



# **PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

## **TRANSCRIPT**

### **HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESSES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority**

**Friday 6 December 2024**

#### **MEMBERS**

Mr Street MP (Chair);  
Mr Behrakis MP (Deputy Chair);  
Mr O'Byrne MP;  
Mr Willie MP;  
Mr Winter MP; and  
Dr Woodruff MP

#### **OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**

Ms Brown MP;  
Ms Rosol MP;  
Mr Ferguson MP; and  
Mr Jenner MP



## **WITNESSES IN ATTENDANCE**

**Hon. Madeleine Ogilvie MP**, Minister for Innovation, Science, and the Digital Economy,  
Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation, Minister for the Environment, Minister for the  
Arts and Heritage

**Grant O'Brien**, Chair

**Will Flamsteed**, CEO

**Sarah Jane Brazil**, Director Conservation and Infrastructure

**David Nelan**, CFO



# PUBLIC

**The Committee met at 9.00 a.m.**

**CHAIR** (Mr Street) - I welcome the minister, chair and CEO to the committee today and also welcome the other members of the committee. The time scheduled for the scrutiny of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHSMA) is 45 minutes. As is the known practice by now for questions on notice, they need to be agreed to be taken by either the minister or the chair and then provided in writing to the secretary. I'll invite the minister to make a very short opening statement seeing as we've only got 45 minutes and to introduce everybody at the table.

**Ms OGILVIE** - Thank you, I will do that. I am obviously in your hands, but yesterday I was very happy to have very much a free-flowing conversation so that you could ask pretty much directly any questions you wanted to and that seemed to work well. At the table I have Grant O'Brien who is our PAHSMA chair; CEO Will Flamsteed; and we have David Nelan and other members of our PAHSMA team ready to come to the table.

I'll just give you the highlights very quickly. Port Arthur was visited by 333,068 people in 2023-24, a 3 per cent increase on last year but still below pre-COVID visitation levels. Cruise ships - we've increased to 26 cruise ships compared to 18 in the previous years. We've done a lot of investment across conservation, infrastructure, education and interpretation. That was \$9.98 million in total. There is a lot of good work going on and I note the Cascades Female Factory's Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls daily tour. We operate across three sites, as you would be aware, and we have a strategic plan, which we've brought. We can talk through and that has three stages to it.

PAHSMA is one of the major economic drivers in the peninsula area and employers and we take that responsibility very seriously with the local community. We've contributed. I'm saying 'we' of course but I'm merely the minister, it's the team here that's done it. We've contributed more than \$10.386 million to the Tasmanian economy in accordance with the government's Buy Local guidelines, which we take seriously.

We have a \$2 million grant deed, of which \$1 million has been already expended and \$1 million to go. We've won gold awards for the Cascades Female Factory at the Tourism Awards and gold for the Port Arthur Historic Site as major tourist attraction at the 2024 Tourism Awards. We have challenges, and I'm sure the team will talk you through those. We've done some work in relation to the water and sewerage issue, which is a cost for this organisation and a legacy issue which we're attempting to deal with, particularly in relation to the clock tower as well, where conservation is required.

One of the challenges we have is hitting up the feds, quite rightly, for the money that they ought to be putting into our World Heritage-listed site and we're not seeing that coming to the fore. That is on our strategic agenda.

**Ms BROWN** - I'm glad to see that the minority Liberal government finally appreciates heritage and it's back on your business card, minister.

**Ms OGILVIE** - I'm very pleased it's back, yes, thank you.

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**Ms BROWN** - I understand that the impact of the *Spirits* was touched on in the other place, so I won't ask for the data around that, but can you advise when you were told that the *Spirits* wouldn't be operating this summer?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I don't have a date or that we were officially advised. I think most of us read about it in the paper.

**Ms BROWN** - So, you found out about it in the paper, no-one actually picked up the phone, rang you, told you?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I wouldn't expect that they would have done. The *Spirits* were certainly on our radar as something that would be coming in the future but they weren't built into any of our current plans, so there's been no financial impact on our forecast at this particular point in time.

**Ms BROWN** - Considering the impact that self-driving travellers have for Port Arthur, I would have thought it would have been on your radar.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - It was certainly on our radar in terms of something that would be helpful to us in the future when the boats were going to come on, but my comment was in relation to impact on immediate financial, which they don't because there was nothing built in for them.

**Ms BROWN** - Last year, PAHSMA in scrutiny committed to undertake a review of the director of P&C (People & Culture) market allowance. Have you undertaken that review and if you have, can you table a copy?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - For the benefit of everyone, the employment of our current P&C director occurred back in, I think, March 2023?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Correct.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - He was the P&C director at the Canberra Hospital at the time and was our favourite candidate in the recruitment process. He moved to Tasmania with his family. His circumstances changed in I think it was June of that year, where family illness meant that he needed to spend some time back in Canberra, which we granted, because the early signs of his performance was exactly what we needed in terms of a P&C manager. We've been reviewing it with the executive on a quarterly basis as to where that's at. Steve pays his airfares to and from Canberra when he when he travels and he's on site in Port Arthur two weeks out of each month. From a performance point of view, he's been an outstanding P&C manager and something that has benefited Port Arthur greatly, but the board, along with the executive, review it on an on a quarterly basis.

**Ms BROWN** - Just to clarify, was there a formal review taken that has documentation?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - It's in the minutes of our board meeting.

**Ms BROWN** - So?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes, is the answer.

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**Ms ROSOL** - Minister, the government's announced that they're going to be doing internal reviews of GBEs with an eye to exploring privatisation possibilities. Just a question around whether you've been considering the privatisation of PAHSMA. Have there been any previous reports into this at all and what's your position on privatisation in relation to PAHSMA?

**Ms OGILVIE** - Not considering privatisation.

**Ms ROSOL** - Have there been any reports in the past about it with recommendations?

**Ms OGILVIE** - Not in my time.

**Ms ROSOL** - Okay. The annual report states that there's been a significant focus on culture over the past year. That was following on from the Tasmanian State Service (TSS) employee survey that showed that 44 per cent of staff had reported exposure to bullying in the previous 12 months. I'm wondering if you're able to provide any further information about the bullying. Did the survey have any more data around whether the bullying was from colleagues at a similar level or whether it was coming from management? Was that part of the survey? Are you able to expand on some of that?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - That doesn't come out in the survey itself so much. The survey is one of our, I guess, feeds in terms of information on where the culture and our people are at. We also run pulse surveys and have done for the last four or five years that supplement the TSS which occurs generally once a year.

I think it was 43 per cent of people, it was 44 per cent the previous survey. What that resulted in when we bring in the real data as to what was reported, I think there were eight reported in that sort of area, three which related to bullying, and they were coworker to coworker. We triangulate the data to properly understand where we're at and there is a range of things we've got in place and have had in place for quite a while.

This is something the board have been looking at since 2019. We got in some specialist assistance to help us look at the TSS survey and other aspects of our workforce. If you look back through the TSS, you see that post that 2018 survey we got a significant jump and improvement in our scores, then COVID hit and the site was shut for a period of time. Then we've had three or four years, I think it was 50 per cent, 40 per cent reductions in visitation, so the site was effectively fractured with people not being able to work as they did before.

The following survey, the 2020 survey, showed more or less a return to where we were in 2018. We've been rebuilding the processes that we adopted first back then, and I'm talking about it because it's something that the board really obviously have overview of and interest in.

**Ms ROSOL** - Has the 2024 TSS survey happened?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes.

**Ms ROSOL** - I'm assuming that will be reported in the next annual report, but has there been any indication of any changes in the -

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**Mr O'BRIEN** - A slight improvement, and we've done since then, we've done a range of face-to-face interviews with staff to further unpick the path that we're on. The general feedback from that is showing areas of improvement as well.

**Mr JENNER** - I know it's been touched on with one of my colleagues. It's my understanding that PAHSMA relies on both external consulting firms and out-of-state HR professionals for its human resources needs. Could you provide details of the total expenditure for the HR services, including any costs associated with travel, accommodation for the out-of-state individuals? Also, do you believe outsourcing these services is a justified use of state resources, considering we have HR companies available here that are high standard?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Firstly, we don't use outside of Tasmania agencies. We use a local agency, the Belrose Group.

**Mr JENNER** - Right, so you don't use anything from the mainland at all, no other companies?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - The Belrose Group that we use has offices and is situated in Tasmania. Yes.

**Mr JENNER** - Right.

**Ms ROSOL** - It's registered to the Northern Territory.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - It's registered in Tasmania, yeah.

**Mr JENNER** - Okay. So, there's no travel, you're not paying someone to fly over here and stuff like that, because that's what we were led to believe?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - No.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I would think they're referring to our P&C manager, if that's the question that you've got.

**Ms ROSOL** - Yeah.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - The P&C manager pays for his travel back and forth between Canberra and Tasmania.

**Mr JENNER** - Okay, thanks.

**Ms BROWN** - I would like to circle back to staff turnover and culture. How many complaints or grievances have been raised by employees in this financial year?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Eight.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Eight.

**Ms BROWN** - What is the turnover rate of middle management in TOPS areas for the financial year?



**Mr FLAMSTEED** - In TOPS? Are you referring to tourism operations? We have had recently one manager depart.

**Ms BROWN** - Did they have a reason for moving on?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - They found their dream job. That manager's now in charge of the environment division on Lord Howe Island.

**Ms BROWN** - Mhm. How many head chefs have resigned or gone on stress leave over the last financial year?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - No chef is on stress leave and no chef has resigned.

**Unknown** - No head chef.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - No head chef has resigned, yeah.

**Ms BROWN** - So, no chefs or no head chefs?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - There's been two resignations of chefs. They've sought employment, or they've taken over a business on the Tasman Peninsula. They're actually still, funnily enough, able to work casually with us into the future if we need them.

**Ms ROSOL** - On page 27 of the annual report, it lists \$94,105 in payment for services relating to a culture program provided by Steople. On page 14 of the report, it talks about a deep dive analysis of one-on-one staff interviews, which you were mentioning just before. I have some questions about the services provided by Steople. Have they provided a written report of the results of their analysis of the surveys, the interviews, the pulse surveys?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Yes, there is. There's a culture strategy and roadmap that outlines steps and programs that we can take, that we've committed to take over the next life of the strategy. A couple of things to note. The cultural roadmap and strategy is very much an evolving document. It has a clear direction for the next year or two, and we'll continue to review that as we move forward.

A couple of interesting projects that we've already undertaken: Grant mentioned before about the level of face-to-face interviews that we've done. We've also run a number of leader-led workshops to understand how our organisation is performing and where it's at. One of the early recommendations of the cultural road map was to have a staff-led review of the values of our organisation. It is really interesting to have gone into that with our staff leading, where they engage with their peers to understand culturally how we could evolve within the organisation. They've created a set of values that we are now rolling out into the organisation. Part of that was also to include, to support our staff going through that, a number of values leads or values champions, we call them, that enabled our staff to have that level of support, to have those discussions and conversations with their peers.

**Ms ROSOL** - Thank you. Is that Steople report something that could be tabled here?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I would think so.

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**Mr FLAMSTEED** - It is an internal report.

**Ms ROSOL** - So, does that mean it can't be? Sorry, I wasn't sure what the answer was.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I'm not sure where we start and we stop with that.

**Ms ROSOL** - Are there any other consultants that have been contracted to provide services for culture change or organisational development outside of Steople? I know you have Belrose Group for HR services.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Correct.

**Ms ROSOL** - There's also Steople providing a culture program. Are there any other consultants providing services in this area?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Not currently, no.

**Unknown** - [inaudible]

**Ms ROSOL** - Sorry, was that seven?

**CHAIR** - Sorry, if you're going to contribute, you need to come to the table.

**Ms ROSOL** - It sounds like he knows quite a bit, so maybe he should come to the table.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - We use a number of contractors. We do use contractors. We are an agency, an organisation that is on the Tasman Peninsula that does struggle finding key personnel for those roles because of our geographical distance and because of the specialist nature of some of those roles. In areas like project management, we do use contractors to enable us to get the jobs that we have outlined in our strategic plan, which is a series of projects that focuses on us as an organisation getting to financial sustainability in five years. So, yes, we do use other contractors specifically in areas of project management.

We've got a contractor that is managing part of the Steople project. They have been working with our organisation in other different areas of project management. Specifically, from a culture perspective, they are managing a project, they are not a culture specialist. That is why I answered that question -

**Ms OGILVIE** - I could probably contribute a little bit too, if it's helpful, in relation to consultancies. Overarchingly, funds spent on consultants during the 2023-24 totalled \$756,852, which was up from \$668,331 in the previous year with the major contributor to the increase relating to the engagement of New South Wales Public Works to provide highly specialised advice on the penitentiary stabilisation, which I am sure we will come to at some point.

**Ms ROSOL** - I asked about the tabling of the report from Steople and that is not possible. However, you mentioned that there is a plan being developed. Is that something that could be? Is it part of the strategic plan? It's not like a separate plan?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - No, it's just our strategic plan, the 2023-28 strategic plan.

**Ms ROSOL** - It includes it in it? I didn't notice. I've got it.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - I am happy to table it. I've got a copy.

**Ms ROSOL** - I have a copy, thanks.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Fantastic. It is a wonderful document.

**Ms BROWN** - Back to staff and culture, what is the percentage of staff on extended personal leave across the 12 months?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - I will just refer to my notes, if that's all right, for those numbers. I think we have non-seasonal - sorry, did you say vacancies for staff? Can you just repeat that?

**Ms BROWN** - No. What percentage of staff on extended personal leave across the 12 months?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Percentage of staff? One per cent.

**Ms BROWN** - Is it easier to say how many staff, rather than percentage?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - For extended personal leave, we have maybe four or five staff in total on extended personal leave. I am just hesitant in that answer because some staff were stood down because of sick leave, and that's personal. So, when you say extended leave, I am just taking that as being staff that are on leave.

**Ms BROWN** - Stood down, or they have left, or they have reduced hours themselves? Has that been a conversation with them and management?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - That's a conversation between them and management, yeah. I can't answer that.

**Ms BROWN** - How many staff are on workers compensation due to stress, post-traumatic stress or psychosocial injury in the last 12 months? How many, not percentage.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - I would say that there's two stood down on psychosocial impact. I would say that there's two.

**Ms BROWN** - Can you talk me through the results of the State Service survey related to staff bullying and harassment over this period?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - I think Grant recognised the state survey report before. It's one tool that we use to really gauge how our organisation is going. Over 50 per cent of our staff completed the survey. We actively encouraged our staff to complete the survey because it is a great tool for us to look at.

A number of things we note in that survey from a workplace health and safety perspective - our staff recognise that we do have policies in place to be able to report bullying and a number of staff increased in their reporting of bullying. We saw those numbers come up,

that's actually good. We have our staff communicating and understanding whether or not they can or cannot communicate into our organisations, so we can understand if we have a cultural problem to be able to change it. It's the job of us, both from the board and executive, to look at that and understand it.

I want to put it into perspective though, and Grant touched on this before, we have had reports of bullying into our management. There have been eight cases that have been formally reported and, of those, four cases went to investigation, of which we stood down two people. They're the real numbers that we need to put next to that. Other things within that survey, I think staff recognise that they really love Port Arthur. They find it is a great place to work. They actually recommend - a number of staff recommend Port Arthur to be a great place to work.

We're in the process of implementing a SpeakUp program well that will enable our staff, once it's implemented in, hopefully the next six months or so, will be an independent process for them to enable whistleblowing to report these incidents in a far more formal, independent, transparent, and confidential way.

We are doing things, we're being really active in how we're moving forward. The culture programs are a great example of that. Our strategic plan focuses, in this first stage that we're in, focuses on a number of things that we're doing to make sure our staff at work are having a better working experience through how they manage their payroll, HR details, and all that sort of stuff. We're working towards it. We're being really proactive. That's how I interpret the survey.

**Ms BROWN** - Just circling back, you said all the things that you're implementing what is currently there for whistleblowers or for people notifying someone that they are unsatisfied or feeling bullied or harassed?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - We have a grievance policy and we have steps we've clearly outlined to our teams about the other steps you need to go through to do that.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Can I add to that. As Will said, 52 per cent of people reported, which was a significant increase on previously, and 81 per cent understand the policies and avenues they have to feedback any incidents that they see. Both of those things have improved because that's what we wanted to do. That is ensuring that we get the best insight we can from the TSS. As Will said, the other things in the TSS that significantly improve workplaces - people were proud of where they worked, people would recommend Port Arthur as a place to work - also increased significantly in that TSS survey. We look at the whole TSS survey to get a picture and then we marry it with actual data, which Will and I shared.

**Ms BROWN** - Touching on the TSS survey, you aimed for a target of a 70-plus for employee satisfaction, but received 60. Given that result and everything you've just said about how people are proud to work in this establishment, do you believe there is a problem with culture and employee satisfaction?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - We've taken you through the TSS results and what we're doing with those and what the actual outcome of that is in terms of eight reported, three relating to bullying and that's co-worker to co-worker. We're looking at all of that data. We've been working on this since 2019 with a range of things that was disrupted and stopped during COVID when the site was shut and fractured by COVID. We've, over the last 18 months, been up and running

with this again. It takes time to change these things. It takes time for people to feel like these things are working. We're taking encouragement from the things that I just shared with you and, as a board, I'm really comfortable with the things that we've got in plan, most of which Will has just talked about. We're working hard on this. It's not something we're ignoring. We've got it in our annual report front and centre. It's not something we're trying to sweep under the carpet. So, from our point of view, it's a focus. It's leading to actions and it's something that both executive and board are focused on and it's important that that's what we convey.

**Ms ROSOL** - Just a question about the staff. In the report you have that there are 130 permanent staff, 13 fixed-term staff. How does that work for them in terms of hours? Are they given guaranteed hours or is there some movement in the hours they get? I understand they're permanent, but how do their hours work out in terms of consistency?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - In the way of permanent staff?

**Ms ROSOL** - Yes, and maybe the fixed-term as well. They're on a contract. Is it contracted hours or is it contracted employment with movement in the hours?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Depending on the contract, it's generally contracted as in time, but within that contract, there'd be a recognition of percentage of hours, so it might be 0.3 or 0.6, they're generally consistent in those hours, generally, depending on the nature of the of the contract.

We have a really interesting workplace. We have seasonal fluctuation. It's really interesting to, I suppose, analyse that and understand how we can ensure that we remain financially sustainable as an organisation.

We have 65 per cent permanent staff. Twentynine of those, we call them more-casual - 29 casual. They fluctuate seasonally, so we've just had a big influx for our summer period. Those fixed-term - sorry, those permanent staff - generally do have set hours.

**Ms ROSOL** - And that doesn't change seasonally for them? They have their -

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - They're employed annually.

**Ms ROSOL** - Yes. Thank you. We've already mentioned the water and sewage infrastructure works that are needed at the site. My understanding is that that will increase the capacity for visitor numbers once that's been put in place. I'm wondering if there's been any modelling or assessment conducted around that increase in visitor numbers and the effect that will have on the rest of the site. If you have more people coming in because the sewerage and water treatment can facilitate them, those increased numbers will then have an impact across the site. Has there been any modelling and exploration done around the impact of more people coming?

**Ms OGILVIE** - Potentially, just before you start, can I perhaps suggest also -

**CHAIR** - Ms Ogilvie, you just need to speak into the microphone for Hansard.

**Ms OGILVIE** - Sorry. Can I also recommend that you talk a little bit about the legacy issues with the water and sewerage and why we're doing that work, and then also then also the projection of the numbers.

**Ms ROSOL** - I think everyone's in agreement that the work is needed and necessary. It's more about the impact of doing it.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - What the minister was referring to, to give a bit of background, a few years ago, TasWater did a report to understand, I suppose, the quality of asset and the ability of the asset that we had for water and sewerage on site. We then had that independently appraised as well through pitt&sherry to make us understand what we needed to do to ensure that we would have a steady stream of water, not a steady stream of sewage, and a capable sewerage system as well. We recognise that value. We were very happy to receive funding from the Tasmanian government of \$16 million to ensure that we get our water and sewerage to a stage that would be able for a specialist government business like TasWater to actually take over.

The impact that it would have on site, again, we're limited by our ability with visitation to what comes into the state of Tasmania. We're the fourth largest visited site the state, which is fantastic. There is room for opportunity there, there is no doubt about that. What we need to consider is how we best manage those people in the site. As compared to having thousands more people coming out in peak season, what does it look like if we have a high demand in winter? A lot of the projects that we are focusing on moving forward as to how we manage our visitation is understanding what it looks like in the low season. We're supporting and investing in local community events like the Lightwave Festival on the Tasman Peninsula that enables us to grow winter visitation and allow us to steady that visitation across the site.

**Ms ROSOL** - I understand that just because there's sewage and water capacity increases, it doesn't mean that suddenly thousands more people are coming and going, 'Woohoo, that's great!'. It depends on other factors. Are you saying that you are looking at the capacity of the site, and I am not just talking about getting more people in, but what impact it might have on the site in terms of the buildings, light issues or that kind of thing at night?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - It's a great question. We have an annual conservation maintenance program and built into that are specific ways that we manage as specialists in managing World Heritage sites and we manage those assets. To me, that's quite separate to the visitation piece. How we manage our visitors in that way is how we interpret our site and we can actually manage that quite effectively. How we analyse that is on an annual basis with our corporate planning, so we can make decisions for a five-year projection that enables us to account for how we will do that.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Before Will's time and before COVID, we undertook or started a carrying capacity, which looks exactly like what you're talking about, what the impact of visitor numbers is at various places around the site. That got dropped with COVID because carrying capacity wasn't an issue. It's something that we'll need to pick up in the future.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - It features in our heritage management plan.

**Mr JENNER** - I just say for the record that it's an amazing site. You do a great job. I think Tassie is a better place for it, for sure. It is in my electorate of Lyons. I'm just asking on

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employment, because obviously a lot of people in my area are employed there and I heard you say you have 65 full-time employees. How many part-time and casual employees do you have?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Out of our workforce of 199, 150 come from the peninsula, so it's a big number.

**Mr JENNER** - Yes, that's great. Have there been any recent changes to salaries and allowances and working hours within your group?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Mr Jenner, that's a very broad question. I don't know.

**Mr JENNER** - Okay. I asked the question because we were asked the question.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - That's a very broad question. I'm not sure how to answer.

**Mr JENNER** - There have been adjustments made, as far as I know, with wages, salaries and times with employees. I'm just wondering how you're coping with that. Are you losing employees because of the change or not? Once again, it's because of employment in that area and like you said, you have 150 or so employees from there.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - I'll just get our COO.

**Mr JENNER** - Lovely, thanks. I know it was a broad question so I'd appreciate a broad answer.

**Mr NELAN** - No, it's an interesting question. As State Service employees - every PAHSMA employee is a member of the State Service under the PAHSMA award - the first and full pay on 1 December we will get a 3 per cent increase in the award wages as part of the State Service negotiations. They are the only changes that are occurring.

**Mr JENNER** - Okay, brilliant. That was the only reason I asked that. Otherwise, great.

**CHAIR** - Mr Ferguson for one question.

**Mr FERGUSON** - I was hoping to get two, but I'll do my best; they're aligned. First of all I want to congratulate the team. You're running a great operation. I wouldn't like any of the questions to be perceived as a negative reflection on the quality of your board and executive. I am very taken with the annual report statement from the CEO and the chair. I want to congratulate you on that and for the team building and commitment to staff welfare that you've put on display. In the same overview, you've made specific reference - and I think the minister touched on it earlier as well - to your concerns about the penitentiary degrading, and I think you said it's now reached a critical point of failure, so I think we'd all be concerned for you and for that asset. Can you briefly outline the timeframe around making those key assessments and setting up the organisation for key decisions about remediating that asset? I'd appreciate the opportunity to ask a follow-up question, if that's possible.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Thank you, Mr Ferguson. Within the last 12 months we've noticed some of the fabric of the penitentiary degrading to a point that we needed to consider the safety of our staff, our visitors and also the safety of the building from a conservation perspective as well. We had to act fairly fast. We engaged NSW Public Works, who are the key specialists in

this area internationally, but in particular in Australia, to enable us to fully understand the level of impact the penitentiary's under at the moment from climate change.

You might know that where the penitentiary is situated, in front of that is reclaimed land. That reclaimed land has been impacted over the years a number of times with high tides. That level of impact has been recognised by NSW Public Works and we estimate that to be around just over \$25 million. That particular ask is an extraordinary ask; there's no doubt about that. If you look historically at the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, every 10 years we have a major event that is outside our annual maintenance program that we look at for our conservation assets.

In conjunction with the minister, we've formally written to the federal Minister for the Environment Tanya Plibersek to request a meeting to discuss how the federal government could support what is, I think, probably one of the best-represented convict-era sites in Australia that tells one of the really key specific stories of Australia.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Timeframes?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Timeframes for the ask, or timeframes for the works?

**Mr FERGUSON** - The assessment and decisions on the works.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - The works will take three to five years, but we've broken that up into a number of different stages.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Would that be the sort of timeframe that would support a genuine - what I mean is, it's urgent, but it wouldn't be outside the envelope of time if it was done and commenced in three years. It would be enough to save it.

**Ms OGILVIE** - Oh, for safety? Conservation -

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - We need it to happen within the next three years. It needs to start within the next 12 months.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Chair, if I may, I would just like to ask if the ticket price is keeping up with the extra costs of workforce, when the reference was made to 3 per cent wage increases? Is the ticket price adequately covering that? I'm seeing you shake your head, so thank you for that. What is the organisation doing to ensure that we are capitalising on excellent visitation numbers, even though they're a little below budget? Still, a third of a million people per year - surely that's an opportunity to help be financially sustainable with modest increases in ticketing?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - The board have asked management and we'll be talking on Tuesday about that very question in relation to ticket price. Obviously, like any business, we work hard to keep it as low as we can, particularly for Tasmanians who want to visit, but we're looking at other things as well, such as the conversion rate on other fee-paying tools within the site, so the Isle of the Dead, for instance. We've got targets that we're jointly setting in relation to getting conversion of people. I think 70-odd per cent of people take the ferry ride, but not a big percentage of those get off on Isle of the Dead, so it's things like that that we've got opportunity to look at and we need to look at.



It's an important question for us, because we really appreciate the money that government - and governments over time - have provided to Port Arthur. We get just over \$4 million each year, but we have to create almost 80 per cent of the revenue to pay for the conservation. Conservation will cost us over \$10 million and the grants we get from government are around half that sort of money, so we've got to continue to keep working hard to generate money from that site from a tourism perspective. Your question's on the money.

**Ms OGILVIE** - If I could just chip in at the tail end, what I've seen is a very innovative organisation, so it's not just about the ticket pricing coming in through the turnstile, but also selling other products on site and recognising too there are three sites in play, particularly the Female Factory, which has really gone ahead in leaps and bounds. The work Port Arthur, particularly with its heritage activation skills, has been able to do with other sites assisting the broader heritage tourism community, which has been very impressive. Thank you.

**Ms BROWN** - I'll note you didn't answer my last question, so I can only assume you do agree you do have a problem with culture and employee satisfaction.

**CHAIR** - Ms Brown, please do not infer. Ask your next question without making inferences.

**Ms BROWN** - Workers compensation expenses have increased since 2023. PAHSMA notes that many claims were successfully disputed. Can you explain what you mean by that?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - The claims were successfully disputed. It means we've gone through a process within those claims that mean they have been positive for the employee, they've been successfully disputed. Sorry, positive for the employer, for us.

**Ms BROWN** - An identified Aboriginal Heritage Officer for PAHSMA was advertised, but seems to be pulled by authority not long afterwards. What sort of engagement does PAHSMA have with Aboriginal heritage and interpretation of heritage?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - Our reconciliation and engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginals is a key part of the heritage management plan. I need to recognise that we are strategically understanding, we need to do more in that space. At the moment it's low, there's no doubt about it and historically it has been low. We recognise that, we understand we need to further develop that. We will engage when logical expertise and/or an officer in that area to enable us to better engage.

**Ms BROWN** - The ad was pulled. Can you explain why?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - I don't think it was pulled. I'm unsure of what you mean by that and in specifically what ad?

**Ms BROWN** - For the Aboriginal Heritage Officer?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - I don't believe, I think we went out to market.

**Unknown** - No, we didn't.

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**Mr FLAMSTEED** - We didn't go to market. Sorry, we didn't go to market for that. We are still considering to go to market. What we're doing is actually ensuring we have our strategy in place as to how we want to best engage with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

**Ms BROWN** - Can I clarify one thing, it wasn't ever advertised or it was and then pulled?

**Ms OGILVIE** - We will seek some information.

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - If you just allow me to check that information, if that's alright. Sorry, it was quite a specific question that I don't have the answer for.

**Ms BRAZIL** - I'm Sarah Jane Brazil. I'm the Director of Conservation and Infrastructure. I think the position you're referring to is a conservation project officer role that we have within the organisation. The key skills that we are looking for in that role was someone with experience and understanding in cultural heritage landscapes and someone with experience and understanding of Aboriginal heritage, it was an identified position. We're looking at that skill set in line of our heritage management plan and to progress our work at the coal mines and to start understanding, recognising better our Aboriginal heritage values. It was not an identified position.

We went to market, we interviewed people and we deemed that no one was suitable for that position. We had colleagues from Aboriginal Affairs who are the experts in this matter in the development of the PD and sitting on the panel. Thank you.

**Ms ROSOL** - PAHSMA has a community advisory committee to engage with stakeholders and guide its work. Are there any Tasmanian Aboriginals on that committee? You've talked about how there's not enough consultation at the moment. Are there any Tasmanian Aboriginals on the committee who are able to contribute at the moment?

**Mr FLAMSTEED** - We have two community advisory committees, one is for the Cascades Female Factory. There are no identified Tasmanians Aboriginals in either of those committees.

**CHAIR** - The time being 9.45 a.m. the time for scrutiny has expired.

**The witnesses withdrew**

**The committee suspended at 9.45 a.m.**