value of Tasmania's historic heritage to the Tasmanian and local communities (beyond mere tourism dollars), and that local communities be consulted regarding their heritage.
- That best practice principles as outlined in the ICOMOS Burra Charter be followed in the conservation and management of places of historic cultural significance.
- That professional expertise, such as suitably qualified historians, architects and archaeologists, is consulted as needed to best understand, conserve, manage and communicate the cultural significance of a place to both locals and tourists.
- That the moveable cultural heritage of community buildings be better protected.
- A co-ordinated approach to Tasmania's history and heritage by government through the publication of tourist guide books, web pages, the organisation of events and festivals and the development of heritage trails.

PHA (Tas) appreciates the opportunity to address this important issue. If you would like further information or an opportunity to discuss this submission please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely


Dr Kathryn Evans
PHA (Tas) President.