



NORTHERN
MIDLANDS
COUNCIL

February 26th 2015

Ms N Exel
Committee Secretary
Legislative Council
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Ms Exel

RE:

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INQUIRY INTO BUILT HERITAGE TOURISM

This submission is being made on behalf of Council's Economic Development Committee and it addresses the terms of reference relating to the role of Government in growing built heritage tourism in Tasmania.

The Committee requests the following built heritage tourism developments:

1) Expansion of the Heritage Tasmania Open Doors Program

Heritage Tasmania is to be congratulated on the success of the Open Doors Program since its inception in 2008. This program provides a great opportunity for locals and visitors to experience some of Tasmania's fascinating built heritage.

The program has to date solely focussed on locations in Southern Tasmania. We seek the expansion of the program into Northern Tasmania, or at the least, alternating the current program between the north and south.

2) Development of an equivalent Open Doors Program for privately owned heritage properties

There are two fundamental ways in which the Open Doors Program concept can be grown to promote heritage tourism in the state.

- 1) The current Open Doors Program only includes privately owned properties that are already to some extent, open to the public eg. Shene at Pontville offers guided tours by appointment across the year as well as during the Open Doors program.

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The Committee proposes that another Open Doors program be developed to provide access to privately owned Heritage Listed rural properties that are, or have been, on the Register of the National Estates. The focus on rural properties is to ensure the program disperses locals and visitors beyond the metropolitan areas: one of the key goals for Tourism Tasmania.

Clearly in order to encourage the involvement of a sufficient number of properties to populate the program, an incentive would need to be offered to the property owners. Options could include rate rebates by the local Council and/or a share of the gate-takings. The property owners would have the choice as to whether to open their grounds and home, or grounds only, or limit to the gardens.

- 2) The current Open Doors program operates for one weekend. To capitalise on the tourism potential of this new program, it needs to run for four weeks annually, with the properties opening on a rotational basis. The vision is that at least 60 properties participate, with four in reasonably close proximity opening each day (thus each property only has to be open to the public for two days of the program). The length and diversity of the program would entice visitors to plan longer stays in the state, and equally as important: would disperse these visitors out across the regions. A spring or autumn timing would ensure the properties' gardens were showpieces for the visitors.

Developing and implementing this potentially high visitor number drawcard built heritage tourism program would require the leadership of Government, ideally as a partnership between Heritage Tasmania and Tourism Tasmania. The National Trust of Australia (Tas) is supportive of the concept and would be another key stakeholder. Our Council is more than willing to be a trial local government area for a pilot program.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry. Council looks forward to the outcome of the Inquiry and trust that the outcome will drive a much needed boost for built heritage tourism in Tasmania.

Yours sincerely



Des Jennings
GENERAL MANAGER