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### **THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION B COMMITTEE MET IN HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON, ON WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2015**

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

**Mr DARIO TOMAT**, CHAIR, **Mr MATTHEW SMITHIES**, MANAGING DIRECTOR, **Ms PETA NEWMAN**, VOLUNTEER, NATIONAL TRUST AUSTRALIA, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Valentine) - We apologise for being slightly late today. Welcome and terrific that you have taken the time to put pen to paper and given us your thoughts. It will be just as interesting to hear anything else you have to add as a result of your experience.

**Mr SMITHIES** - My name is Matthew Smithies and I'm the Managing Director of the National Trust Tasmania. I've been involved with heritage cultural management for just over 20 years and that has included senior management positions at organisations like the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney, the Queen Victoria building and a lecture position at Sydney University.

In Tasmania while I've been at the Trust I've also been the Chair of the Launceston Tamar Valley Tourism Association. It has given me a good grassroots feel of tourism. I've also been a committee member of Tourism Tasmania's own marketing initiative, which was about four years ago. I was also a member of the committee responsible for establishing the structure for one of Tasmania's regional tourism bodies that was Tourism North Tasmania, which is currently the regional body.

**CHAIR** - All up a lot of experience.

**Mr TOMAT** - My background is initially as an engineer and I was sitting in the meeting room admiring the great work we did getting the air conditioning in to the Chamber. I'm still picking out the ducting.

**CHAIR** - So you're responsible.

**Mr TOMAT** - The truth was, Chair, the Legislative Chamber wanted air conditioning, but they didn't want the hardware. We compromised. That was my first introduction to heritage as a professional. Since then I've worked predominantly in Defence looking after a number of heritage assets, or asset management on their behalf. The last project I did with them was the reconstruction of the old Fort Direction World War II camp. I was the project manager for all of that. I've been Chairman of the National Trust for the last two years. I'm one of the Government appointees on the Board of the Trust and my current term finishes in October this year.

**Ms NEWMAN** - I'm a volunteer with the National Trust. I've been volunteering for about nine years. I've been a member of the Trust since I was 17.

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**CHAIR** - No need to say how long.

**Ms NEWMAN** - That is 43 years. My last job was with the Justice department as a project and research officer. Before that I was with the Education department. I have a lifelong interest in anything historical. That includes historical research and built heritage, architecture and I have a particular interest in art deco. With the Trust I've been doing the inventory at Franklin House it feels like forever and from that I've branched out into various other things that I've been approached to do.

**CHAIR** - All evidence taken at the hearing is protected by Parliamentary privilege, which you may be aware. I have to remind you that any comments you make outside of the hearing process will not be protected by Parliamentary privilege. As long as that is understood that is important. You've read the information for witnesses document I expect and that is important. I would like to now give you the opportunity to make a verbal submission to accompany your written submission. We thank you for the in depth way in which you have dealt with this. We appreciate the terms of reference being focused on. Over to you and then we will ask questions.

**Mr TOMAT** - The way we would like to approach this is looking at it from the concept of volunteers and their needs. I've asked Peta to give some of her experience. Then we want to look at the community-based heritage sector as a whole, its needs and some ideas that we would like to flag to the committee about how capacity might be built there. Finally I will talk a little about roles of government and in particular some funding models that might be useful. It is our thinking and hopefully it will help.

**CHAIR** - We are here to listen today, not to pass judgment.

**Mr TOMAT** - We hope it is of assistance to your deliberations. We are not here to ram too much of a trust line but more of a community sector line.

**Ms NEWMAN** - As you know from the written submission, we have said a reasonable amount about the importance of volunteers to all heritage organisations. Without volunteers there probably would not be any heritage organisations in Tasmania. We need so many volunteers - approximately 400 - because the properties are scattered throughout the state and there aren't the funds to pay anyone to do the work they do. Volunteering varies enormously. There are some people who work the gardens and would do it for years and years. That's all they want to do and are very capable of doing it. There are people who are house guides and have great expertise in the history of the particular property. Whoever comes to the door is guided through the house or may choose to self guide after the introductory spiel. The house guides are given training when they first join the trust.

I was recruited through Volunteering Tasmania, which as you probably know is a clearing house for appointing volunteers. People approach Volunteering Tasmania rather than the other way around and say, 'I would like to work in a particular field' and they take your details. If an organisation approaches them saying they need a person, they contact the person who has already volunteered. In my case, Hilary Keeley rang me and said, 'We need somebody to do the inventory at Franklin House'. From what I have done in the past on paper it looked like I fitted, and I think it has fitted. From that, I was asked to work on room sheets, which drastically needed updating in each of the rooms in

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Franklin House. Time moved on and I was then asked to do some proof reading on a lot of documents. I have worked on the *Heritage Month* publications and recently I have done the work on *Home from the War*.

As a volunteer you can be extremely flexible. If they need you for something and think you fit, that's fine, but there is nothing very formal about that process. The disadvantage is that you may find people who say, 'I just want to prune the roses and that's all I'm going to do for the next 50 years'. That is something that needs doing but the trust isn't in any position to say to that person, 'Sorry, you need to be more well-rounded to suit our requirements'. They are not paying us so they can't be too fussy.

To get back to the way we end up at the trust in the first place, it is largely through Volunteering Tasmania. If anybody who is a paid employee meets somebody and they say they would like to volunteer, I am quite sure they could turn up the next day and have a chat. That has its pluses but it also has its minuses. Where is the body that is ensuring a new volunteer is being adequately trained? Who is going to ensure this person knows about occupational health and safety? I knew about that through the Education and Justice departments so I was spared that, where somebody from a completely different background might not have the slightest idea what occupational health and safety means.

**CHAIR** - Insurance companies require anyone working on site to mitigate the risk they need to have training.

**Ms NEWMAN** - Exactly. A simple thing like how you disengage the security system, for instance. For one volunteer that might be simple but for another it is so terrifying they flatly refuse to do it. The trust doesn't have the manpower or the time to be giving each of its 400 volunteers that training, so it tends to be ad hoc. You will find one person will cop it, they will be the person to disarm the alarm if it goes off and there will be panic and you have to find this person. Usually it is the poor paid person who has to drive for miles.

**Mr FINCH** - You have 400 volunteers with the National Trust?

**Ms NEWMAN** - Yes, that's my estimate.

**Mr FINCH** - We have heard this morning there are volunteers at Woolmers and at Brickendon. Do we have any idea how many volunteers there might be collectively in that space of built heritage?

**Mr SMITHIES** - No, we don't. It was one of the points I was going to bring up later, that there is not a really good understanding of, statewide, what is the number of volunteers, what is the value they bring to the sector. That has not been quantified.

**CHAIR** - For volunteers in Tasmania per se, it is well over \$1 billion.

**Mr FINCH** - The point you are making is about the training of volunteers, which may be one of our recommendations as the outcome of our discussions. It would be a good idea to have that understanding of how many are involved. You might try to get a handle on that to see if it becomes part of our recommendation because even with your 400, the

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organisation would welcome, I am suggesting, some assistance in respect of that part of the operation.

**Ms NEWMAN** - We would definitely because what is required from a tourism perspective is that a tourist travelling around the state visiting heritage properties, large and small, all variety, would like, I am sure, a consistent quality of experience. You would like to be greeted appropriately and given sufficient background on what this building or organisation is up to and feel you are being treated professionally. You don't want to go in somewhere and have someone poorly dressed saying, 'What are you here for?' Expecting each little organisation, let us say it is the St Helens History Room, they do not have the capacity to be doing this but an overarching body that deals with all heritage organisations and properties would have the capacity, one would hope. There are standards they would train people up to.

**CHAIR** - I did say over a billion. In fact, the Volunteering Tasmania Report 2014 said, 'The total benefit to the community was \$4.9 billion.' We are talking about huge amounts.

**Ms NEWMAN** - I alluded to needing proper induction processes. I alluded to needing proper OH&S training. There are also codes of conduct. That is an obvious point. But ever since the trust was set up in Tasmania, which was in the 1960s, until now, things have changed enormously. In those days there was no such thing as a working with children clearance, for instance. Believe it or not, at the Trust you need that because we have children coming in on education programs which are a mandated part of the curriculum now, which is probably something the general community does not know anything about. That is delivered by volunteers.

The individual capabilities of volunteers would include such things as general guiding skills. It is not something that naturally comes easily to everybody. You need to be trained in how to speak to people, how best to suggest that they do this, that or other in the given time they are at the property, as well as expanding the capabilities of your volunteers to interpretation work. That has become a major deal now all around the world, that you don't just go to a property and wander around and say the curtains are nice, you need to have things interpreted for you. What is that thing in the corner, is it really of any great value? I don't really know unless there is something there to tell me. The Trust has improved in that respect hugely over the years.

If you walk around Franklin House, you will find all sorts of panels on stands that often get changed to make it more interesting. One of the rooms is now being used for exhibitions and displays which we are hoping will be turning over reasonably frequently. That is so that we can get repeat visitors from within our own community, not just tourists.

Interpretation skills require a high level of literacy in historical research. I have those skills, but that wouldn't necessarily be the case of all our volunteers, so training is needed in that area. Of course the thing that has changed enormously since the 1960s is technology. The Trust freely admits that we need to really get into social media and apps and all that sort of stuff because that is what is being done overseas, people self-guiding through their own smart phone. There is a lot to be done there.

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Basically, we do not have the funds to invest in volunteer capability. We don't have it. We don't have a lot of money to deal with a lot of things, but there needs to be an alternative, another way of coming about the whole volunteer organisation, acquiring the volunteers, keeping the volunteers, keeping their skills upgraded and giving them incentive to stay, too. The typical volunteer now is not what they were in the past. They tend to be more my age, I suppose baby boomers, for want of a better term, and we tend to be much more 'portable'. We will decide to go overseas for a while, so the volunteer is lost for  $x$  number of weeks or months. What are we going to do to replace that person? What are you going to do to give them the incentive to come back?

The days of the ladies in their 70s and 80s who went every week at the same time and were absolutely stoic and reliable are fading very much. We need to do something about that as well.

**Mr DEAN** - The volunteers at Franklin House, for instance, are they covered for injury if that happens whilst they are on your premises and working?

**Ms NEWMAN** - Yes. We have been given information about that. When I first volunteered there wasn't any discussion about that. I went to a volunteers conference in Hobart some years ago and that was discussed at great length. The Trust itself has addressed it, I think probably on an individual basis, correct me if I am wrong.

**Mr SMITHIES** - We do have insurance coverage.

**Mr DEAN** - It covers all volunteers.

**Mr SMITHIES** - Absolutely, yes.

**Mr DEAN** - I should say, to be clear on this, my wife is a volunteer and works for the National Trust.

What is the position with your volunteers when it comes to occupational health issues? Are they trained in that area? In other words, if there are people on your premises at Franklin House, for instance, and there are some occupational health issues there, are your volunteers trained to pick that up and to talk to people and guide them?

**Mr SMITHIES** - They are, Ivan. For each of our properties we have a property procedures manual and that certainly covers a whole host of things, including occupational health and safety. It provides volunteers with the ability to identify any issues, and then quickly assess how it gets dealt with.

**Mr DEAN** - Once again, the Old Umbrella Shop is one we have heard a lot about, what about your personal work in there about armed hold-ups training? What procedures do they go through and are they taught?

**Mr SMITHIES** - Once again there is a manual. We have a specific one for each site and for the Old Umbrella Shop there is a section in their manual that covers being held up. It is really 'duck behind the counter and don't say anything'.

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**Mr FINCH** - Everybody is issued with an umbrella with one of those daggers in them to defend themselves.

**Mr SMITHIES** - It really is a serious issue, Ivan, I appreciate the question. We have actually put together manuals for each of our sites and they are site-specific.

**CHAIR** - Any questions on volunteers?

**Mr FINCH** - No, not at this stage. I'm really interested to hear that aspect of the National Trust work and these 400 volunteers you've had over many years. With the requirements of today's corporate understanding and implications for insurance and all that, it's very important that the people are trained. To have professional people to come into to do that, because those people with those skills are not going to volunteer. You need to have it covered off professionally and that is probably an area that could be a strong recommendation by us, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr SMITHIES** - We have spoken about the National Trust but it is across the whole of the heritage sector.

**Mr FINCH** - You segwayed very nicely into your section.

**Mr SMITHIES** - I'd like to chat about a few of the sector challenges that we've identified at the Trust. We put together the Tasmanian Heritage Festival every year and part of the process is we get in contact with about 325 community-based heritage organisations throughout the state. It really is an impressive sector.

The festival comprises of a group of organisations that are vastly different from each other. You might have a heritage organisation in Smithton, which is mum and dad running a little community-based museum out of a garage, through to a National Trust property, a Woolmers property like you've just seen. It's a really complex sector.

That encumbers the sector quite significantly in its ability to address tourism. Tourism is what we're here to talk about. There hasn't been a lot of synergy between the tourism body and the heritage sector. The main reason is that tourism can't actually quite get their head around this sector because it's so vastly different. They are specifically targeting certain sections of heritage, like our world heritage sites.

They can focus on that, but that isn't the whole heritage experience in Tassie or what we offer our tourists. That is an important point if we're really serious about addressing heritage tourism. With heritage experiences we don't package them together. For a visitor who often tries to plan their trip prior to coming to Tasmania, they can't go to a single site or a single body and look at all of the heritage experiences throughout the state and put together a package tour for themselves.

They have to go on a self-searching, self-seeking experience. Also within the sector the quality of the experience varies greatly. For example, you've got the National Trust and we have international branding. There is a level of experience and a quality that people would expect. That is probably at the higher end and then you have, for example, St

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Helens Museum, which is a fantastic museum. They're an extraordinary community based significant collection. You walk in there, and I can speak openly about this because I talk to them about it regularly, it's almost like you're annoying them because you're going into their space. They're more interested in the collection. They're not engaging with tourists.

**Mr TOMAT** - It is probably fair to say that a number of those community-based organisations were set up as history societies and things like that. It's because they've suddenly got a feeling that they've got to show the community collections and things, that it becomes an add-on to their function as opposed to their core business. That is why you get the type of divergence that Matt is touching on.

**Mr SMITHIES** - I think you can look to countries like New Zealand, the UK is obvious, Canada and I recently did a trip in South America and surprisingly Chile does it incredibly well. Heritage is taken seriously as a tourism driver and vice a versa. There is a great deal of talk and synergy between tourism and heritage.

**Mr FINCH** - Can you give us some sort of link through to Chile? Was there a museum or an operation that we might connect to or visit?

**Mr SMITHIES** - They have a centralised database that you go to and a booking platform. Before going there you just plug in to the Chile Heritage Tourist and all of the experiences come up. You can pick and choose which ones you do and it gives you a quality gauge as well.

Closer to home, New Zealand do heritage tourism very well.

**Mr DEAN** - One of the reasons this committee was set up was the failed connectivity between heritage and tourism in this state. That was discussed with us previously and hence we are here today. There needs to be a lot more done in that area.

If you look at tourism they probably talk a fair bit about Port Arthur but where do the places like Franklin House fit in? Where are the Brickendens, the Woolmers, Runnymede? Where do all of these other areas fit in to tourism? They did that survey about four or five years ago on why do tourists come to this state. There seemed to be this perception with Tourism Tasmania that it was all about wineries. Wineries are about 14 per cent of why tourists come to this state and visit. About 14 per cent might visit wineries, whereas 62 per cent are interested in our heritages sites and our national trust areas. There is not enough connectivity between tourism and heritage and as a committee we want that to happen.

**Mr TOMAT** - You might start talking about things we think you might consider.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, I am certainly interested in that.

**Mr SMITHIES** - Sitting on these local tourism bodies I have very much experienced that. The reason for me to be the Chair of some of these local community-based bodies has been because heritage is not represented properly in tourism.

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**Mr DEAN** - We have these signs up - wine routes, wine tours, wineries. I do not see too many signs up saying the heritage list tours, heritage routes, these are heritage buildings.

**Mr TOMAT** - There are some but there could be more.

**Mr DEAN** - They are more restricted, more controlled.

**Mr TOMAT** - It is the chicken and egg situation where you have a diffuse group of organisations, particularly in the community based sectors, that do not have the capacity or resources to get that level of connectivity. You move up to slightly bigger organisations and we thank the government funding that helps us do a little bit of that work through the Heritage Festival. It is of a limited nature and tying a lot of voluntary bodies, it is like trying to manage 100 diaries.

**Mr FINCH** - What sort of financial support do you get for the Heritage Festival?

**Mr TOMAT** - It is part of a global support that we get for governance, community engagement and the festival. In total that is about \$300 000. Of that it is roughly a third, a third, a third so we are making that sort of \$100 000 level of investment. It is literally a staff member plus the publications and everybody else's time.

**Mr FINCH** - But well worth it?

**Mr TOMAT** - We keep on improving it. We are getting more professional as we are learning and we are certainly focusing more of our attention in trying to get a good experience going. I don't know if you have had a chance to look through this year's program but the program is a very professional document. Some of the content has been well structured and well developed around them, which this year was conflict and compassion because of the centenary of World War I.

Each year there is a different theme. Last year one of our keynote events was a conversation with Josef Chromy. Josef's son-in-law gave us a description of life as a Czech citizen, a bit of living heritage.

**CHAIR** - As to the Heritage Festival, do you think there is enough absorption in the community that this is on? Do you think the awareness is growing, or is it still a battle?

**Mr TOMAT** - If we could double our money in marketing we might be a bit more awareness. The reality is that reach is one of the limitations for community-based organisations. The Heritage Festival program is on the web and there are links to it from various sources but we can't invest hugely in advertising. We did a whole lot of illumination of buildings as part of the theme. We illuminated Macquarie House on Friday. To get enough people to know about it we rely very much on word of mouth from other community organisations, and that is a limitation.

**CHAIR** - When you said 'illuminating Macquarie House', are you talking about the one in Macquarie Street?

**Mr TOMAT** - No, in Hobart we did the side of Rosny Barn on Tuesday in the middle of a decent downpour, but the technology worked and the people who attended really enjoyed



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it. We didn't get thousands. When we talk about community sector perhaps building capacity -

**Mr SMITHIES** - With the Tasmanian Heritage Festival we have an issue in getting the program reach out to the broader public. However, there is a huge benefit within the heritage sector in that the program pulls the sector together. Everyone feels as though they are participating in one centralised program. I cannot name another project in this state that does that. With all those community-based organisations it is recognition that they are a player in a sector and I don't think that is done anywhere else.

**CHAIR** - Is that statewide?

**Mr SMITHIES** - Very much so. Each of these bodies see their name in the program and they feel part of the heritage family. That experience then goes on to building sector capacity and capability. From that Heritage Festival experience and that connect that we have, you can take a step further to develop standards across the sector. I believe that is very important, particularly when we are engaging with visitors. It's all about lifting that standard.

We can talk to individual organisations about best practice: how do you look after collections; how do you put together interpretations? It is looking at the roving curator project, which has been very successful with the collections. It is expanding that out to talk about heritage management and heritage tourism. A lot of heritage organisations don't have the time, capacity or capability to get their head around what heritage tourism is. It needs to be taken to them.

**Mr FINCH** - Do you have any contact with LGAT, because they all, each and every one, would have something of built heritage.

**Mr SMITHIES** - Yes.

**Mr TOMAT** - How can it all be fixed? The nearest template that I can offer you, and I'm not suggesting that this should be funded the way it is, but as what government already does well is sport and recreation support for clubs, sporting clubs, large and small. That is a very elaborate framework. But when I look through - my daughter is in the area so I have a little bit of knowledge from the other side - they have a number of tools like a diagnostic tool for the club. It is not just quality in what is being shown to the tourist; it is also quality in the business being sustainable. What we have to build is a sustainable business as well as a quality tourist operation. What Sport and Rec do exceptionally well is they have strategic planning and operational tool kits, they have governance, risk management, club rule tool kits - we wouldn't necessarily go down that path - but certainly visitor experience, asset management are issues that are big in our area.

The guide or the model that I try to encourage us to embrace at the National Trust is through an organisation in America, the American Association of Local History, which I mention in there. They have a lot of these diagnostic tools specifically for heritage. A relationship with them and a relationship with Sport and Rec materials would make the hardware to put something like this together quite economic to assemble. If you look at the model that TCCI had where they were getting a bit of government funding to have a couple of people provide strategic planning and business planning support, a similar

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model is probably a much lower cost model than the sort of infrastructure that you would have around a government department trying to do it. They are random thoughts, but -

**CHAIR** - You think they could be adapted?

**Mr TOMAT** - I think there is a way of massaging it into something that is good. Ultimately, there is the big T-Qual Accreditation Scheme for tourism accreditation, and our aim should be that those organisations that move into there should be part of the family that ultimately gets encompassed as part of the tourism offering. It just takes one poor experience, irrespective of where it happens within a tour, that says, 'Well, I wouldn't go to Tasmania again because of X'. We don't want that. That is a really key part to perhaps the way that you might see.

The other important program is government has a partnership with the university. Part of that partnership is contributing across a number of sectors and perhaps looking at extending that agreement into Heritage because we do work with individuals. Dr Myhill, who does send her apologies for not being here today, has been a great facilitator on the board to give us those linkages. There are some opportunities to think about whether the government would be prepared to expand that partnership agreement by including something like this. TAFE has a role in assisting in that training that Peta was very much flagging as an issue. Those are where we are thinking about how our sector might actually improve its capability.

**Mr DEAN** - How closely do you work with Tourism Tasmania in marketing tourism for this state? Do you have a position on their committee?

**Mr SMITHIES** - No. With the structure that has been set up by Tourism Tasmania, it means there is Tourism Tasmania sitting up there, then sitting underneath you have the regional tourism bodies and then sitting under there you have the local tourism associations. All organisations don't have direct contact with Tourism Tasmania. The route you have to take is through your local tourism body. That is problematic for the National Trust because we have multiple sites throughout the state. For us just to manage, that multiple contact is difficult. I don't know that Tourism Tasmania has clearly identified, I could be wrong, the peak heritage tourism experiences through the state. Should they be engaged with at that local level or at a higher level? There is very much a hierarchical system now within Tourism Tasmania.

**Mr DEAN** - How do you believe that should operate? Can you give us an idea of what you think could happen or change in that regard to assist in your area?

**Mr SMITHIES** - The regional bodies are working really well. At Tourism Tasmania, that next level up, in which they are doing the interstate marketing and a little bit of international, there needs to be much more engagement with the heritage sector across the board. I say that having spoken to a lot of heritage colleagues. They have identified several iconic heritage experiences and they seem to be the ones that are being reused time and time again.

**CHAIR** - Do you think the regional bodies tend to fragment it a bit? I put it to you that the Port Arthur experience is the incarceration experience. Brickendon and Woolmers is the onground rehabilitation of people in that way and you have two ends to the story.

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Because they are in different regions they might not be coming together as much as they should be. Do you have a comment on that side?

**Mr SMITHIES** - From a tourist perspective, they don't look at regions, they look at the whole state. That whole regionalised fractionalisation might make sense in a management way, but not as a visitor.

**CHAIR** - They are not getting that whole experience.

**Mr SMITHIES** - They are not getting that whole Tasmania experience. It is really interesting that you bring up the convict experience because that is also an area that gets a lot of attention in this state. Our heritage in Tasmania goes way beyond the convict story and yet that is the one that we keep focusing in on.

**Mr DEAN** - On that connection between the National Trust and Tourism Tasmania, I think I am right in saying that Chris Tassell and Ray Foley, going back several years ago, were strongly of the position that there should be somebody from the National Trust on the board of Tourism Tasmania to strengthen that and to get the right emphasis on heritage and tourism that would have to occur. That was their position then; I don't know what it is now.

**Mr SMITHIES** - I was part of that process with Ray and Chris. I was with the Trust at that point. To get someone with heritage experience on the Tourism Tasmania board was problematic at that time. The focus was on food and wine and wilderness, and that used to frustrate me like anything. But when you step back from that and say why is that so, why isn't heritage being taken seriously at that level, it goes back to what we were talking about earlier. We have a fractionalised sector. For Tourism Tasmania it is like dealing with a bucket of jelly. You can't get your hands on what is this product; what is it that we have? There hasn't been enough research. There has not been enough analytical data on what are the heritage experiences in this state.

**Mr DEAN** - Would you say that there ought to be then a heritage position on the board of Tourism Tasmania?

**Mr SMITHIES** - Yes, absolutely. There should be a heritage position. Coupled with that, there should be a really strong audit of our heritage attributes throughout the state, and decisions get made from that audit.

**Mr FINCH** - Back to something you mentioned earlier about the social media, that world out there that is dominating the way people function and operate and particularly plan holidays and when they tour anywhere. How are we placed? If somebody internationally, or in Australia, wanted to find out about built heritage or a heritage tourism holiday in Tasmania, are we pretty poor?

**Mr SMITHIES** - I would suggest we are very poor.

**Mr TOMAT** - Outside of what Port Arthur Management Authority achieves, and they do a good job, the rest of the sector is just starting to embrace some of this technology. The challenge is again few resources to get there. We don't know ourselves what you can add in the package. As we said earlier, you can't market something that you can't define.

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**Mr SMITHIES** - One prime example is that we have just initiated and rolled out the Rezdy system, which is a booking system. What it enables people to do is, through a search button they can pre-pay, pre-book their experience. They can be single experience, they can be clustered and packaged. Throughout the world, huge numbers of organisations, countries and sectors are using Rezdy or similar products. We rolled it out in Tasmania. We have gone to board meetings fairly recently and let people know that we have this system. It is like, how amazing. It hasn't been done in this state. You say, come on guys, this is basic stuff.

**Mr FINCH** - Is this a system put in place by the National Trust?

**Mr SMITHIES** - It is an off-the shelf product.

**Mr TOMAT** - It is a user-based product. They provide the platform; you add the content.

**Mr FINCH** - So it could be for any sector, not just heritage.

**Mr TOMAT** - Yes, any sector, not just heritage. But at the moment we are building a platform that is for National Trust, so we are going to capture a bit of the market. But all that really means is that we are not able to funnel people into the whole of the sector, and that is a limitation, which is why the capacity building is required if you don't have that level of cohesiveness. Some people wouldn't put our products in because they might say that they think that might damage their brand.

**CHAIR** - It seems to me that if there are resources being put to work, say at Port Arthur, that those same resources, just by tweaking the focus, could be used to benefit other groups, and indeed to get more coherence in the sector. I am not just talking about convicts; I understand precisely what you are saying. It is not just about convicts in Tasmania; it happens to have a significant story to tell in Tasmania, but it is not the only story. Obviously there are advantages but that extra [inaudible] exists. So harnessing that for the good of the whole is important.

**Mr TOMAT** - When you look at it, government is a pretty dominant provider of the heritage tourist experience in the sector. I think Port Arthur provides a wonderful product. Where the thing unravels a bit is that when you come to the community-based heritage organisations, the funding sources from those are all over the place. Ours goes through Heritage Tasmania. I noticed Zeehan get money from Arts Tasmania. I don't know if the Government knows how much money it spends on the sector. It is probably not a number they would like to know because it's a lot. Just maintaining the heritage buildings that the Government has is a huge investment. My view is as a community we shouldn't keep on saying to the Government, 'Put your hand a bit deeper in your pocket,' or something like that. If we keep saying that then when is the next hospital not going to be built. We are very cognisant of that. There are things the Government can do at very low cost to themselves, which is working out amongst all this multiplicity of agencies, how are they going to coordinate with the then Government and interface between Government and the sector? Our paper initially said, 'I am an advisory committee talking to Heritage Tasmania.' Heritage Tasmania has got a very big statutory function and project of straightening up the heritage register.

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**CHAIR** - Which no doubt will bring some angst from all sorts of quarters.

**Mr TOMAT** - It could do, but it's a matter of how much focus they provide with this. One of the other suggestions that we are putting to you without any definition is whether a ministerial advisory council might work better. We do it in disability. We do it for a variety of things. Whether that gives better access, I don't know. It was an alternative that came to mind. With funding, there has been the heritage lottery concept and even a national heritage concept floated. We're not going to be backwards and say we won't put our hand up. Peter was telling me about very good local lotteries that were being run within the UK, focussed on a particular village and getting the heritage support there. That could be quite a good model. At the macro economic level, my concern is that the funds that are flowing into lotteries are finite. One assumes that if you add another lottery, it's just a redistribution and reallocation of funds. If you look at it from a Government revenue type thing means that you suddenly get a group of funds. It's a little bit like the Commonwealth funding at the moment. Something goes to a particular project as opposed to the flexibility the Government needs to allocate those funds in accordance to priorities. So there is a lot of power. If we can get a heritage lottery up, that's great. The realization is that it may not generate new money. It's just reallocating money.

**CHAIR** - So what will?

**Mr TOMAT** - I'm glad you asked that, Chair. When I was in Sweden there were modest imposts on accommodation charges for various taxation reasons. So when you look at our current bed nights, on Tourism Tasmania statistics it is about 9 million bed nights per annum. We are saying tourists like heritage and even if they are not participating in a heritage site they certainly take the quaintness of what our heritage offers as part of their experience of being in Tasmania. Nine million bed nights, \$1 impost per bed night is a \$9 million fund that you suddenly have.

**CHAIR** - Administering that?

**Mr TOMAT** - I don't have a perfect understanding but we already licence premises like that therefore there must be -

**CHAIR** - For the most part, but Airbnb is not, is it?

**Mr TOMAT** - But you're getting there. There must be a process where because they are registered, there is presumably licensing and things like that happening, therefore the revenue collection could be integrated within that sort of process. If a particular large establishment well we made \$100 you would very quickly know.

**CHAIR** - People do not want others to know what their turnover is because of competition reasons and all sorts of things.

**Mr TOMAT** - They can give us a bigger cheque, Chair.

**Mr DEAN** - They have to provide their income for taxation, so it is not disclosing their income to other businesses at all. It would simply mean that at the end of each quarter,

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the end of each six month period or what have you they provide that levy into Treasury without setting up another bureaucracy to control it. It could be done.

**Mr TOMAT** - Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - The other idea raised with us yesterday was that a similar thing occur with every tourist coming in to Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - At the airports and TT-Line.

**Mr TOMAT** - I think that is a good idea. The issue is that the quantum is probably much more physical to the tourist. If you have almost an incoming tax -

**CHAIR** - Remember they used to have a \$10 exit levy. We are not talking about an exit levy, but it might only be \$1 or \$2 we are talking about here.

**Mr FINCH** - It's in the submission here as AJ16.

**Mr TOMAT** - That is the dollar a bed night.

**Mr DEAN** - If you look at registrations as a good example. Six or seven years ago the State Government said we have to do more to make our roads safer. There is not much difference in this. This concept is very similar. They said for one year - is what they initially said - we're going to put \$20 on every registration and it will go into road safety. I think that has happened. They have kept it there at this stage, so they are still getting that money and putting it into roads. What would be the difference with doing that with \$2. It would probably be sufficient if you look at the number of tourists coming to the state and people wanting accommodation.

The other one that has been floated is gambling. There is a gambling levy currently of 5 per cent that Federal Hotels and others involved in gambling have to provide to the State Government. It goes into community activities and helping problems gamblers. Could they not consider increasing that to a 6 per cent levy and 1 per cent of that levy going into heritage and National Trust buildings?

**Mr TOMAT** - We need a source of funding that is not directly impacting on government revenue. If we could get something around \$9 million a year, which would be managed by a board but would have the capability of direct support for the training et cetera. It would also have capability of supporting heritage organisations, it would give support in helping with capital works and also support for private owners of buildings that have a heritage requirement where they could get a soft loan. That loan only has to be paid when the building ownership transfers and that way, because you continually have \$9 million, or whatever the number is, pouring into the fund year by year, you have a sustainable model. The better we do at tourism, the more tourists come in and the bigger the pot grows.

**CHAIR** - That's okay for tourism-related buildings but we have a lot of heritage that is not tourism related.

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**Mr TOMAT** - That is part of the experience. People come and look at Launceston and say, 'I love that streetscape', but if we let that streetscape crumble and slowly disappear, what are they going to see? That is why it is tourism.

**CHAIR** - So it's a competitive edge. I understand what you're saying but it is not directly related to the building being used for a tourism purpose.

**Mr SMITHIES** - That comes down to the fact we need a very strong heritage audit. That is fundamental to this so that we know what it is. A prime example is a friend of mine, Frank Archer, who owns Landfall. He has 10 000 acres with two heritage sites on the property, and they are their family homes. When you ask Frank if he understands he is in heritage he says, 'Yes, but I breed Angus cattle. I export Angus'. 'Do you realise you are also in the tourism sector?' 'No, Matt, I am a farmer and I breed Angus cattle.' There isn't an understanding that when visitors pass by that site they see those heritage attributes and it is part of the experience. Does that become part of the heritage audit of the state? I would say yes. Should that then be funded in some way or should there be some kind of assistance being given -

**CHAIR** - To keep those in reasonable condition. Kerry was pointing out on the way here about that building, Eskleigh. It is a great building, beautiful presentation, a wow factor, but is there any assistance to maintain it?

**Mr FINCH** - You say you are a government appointment to the board - the previous government?

**Mr TOMAT** - Yes. The minister has the right to appoint three members to the board and they are appointed year by year for a three-year term, so each year one of the government and one of the members come off. We are a statutory corporation under the National Trust Act and because of the previous history of going into administration, one of the consequences of coming out was that level of government oversight of the board.

**Mr FINCH** - What opportunity do you have to express these sorts of thoughts to the Government? This is a fantastic submission and I have been going back over the work you have put into it to present to us. How much connectivity do you have with the government, and particularly the new Government?

**Mr TOMAT** - Certainly with the minister's office, Will Joscelyne is the minister's adviser and we talk quite often.

**Mr FINCH** - Once a month, every three months?

**Mr TOMAT** - Every six weeks or so and we have a couple of issues that are historic that we are still working through. Pete Smith is the director of the department. He and I would meet at least once a month for an informal coffee. We have our normal reporting requirements to that office. We haven't had the level of interaction with the minister directly but that has been happening through Will.

**Mr FINCH** - Are you saying it is happening now?

**Mr TOMAT** - It happens through the adviser rather than directly with the minister.

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**Mr FINCH** - I am trying to get a sense of whether you feel there is a good landscape there in which the National Trust can work and might be more appreciated in the future.

**Mr TOMAT** - The National Trust, despite its history, has an incredible level of bipartisan support from government. There are continuing opportunities to do better. Our board is very much on a continuous improvement curve. The last two or three years we have done considerably better but we still do not have a sustainable business, and that is one of the big aims of the board, to get ourselves a sustainable business. We still have the challenges of resourcing ourselves to the point where a lot of the things we know we should be doing, we can do. For example, getting our marketing investment improved and things like that. There is no way of doing that other than working hard to get our house in order.

We appreciate the government gives us a grant of \$300 000 a year. That has been static for seven years but everybody is having to find efficiencies. Since we have had Matt onboard as managing director, he has found a fair slice of those efficiencies. We are engaging better, by and large, with community stakeholders - not just other organisations but also the members of the community. We are getting to the point where our credibility with government will continue to rise.

**CHAIR** - We have about seven minutes left. Do you have any burning issues you want to present? There are a couple of questions.

**Mr TOMAT** - I am happy, Chair, to take questions. I have pretty well covered it, and thank you for the patience with which you have gone through this, that has been terrific.

**Mr FINCH** - I wanted to conclude that line of questioning with a reference to the volunteers because the big thing with the National Trust has been the 400 volunteers you have, the membership you have enjoyed in the past. I am wondering about that connectivity again, back to the troops from the board, how do you feel that the situation is developing at this stage, or should I ask Peter?

**Mr TOMAT** - You could ask Peter but I rate us at about a C at the moment in terms of what we are able to do. The connectivity we have with our members is reasonable to house committees, where there are structures. But for the membership at large, our communications are not at the point where I am comfortable we are informing our members and bringing them on the journey with us.

**Ms NEWMAN** - There are many members who are not volunteers. The only way a member who does not volunteer would know is through the mailout that comes in the letterbox of *Trust News*, which is an Australia-wide publication. Inside that is a leaflet of two pages of about what is on in Tasmania, what functions are on. There is nothing there saying at the last board meeting the following motions were carried or anything like that, no.

**Mr FINCH** - Is it needed?

**Ms NEWMAN** - I think so, because I find out what is happening on the board through a very roundabout and perhaps totally inaccurate way of just what people are saying when you



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are there on the day doing some volunteering. If I want more accurate information I will have to ask one of the paid staff. But they are often so jolly busy that I wouldn't be doing them a favour. So it is as ad hoc as that.

**Mr TOMAT** - We are trying to get an electronic newsletter going for those sorts of things.

**Mr SMITHIES** - We, as an organisation, have identified a whole heap of issues that we need to address. Communication within the organisation is one of those. With that we need investment into systems. We operate on pretty much a paper and pencil kind of system at the moment. I guess our focus over the last 18 months to two years has been on good governance and financial responsibility. They have been probably the key drivers of the organisation. We are going through a morphing phase at the National Trust. We are shifting and changing the nature of the organisation and the internal culture as well. Definitely an organisation on the move.

**CHAIR** - A single planning scheme is coming into play. Rumours about properties adjacent to heritage buildings no longer being as tightly controlled in terms of what can happen on those. Do you have any comments? Do you know about the single planning scheme?

**Mr TOMAT** - I know about it, but don't have any comments.

**CHAIR** - In your submission you talk about Tasmanian visitors being 11 100, interstate 26 900 and international 12 000. When you look at that breakdown, in fact Tasmanian visitors are the lowest number that you are receiving, yet they are the most immediately available. Do you have a brief comment on that?

**Mr SMITHIES** - Yes. There are a couple of things that come to play. We have a limited population in Tasmania. We need to look at the demographics of our population and what percentage of our demographics are going to be interested in heritage. I would suggest that it is possibly lower than other states.

**Mr TOMAT** - The number of locals has gone up in the last year or two, on the basis that what we are now doing is a lot more event-based activities at some of our properties, which means people will come along if you have an antique fair. Matt, out at Clarendon has been doing some fantastic events, vintage cars and this, that and the other. People come to that, and that is mainly locals. But to come and look at a museum house, I confess when I lived in Launceston I went to Franklin House once, and it was 30 years afterwards that I went again when I became chairman.

**CHAIR** - But is there enough marketing of this to schools to come and have the experience about where the community has come from and the way it has changed.

**Mr SMITHIES** - I am really glad that you brought that up. The National Trust in Tasmania, through National Trust partnership program, we put together a whole suite of education programs. It is putting together modules directly from current curriculum. We are quite active in that. There is a lot more work that we, at the National Trust, can do in that space. I don't see a lot of activity with other heritage organisations throughout the state.

**Mr TOMAT** - One of the challenges for schools is excursions.

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**CHAIR** - The cost of them.

**Mr TOMAT** - The cost, the amount of risk management and all of those things that teachers now have to do. So at each of our properties we do have a number of school groups. But for a northern group it would be a very unusual situation where they would appear at a southern property, and vice versa.

**CHAIR** - Growth in non-English speaking tourists. How are you handling that through your volunteers? Are you using QR codes at all? What's the future there?

**Mr SMITHIES** - Not yet. We have had discussions with UTAS. They've got a unit, for example, that deals specifically with the Asian market. We initially went to them with one of our sites, Runnymede, and said, 'Here's our Runnymede brochure. Let's translate it into Mandarin and we're good to go.' UTAS absolutely put the brakes on that with us. The reason being that you don't actually just translate your current marketing because it actually is not read in the same way in different cultures. It's not rocket science when you start thinking about it. You've got to understand the cultures that you're marketing to. What are the trigger points? What are they going to respond to? So there is a whole heap of investment that needs to go into non-English speaking backgrounds and people -

**CHAIR** - Is that going to happen, though?

**Mr SMITHIES** - Organisations like the National Trust can't do that on own. We don't have the resources to do that. So is that a task for an overarching body?

**CHAIR** - Did the university say, 'No, that's a showstopper', or did they say, 'We will work on this'?

**Mr SMITHIES** - No. The university is working with us on it. We're very lucky. We've got Dr Marion Myhill who has made those introductions for us. We are putting it together as a bit of a pilot project. It signifies that we've got a bigger issue in the state. Robert Ravens from Bridestowe Lavender Farm is a prime example. He spent years and years studying and going to the Chinese market prior to his little bear becoming what it is.

**CHAIR** - He has created his own future.

**Mr SMITHIES** - Yes.

**Mr TOMAT** - Those are the challenges for any organisation, more so for ones that have no resources to achieve. Tasmania-wide, the international tourism market is an important one. It is one that, particularly with expansion into Asia, brings a very different cultural and historic understanding.

**Mr DEAN** - We've tried to look around the country to look at who does it better than us, our heritage and National Trust and so on. Victoria has been suggested to us. Have you looked at the Victorian system as to how they're handling it? Where would you suggest that we should look?

**Mr TOMAT** - Victoria is very lucky in that it has a plum large site in the centre of Melbourne, which is Old Melbourne Gaol. The last number I saw was an injection of

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\$1 million of free cash into the organisation in a year. So it has done exceptionally well. They have done great things with Como, Rippon Lea and the like, but they've had to adapt. Again that funding has allowed them to do a lot of innovative work.

The other place that you can look at, which has been funded through a heritage lottery of course, is Western Australia. Western Australia's National Trust receives money from Lottery West. There is about \$3 million a year that is generated for heritage out of that lottery. There are other uses. They are a quasi-government department. They're a little bit different to other National Trusts. There is certainly some interesting practice there.

**CHAIR** - You mentioned people planning their tours prior to their visit. Do you have any evidence that they actually do that? I was talking to someone and they were saying you see people going for the pamphlet rack as soon as they get off the plane.

**Mr SMITHIES** - There is a lot of evidence coming out of Tourism Australia. They track that as one of their activities. You can also see it through pre-bookings through hotels. There is a section with a lot of hotels where they can find out if there are added attractions. Trip Adviser also provides a lot of that backup information.

**CHAIR** - Thanks. Anything else?

**Mr TOMAT** - Thank you for the committee's time.

**CHAIR** - The evidence you have presented today has been recorded and the *Hansard* will be published on the committee website when it becomes available. It is not going to be tomorrow, but it will be up eventually and it is something you might care to review. Thanks again for coming it has been really great. A very good submission and it has sparked a lot of interest.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

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**Mr MATTHEW SKIRVING**, MANAGER, ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES, **Mr EAMONN SEDDON**, MANAGER, TOURISM, AND **Ms FIONA RANSON**, URBAN DESIGN AND HERITAGE PLANNER, CITY OF LAUNCESTON, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Welcome. We really appreciate the fact that you have taken time to put your thoughts and feelings down about this very important matter for the state. All the evidence taken here today is protected by parliamentary privilege, but if you talk outside this hearing, you may not be afforded that same privilege. The evidence you are presenting is being recorded on *Hansard* and will be published on the committee's web site when it becomes available.

**Mr SKIRVING** - I certainly appreciate the opportunity and as part of the Heritage Advisory Committee there was some correspondence from the committee requesting a submission. There was quite a bit of discussion at the committee meeting around opportunities to raise some particular issues and one in particular which I recommended to the committee was a discussion around representation in this process for the owners of heritage properties. That is both in the context of council being the owner on behalf of the community of some very significant heritage assets, but clearly more generally in every instance, and we do rely very heavily of owners of individual properties to be part of or custodians of that built heritage value.

**CHAIR** - That is right and there are some very significant ones.

**Mr SKIRVING** - They certainly have both their own personal financial commitments to those properties but also an implied obligation at least in terms of protecting that heritage value on behalf of the broader community. We certainly saw that they played a very important role or had some value to offer this community in terms of a representative voice.

I think there are certainly some challenges in pulling together a reasonable forum for property owners to put that voice forward. I think there is not really an association that exists at the moment or a group which can act with some level of representative authority. There are certainly statutory bodies, the National Trust and other heritage interest groups, but there is a gap in the voice of some heritage property owners in this debate at the moment around their own interests in the properties they own, but also the implied responsibility that they carry in terms of maintaining that heritage value on behalf of the community.

Certainly one of the challenges that we face as an organisation at the Launceston City Council is that there is often conflict between access to heritage properties, the financial viability of maintaining those properties and the balance between commerciality and community service at those sites. I think the Albert Hall is one good example of that where our desire as an organisation is to maintain as much community access to that facility as possible so they can have the experience of using, being in, enjoying a significant heritage asset. Financially the council carries a significant burden in maintaining that property and the tension then comes around the point of managing the conflict between cost-effective community access versus the commercial reality of maintaining a property like the Albert Hall. Coupled in with that of course is our

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ongoing obligation as not only the nature of our organisation is as custodian of assets on behalf of the community, but heritage assets in particular have significant community value. I think there is certainly some value which we can add to this discussion and this review of the committee in terms of some of the challenges which heritage property owners face.

**Mr SEDDON** - My own particular interest really ties in with the tourism marketing side of built heritage. My feeling and understanding of the shift in direction from Tourism Tasmania to what I call quirky style marketing - just to be different for the sake of being different. Built heritage is the biggest reason people visit the state. We don't seem to recognise that in any form in our interstate or international marketing at this stage, and that leaves us very much on the back foot in this particular region, where we have a significant amount of built heritage to sell. People are discovering it rather than being sold it.

So from a statewide point of view, it is left to smaller organisations such as ourselves and the National Trust, to be pushing the boat as far as the heritage side of our tourism is, out there, and yet our state tourism organisation tends to put our food and wine - quirkiness. I will be honest, what place has a purple stuffed bear in the role of marketing our region? I am not sure.

**CHAIR** - There will be some questions from the three of us, but perhaps I can start off with respect to that aspect of private owners and how vital they are to the industry. The issue of their own stake in the heritage and the tension between them being able to make their property available for tourism, but at the same time wanting to have a level of control over what they do - that is the tension, isn't it? It's how does the government engage private individuals as opposed to private enterprise, yet it might be an enterprise in some part if I take Brickendon as a classic example of that. How is the government expected to engage and put money into private hands like that without the public saying you are lining their pockets? There is a tension. Do you want to make further comment on how that can effectively happen? Have you seen examples of how this happens in other places? Can you point us as to where we might look to see how that is effectively undertaken in other areas?

**Mr SKIRVING** - I think there are some international examples. The UK has a great model, particularly around the community lottery programs that they run. That does provide some other financial support to other government-run programs, but there has certainly been significant funding come out of the lottery programs in the United Kingdom to go towards heritage protection of all types, not just physical built heritage, but also some cultural heritage programs as well.

I think in a local context though, my concern is not necessarily for our organisation, the City of Launceston. Obviously we are reasonably well resourced and it is a yearly decision around competing priorities about how we fund and maintain our heritage assets. I think in our instance we are reasonably well resourced to carry that obligation. No doubt we could always do with some more support.

My concern is really translating that same issue back into the private sector, where the trend that is occurring is that, because of the large financial obligation that owning some of these properties comes with, often if there is a commercial enterprise which is

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developed around the heritage value, it is targeting the exclusive end of the market and what comes with that exclusivity is generally limiting public access potentially to those sites. I think there is certainly some opportunity to explore if there is capacity into the future to develop some funding partnership arrangements with private heritage property owners and there needs to be some mutual obligation built into those agreements to ensure that general public access is maintained.

**CHAIR** - It is the case, isn't it, that any person owning private property that is heritage listed is constrained quite significantly with what they can do with that property, even though it might be a working site. Perhaps putting government money into that should not be seen as lining the pockets of individuals, but almost as a recompense for the way they have to operate within that heritage sphere.

**Mr SKIRVING** - I think it wouldn't be an unreasonable expectation that if private property owners were to receive funds to support the ongoing maintenance or some heritage-related activities at those sites, that funding comes with some significant conditions in terms of ensuring ongoing public access to those sites. It may not be on an ongoing, daily basis. It may be for particular times during the year. I have seen some programs where the scale of funding potentially is linked to a number of public access days. They may be available at particular sites or other particular programs which are operated at those sites. It is to ensure that if there is a substantial business operation which does require some exclusivity like tourist accommodation that is not going to be compatible with tour groups coming through those properties all the time. There are some consistent structures that can be established where a level of funding is also tied to a level of public access which is maintained across the year.

There are a lot of obligations placed upon heritage property owners without a lot of support at the moment. I don't think we need to flip that obligation completely and just be handing money out unconditionally to property owners. It would be received fairly by property owners that if there is support offered it comes with some conditions in terms of a community obligation to the value of those properties.

**CHAIR** - Being privately owned, they undertake the work privately and it is not as expensive as it is for an organisation in the public realm because of all the checks and balances that need to be there. Have you had any experience in that area.

**Mr SKIRVING** - It can be scalable. Small scale projects can generally be more efficiently delivered by the private sector and with the highest level of discretion that comes in the private sector. The reality is with heritage building works within the state there is a very limited pool of qualified contractors. The notion of competition amongst those contractors is probably fairly limited. It is fair to say that public sector bodies generally, on balance, pay a higher rate to have work completed. Some of the compliance obligations and processes we are obliged to maintain do not necessarily deliver lowest cost outcomes. That is not necessarily always a bad thing. There are some changes mooted to some regulations, particularly in the local government sector, which will take some of those restrictions away.

Smaller scale projects most definitely are best delivered by the private sector. Larger scale and more complex projects, there is more balance between and private sector works there.

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**CHAIR** - Given the amount of money that is involved as well.

**Mr SKIRVING** - Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - Could you be forgiven for thinking that the only heritage we have in the state is Port Arthur and convicts?

**Mr SEDDON** - Absolutely right. When I started from a tourism perspective, looking at the branding story for Launceston, it is beyond the convict. It is the stories about people and their freedom, not the penal servitude. We don't tell that story from a national perspective. If we take heritage visitation in the north, it is greater than Port Arthur and yet Port Arthur gets both the story and the significant amount of funding.

**Mr DEAN** - One of the reasons the committee was set up was what was seen as a failed connectivity between our heritage, national trust buildings and Tourism Tasmania in promoting tourism into this state. You were right when you made the comment that 62 per cent of those last surveyed came here to look at our heritage.

**Mr SEDDON** - 15 per cent growth in the last survey is massive.

**Mr DEAN** - There seems to be an issue between that connection and Tourism Tasmania and their promotion of this state. How can we get that right? What needs to be done?

**Mr SEDDON** - You can tell from my accent I'm a Pom, a Welshman sorry - One of the challenges we have is that we look at built heritage as old and for a lot of Europeans coming in as tourists it's not that old. One of the major pluses we have in Australia and Tasmania is we know the stories and the people. We can do far more from a marketing and selling perspective to tell those stories. We don't focus so much on the buildings, but we focus on the stories that sit behind the buildings.

In the past we have focussed too much on the infrastructure, the asset and not the story behind the asset. We have a very strong opportunity to sell those stories. There are some great stories, even just in Launceston, let alone the rest of the state.

**Mr DEAN** - I was interested in Matt's comment that Launceston has sufficient financial support to look after its buildings. I doubt very much if your Mayor would say that. I certainly didn't when I was mayor, I can assure you.

**Ms SKIRVING** - We always appreciate more.

**Mr DEAN** - I didn't say that when I was Chairman of the Heritage Advisory Committee.

**Ms SKIRVING** - We are not as restricted as some councils.

**Mr DEAN** - The Princes Theatre as a good example and Albert Hall, to some extent, is another good example of that. Do you believe that those assets are really Tasmanian assets.? They are really a Tasmanian icon and therefore there ought to be financial support for the upkeep of buildings like that with some form of state funding. I just want to raise the issue of funding and how we could better do that? A number of concepts

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have been mentioned and one is that there be a lottery set up for appropriate funding of these buildings. Another is a levy charged on all tourists coming into the state that they pay at the ferry terminal or airport when they arrive. It could be a \$2 levy or whatever it might be, which is insignificant really for them. To us it would mean a lot. Another idea is when a person books accommodation anywhere in this state they then must pay a \$1 or \$2 levy and it is used for maintaining our building heritage? Do you have any ideas on that or any views?

**Mr SEDDON** - I was on the receiving end of 22 million pounds worth of heritage lottery funding. The Heritage Lottery in the UK was new money. It was not money that was being lost from a budget elsewhere. It allowed a lot of significant heritage projects to get up that would not have got up in the first place. One word of caution, though, was a lot of organisations started relying on the Heritage Lottery funding to survive. When the Heritage Lottery funding paused for the building of the UK Olympics a lot of organisations found themselves, including my old organisation, in financial problems because of the reliance they had on that funding.

**Mr DEAN** - They were relying on that for salaries and all the other things?

**Mr SEDDON** - Salaries so they could build a workforce that was funded through the capital projects. Without the capital funding they could not afford to maintain the work staff, so it has to be a careful balance. It gave significant input into the opportunity for ongoing built heritage, both maintenance and restoration. As a consequence it created significant employment through that significant economic regeneration. It was the key to a lot of it.

I came to the state, as Kerry knows, to build the Abt Railway in the first instance. The model we put forward for Queenstown was for an economic regeneration around the federal funding. That was based on heritage lottery funding on a project we were then running in the UK.

**Mr FINCH** - You talked about the branding and the marketing by Tourism Tasmania, the shift by Tourism Tasmania to quirky, when in fact built heritage should be, could be, the big attraction. I am wondering what opportunities you have to present that argument to the state government now or to Tourism Tasmania? Are they close minded to suggestions that might come from the regions?

**Mr SEDDON** - My own opinion is they are quite close minded. They embarked on a strategy three or four years ago and it is going down a track. They needed to find a point of difference and decided to find a point of difference in quirkiness, which is all well and good but to me it doesn't represent what we are about here in the north. I believe we have an opportunity to present a point of difference around our built heritage. There are very few places in Australia that has the amount of built heritage we have here in Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - We have by far the greater amount.

**Mr SKIRVING** - Clearly the data is there that people are visiting the state because of the heritage story that is there to be told. Potentially it is a case of resting on our laurels and focusing on another area of growth, but today's potential strength is possibly tomorrow's weakness. If you neglect those opportunities in deference to something new, we are



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probably leaving ourselves exposed to a threat of losing that market if we're not bringing that along on the journey as well. There is a transition happening in tourism in Tasmania, and a growth period. Growth at the expense of decline in other sectors is probably a peril we need to be very aware of in leaving those obvious stories off the table. We know the data is there. There is hard data from very recent surveys that people are coming to the state because of the heritage value we have to offer. That still needs to be front of mind as well as filling some other niches, not at the exception of building on our strengths.

**CHAIR** - It is hard to argue against the numbers. Tourism Tasmania no doubt would feel it has accomplished extra numbers into the state. This is our opportunity through this inquiry to signal that people like yourselves and others are saying not to ignore what's there.

**Mr SEDDON** - I often say what's quirky today is the norm for tomorrow, so where does the journey take us next?

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for appearing before the committee.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

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**Mr LIONEL MORRELL AND Mr IAN ROUTLEY**, HERITAGE PROTECTION SOCIETY TASMANIA, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**Mr MORRELL** - I am a practicing architect. That's meant to be my employment, and heritage consultant. But of particular relevance to you is that I am a three-term past president of the National Trust in Tasmania and Director of the Australian Council of National Trusts. If we're talking cultural heritage and tourism, that's where it has been. I have served on a variety of committees over 20 years. I'm a life member of the National Trust. In 1998, I was selected as one of the Tasmanian delegates to the Prime Minister's National Heritage Convention, which was the basis for a COAG agreement on heritage. There are many other matters which relate to cultural heritage tourism, not just related to built heritage. The National Trust, contrary to popular opinion, is actually responsible for all levels of heritage in this state, Aboriginal heritage, natural heritage and built heritage.

**CHAIR** - Under the act?

**Mr MORRELL** - Under the act, yes. I have been retired from that position for 15 years, but I'm still involved in a great number of other organisations, principally at the moment in being president of the Tasmanian Heritage Protection Society, which hopes to take up a lot of the areas of the National Trust that were taken away from the National Trust in the most recent legislative amendments.

**CHAIR** - The national amendments?

**Mr MORRELL** - No, state amendments, where the National Trust is no longer the National Trust that it was 20 years ago.

**Mr ROUTLEY** - I have formally been an alderman on the Launceston City Council from 1992 to 2005, and was chairman of the Heritage Advisory Committee. I have been a member of the committee of the Heritage Protection Society since its formation.

**Mr MORRELL** - There is quite a bit in our submission. I'm perhaps stating the obvious, but Australia's heritage is very much shaped by nature and history. It's interesting that your area of interest in this inquiry is to do with built heritage, but it's very hard to separate that, particularly when you're talking about tourism.

**CHAIR** - We just thought we'd confine it otherwise we would be going on for years.

**Mr MORRELL** - Yes. This heritage is an inheritance, passed on from generation to generation. It encompasses many things from natural and cultural places, lifestyles, traditions, objects, history and values. It helps us to understand our past. The cultural heritage of Tasmania is not about 100-year-old buildings, piles of bricks and the like, it is really to do with what some people might call our lifestyle and that includes our landscape. It is the place we live in and if we as Tasmanians make the place as enjoyable and culturally rich as possible for ourselves then our visitors will appreciate that and come here to experience it. That is my experience having travelled quite extensively to all countries and places around the world with the exception of the Americas.

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**CHAIR** - You are saying that we will have a point of difference if we do that or that is how other countries handle it and it is the way we should handle it.

**Mr MORRELL** - That is how other countries handle it and we do not want to be turning ourselves into a Disneyworld. We do not want the big banana, apple, potato, whatever it might be.

**Mr FINCH** - Or a bogan.

**Mr MORRELL** - I think that has gone to Sydney lately, luckily.

Domestic and overseas tourists want to experience all of these things from the natural, indigenous and built heritage.

We are going through a rough patch at the moment. I won't go too far into that because it is terribly live. Reading the *Examiner* today 133 places are being removed from the Heritage Register here, the State Registry in Launceston, Australia's third oldest city. We are deleting heritage places. We should be expanding our register. The scoping study of 15 years ago said Tasmania's 5 000 places should be 20 000 places. I can assure you that is the truth. How do we, today, start reducing our heritage places which is the fundamental basis of our cultural heritage tourism?

I was interested to hear the tail end of the previous speakers about the lottery and I can tell you quite a bit about that because I approached Premier Bacon on that very point many years ago when I was president of the National Trust.

Developing mutually beneficial partnerships is essential. No one entity, government at any level can do this without the local community. It must include the local community.

There must be a business plan. It has to give respect to everybody and part of that business plan must be to maintain that cultural heritage. Those places and items have to be part of the business package. It cannot be funded by somebody else from somewhere else. We have to forget the cargo cult that is far too common in this city and in this state.

We have to invest in the people as well as the place. The people are an essential part of our cultural heritage. Without them we are just looking at a few dusty old ruins. You may as well go to Egypt and wonder what the pyramids were for because without the people they do not mean a damn thing.

The provision of high quality visitor experiences does not necessarily mean expensive. The best quality is the personal guide. The lady who walks around this building with her large flowing coat and black hat guiding tourists is more valuable to tourism in this town than looking at a building in the street.

Respecting the indigenous rights and obligations is something we are starting to handle. It is a two way street as far as I am concerned and our indigenous friends need to open up and share their experiences much more with other people and not keep it privileged and private and exclusive and their own domain. We must all share that.

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We must recognise the importance of these places. It should be a given. It is a given in the great heritage cities of the world. All over Europe. You don't have to argue to keep your city. You don't have to argue that it is important and it does not need to exclude modern development. They are not mutually exclusive. It can all be accommodated. One wonders at times.

In 1998 it was recognised that during their stay in Australia, six per cent of international tourists visit a cultural attraction. Half of those visit a national park. One can only assume that the other half of their time is spent looking at non-national parks. It is not just Uluru and the like; it is going to ordinary places where people live. We have to look after these heritage places. Heritage conservation is a vital concern of any responsible and sustainable tourism plan. Long-term protection is essential. We simply won't have it if you wear it out or modify it to suit, or the perception of suiting a tourist.

**CHAIR** - We will never be the Rome of the south.

**Mr MORRELL** - We must develop mutually beneficial partnerships. It can't be all one way. That depends on building relationships with local people and where appropriate, with the indigenous community. There is already a business plan for Aboriginal tourism in Tasmania. Have any of you seen it? It was in 2007 but there is not much evidence of it happening. We don't need to reinvent the wheel, it is all there, sponsored by the State of Tasmania.

We have to incorporate heritage issues into the business planning. Sound business planning is the essential foundation and the business plan must clearly establish all of the principles that a tourism operation and heritage objectives will achieve. It is not just a case of getting the tourists here and looking or talking about it. There has to be some income put into the maintenance and conservation of those places. Tourism must contribute to both the conservation of the assets and to the social and economic wellbeing of local communities. The local community must get something out of it, not just the tourism operator who may not even come from the local community.

You must market and promote products responsibly. There has to be a balance between meeting the tourism needs for marketing promotion and product positioning, but still respecting the wishes of the local community without causing unrealistic visitor expectations and providing high quality visitor experiences within a range of economic boundaries. It is all very well to have a nice Saffire facility on the east coast, but even the premier of the day admitted that she was probably unlikely to be able to afford to stay there. How remarkable is that? Yet it occupies a national park. It is not really for the people.

Respecting the indigenous rights and obligations, and being the primary sources of information all the material must respect their sensitivities and all the other peculiar or unusual aspects of that in terms of photographic recognition and the like. There needs to be a more holistic approach to cultural heritage tourism, but it is all to do with the unique animal called the Tasmanian. The Tasmanian changes and is changing more rapidly as time goes by. That is what people come here to look at. They don't want to look at empty streets full of stage sets or imported concepts like rope climbing and all these other things which are not Tasmanian at all. They don't need to be Tasmanian. We don't need to have recreated gunpowder mills that never existed.

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That is not a tourist attraction, that is Disney World. There is plenty of scope for that elsewhere. If you want to go to Disney World there are many places around the world called that. It does not need to be in Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - You are saying concentrate on the real things we have rather than the invented.

**Mr MORRELL** - Yes. I don't wish to criticise Tasmanians, but we have things that are very attractive but only obvious to people who come from elsewhere, not to the locals, sadly. If you travel elsewhere you suddenly realise when you come home what you have.

**CHAIR** - It is a lack of engagement with the Tasmanian people, a lack of knowledge of the Tasmanian people in the heritage we have in the state, is that what you are saying?

**Mr MORRELL** - Yes.

**Mr ROUTLEY** - They haven't been educated to appreciate the value of heritage.

**Mr MORRELL** - Being educated sounds like preaching to them. I don't mean that. But they need to better understand what their visitors are wanting to know and be prepared to engage with them in a polite way. We are not going to be issuing degrees to tourism guides or the like, they going to have to naturally understand that if a foreign person approaches you in the street, you are polite to them.

**CHAIR** - You don't say, 'That thing over there is a real eyesore.' That is the last thing you need to be saying. Is that what you are saying?

**Mr MORRELL** - Yes, or be culturally insensitive, like 'We fought you in the war,' and I have heard it, not so much these days.

I am not saying we will be perfect in that regard but we have to close the gap a bit and appreciate that these visitors are important and that tourism is a viable industry here. It doesn't have to compete with woodchips as the alternative, if that is the alternative, for instance. There is a lot of open scepticism about the importance of tourism. I thought we got past that about 20 years ago but one wonders.

It is very much a whole-of-community thing and very much the total landscape, and by that I don't mean trees. Landscape includes townscape and every other scape possible and our visitor wants to see all of it. We have a very unique quality in that in a very small place, within two or three hours, you can just about experience most things in Tasmania that you could experience in the whole of our continent. We don't have deserts but we have arid areas. We do have everything from beaches to craggy mountains to dense rainforest to whatever.

**CHAIR** - Summit to sea.

**Mr MORRELL** - It's all there and it takes more than 24 hours to drive around it.

**CHAIR** - I am conscious of the time and 4.30 p.m. was our cut-off but we did start a bit late. I don't know if there is anything else burning for you to present but I want to leave a bit

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of time for questions. Are you happy to take questions at this point or is there something else you wish to raise?

**Mr MORRELL** - There are lots of things you might like to know about. There is a *Mercury* article from my friend and colleague, architect Robert Morris Nunn, who had some interesting stuff to say in the *Mercury*, having come back from South America.

**Mr FINCH** - Was that recently, Lionel?

**Mr MORRELL** - Yes. It was January this year I think, having come back from Havana. Fascinating, there was no money but they managed to do things - at the end of the day this is all going to come down to money.

There is also this article from *The Australian* in November where heritage means happiness for history-loving Britons, where your heritage actually makes you happier. Heritage has been such a negative in this place where people groan instead of celebrating heritage. What a ridiculous situation.

**Mr ROUTLEY** - That is really confirmed in that article, following a comprehensive survey in the United Kingdom.

**Mr MORRELL** - Some of you may know of Dr Eric Ratchliff in Launceston.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, I know him well.

**Mr MORRELL** - He said to me, back in 1978 -

**CHAIR** - He was mentioned to me the other day by somebody else who is a Launcestonian.

**Mr MORRELL** - He quoted a guy called Smigelski, whoever he is - someone important who said that a community without a heritage is like a man without a memory. It is one of Eric's good quotations, he is full of them and they are all very good quotations. Unless you know where you have come from, you don't know where you are going et cetera. How could anybody who has lived in Tasmania not appreciate the wonderful rich heritage we have? We are also a very safe place and that is one of our big advantages over many other places that one might aspire to visit around the world, that you can come to Tasmania and walk down the street and it is quite safe. It really is safe. I know we get a bit concerned from time to time about a few issues, but they are nothing compared to some of the places I've been to where you don't go without a guide and a gun. Tasmania is very safe. It is a very safe place for longer-term tourists masquerading in education, because they are usually tourists as well but just stay a bit longer and it is safe for them to come and be educated.

**Mr FINCH** - As you said before too long, we do tend to take what we have in Tasmania for granted because it is around us all the time, right from our childhood through our ageing process. We have these things there and we just accept them, but that is what we have and who we are or where we have grown up. People from the mainland or from overseas come and go 'wow!' - particularly mainlanders to see how much we have preserved here and we have saved.

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**Mr MORRELL** - Only through economic necessity have we saved it and retained it.

**CHAIR** - That is right. The money wasn't there during the Depression to knock it down and aren't we lucky.

**Mr MORRELL** - Robert Morris Nunn makes this point that Launceston has been in economic recession since about 1870 since the mining boom collapsed and all the buildings we have were built by the mining money. All the mines from Launceston to Beaconsfield, Fingal were all owned here. The head offices were all here. They built the edifices, they decorated their formerly plain Georgian buildings with Victorian decorations and it's still there because we cannot afford to pull it down, we are still using the buildings, otherwise they would have gone. There are many people today that would tear down what we have left. It is economic recession that has kept Tasmania, not because Tasmanians wanted to.

**Mr FINCH** - As an aside, I lived in Port Macquarie and they had a lot of convict heritage through Port Macquarie being a penal settlement. The boss I had at that stage, Bernie Hart[TBC], fought the good fight to try to keep them retained. The developers of course wanted to get their hands on Port Macquarie and he lost that fight. If you go to Port Macquarie now, you get a booklet that tells you with stickers on the footpath where this used to be, the old bakehouse used to be here, the old courthouse used to be here and jail used to be here, with stickers and there are some big high-rise buildings there now.

**CHAIR** - We have run out of time, but anyone with burning questions?

**Mr DEAN** - I have a couple of burning questions. This committee was set up because of a failed connectivity between heritage and tourism, the promotion of this to state tourists by Tourism Tasmania. It was seen that there was not sufficient emphasis placed on our heritage and our National Trust buildings and so on. Do you agree with that? Do you believe that there is not sufficient emphasis placed on the heritage of this state in the promotion of this state to tourists? If I can just add a little bit there by saying you could be forgiven if you live out of Tasmania, and even if you live in Tasmania, that the only heritage that we have here is Port Arthur and the convicts. Do you wish to comment on that?

**Mr MORRELL** - That is largely true. I would not just blame Tourism Tasmania, though. I am quite happy to blame Federal Hotels Casino as well because, generally speaking, they are herded through a particular set of places that suit Federal, be it Strahan or Cradle Mountain or wherever, and they are brought in on seven-day promotions where you really cannot do justice to anything and they often don't see the in-betweens. Yes, there needs to be more promotion of our so-called built heritage, but that is often best experienced through colonial bed and breakfast type setups and the like as well. They have fallen out of fashion a little bit and the standard has gone down significantly because there isn't any more regulation on it. There was a time when the National Trust had to license those places so there is no scrutiny of standards.

The important aspect about our cultural heritage is to allow people to experience it directly. If you are living in a high-rise five-star hotel akin to any other five-star hotels in the world you are never going to experience the cultural heritage of the place. It has been interesting to see how Hobart has developed, particularly North Hobart, through the

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cafe strip, which is fantastic. Hobart was culturally moribund until those sorts of things started. I'm not just saying it for Mr Valentine's point of view.

Launceston was, from a heritage and restaurant point of view, very advanced two decades ago. It's now fallen way behind. There needs to be big change here. Not to regain our place, but just to improve our experiences.

**Mr DEAN** - One further question on the funding issue. I'm glad that the lottery thing was raised. There have been a couple of other concepts put to us apart from a lottery and I'll run it by you to see what your view on that is. One is that every tourist coming into this state should be paying a \$1 or a \$2 levy at the ferry terminal and/or each of the airports where they come in, which goes into a funding to Treasury for maintenance and works on our heritage buildings. The other one was that everybody coming into the state taking up accommodation - B and Bs, hotels, motels and other places - put a \$2 levy or a \$1 levy on top of the cost of the hotel room. Another one is a gambling levy, which is a 5 per cent levy at this stage, which could be increased to a 6 per cent levy and that percentage of funding go into the maintenance of these buildings. Do you have any views on any of that or any other concept that should be considered by us?

**Mr MORRELL** - My concern about that, being involved in small business, is it will be more administration for the small business operator and that is not very efficient. By all means have some minor levies, but it will never be enough money to do what you want to do. The only way to directly benefit maintenance and restoration, conservation - and all of those terms fit under what I call the bar of charter and you need to know a lot more technically about that to understand it - is through the Australian taxation system.

**CHAIR** - We're aiming to visit Burra by the way.

**Mr MORRELL** - Good, that's excellent. You will need to take a bottle of water, it is pretty dry. When I was on the Australian Council of National Trust we dealt with the Australian Council of Lord Mayors or whatever it was called.

**CHAIR** - The Council of Capital City Lord Mayors?

**Mr MORRELL** - That's it. Pre-GST we had succeeded in getting a KPMG paper together about tax incentives, sales tax exemptions, where even a can of paint for a heritage building, private building, gave you a tax deduction for sales tax. Unfortunately, with the GST system it was made pretty clear at the outset there wouldn't be any concessions. We need to keep all of our heritage, not just our grand places, our icons, Clarendon, Woolmers and whatever, in good condition,. They can generally look after themselves. We need to make it so that all of our places are better maintained and that has to be through tax incentives from the Federal government.

Tasmania presently has 5 000 places. It has half the number of places than the rest of the country put together. We have more heritage than anybody else and that's a plus. That's an advantage. We need to get tax incentives from the Federal government. It is beyond state government, it is beyond local government, we need to get tax incentives from the Australian Government to support Tasmania. That can only be through the tax system and by getting reductions because they don't need administration. It means that ordinary people can look forward positively to maintaining their older buildings simply because if



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it is agreed maintenance and conservation work, it gets an incentive at the coal face through the tax system.

**CHAIR** - Do you have a copy of that report?

**Mr MORRELL** - I'll have a look in my boxes.

**CHAIR** - We're going back to the mid-nineties?

**Mr MORRELL** - We are.

**CHAIR** - I was chairman of that body twice for twelve and a half years and they did some very valuable work in certain areas. I think that would be a report that would be worth getting for our information.

**Mr MORRELL** - It would need to be redesigned to fit the new system. It is horribly out of date.

**CHAIR** - I'm sure, but the concepts are there. It's the concepts that matter.

**Mr MORRELL** - The other document that you need is this one, Successful Tourism for Heritage Places. It's all there. You could just about put a rubber stamp on that one.

**Mr DEAN** - And send it in.

**Mr MORRELL** - You could, so there's your homework done for you.

**CHAIR** - Would you be able to provide us with that CCCLM?

**Mr MORRELL** - I will look for it, yes, certainly. The other aspect is access for people with disabilities. We are all disabled. We all hobble. You don't have to be in a wheelchair. My other charity is Eskleigh Foundation. I have been there for over 30 years. I was part of this, access to heritage buildings for people with disabilities. There has to be ways of doing it and that is important, access for everybody.

**CHAIR** - Thanks for that.

**Mr ROUTLEY** - When I was on Council I was privileged when we had a visiting architect/consultant from Frankfurt who came out here to help the students at the School of Architecture to come up with some concept designs for redevelopment at Inveresk. He gave a presentation about the heritage strengths and weaknesses of Launceston. As a city, since 1994, we have gone to the lowest point that we can get to. We have not had the encouragement and support of local government and other players, and state government, relating to recognising the value and the worth of our heritage. It is timely you have had this inquiry because we need to refocus on our built heritage in our city, otherwise it will be too late. If we look at the provisions of the Launceston interim planning scheme compared to the four southern councils in Hobart, you would not give Launceston one out of 10. The definitions and the provisions are either so badly worded or not completed, it does not protect anything. It is that serious.

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**CHAIR** - Are you talking about the single planning scheme that is coming up or the interim plan?

**Mr ROUTLEY** - I am talking about the Launceston City Council's interim planning scheme that went out as a live document before any community consultation. We have been through 15 months through the Planning Commission reviewing it, but the situation with the Planning Commission panel, although they did the hard yards, was flawed because under the Act they were not able to undertake a forensic audit. Therefore, they were unable to give any sway over the Launceston City Council to improve this document.

We are now at further risk with Heritage Tasmania wanting to deregister a number of properties in Launceston before they tackle Hobart. This is creating major concern to three or four groups in our city that came together and met with Heritage Tasmania only last Wednesday week because that is how concerned we are. They were representatives from the Friends of the Library, the Launceston Historical Society and the Heritage Protection Society. I was limited to having only seven people in attendance. I could have had a lot more.

**Mr DEAN** - You know those buildings that they now want to remove from the register? I have not seen that. I would like to see that.

**Mr ROUTLEY** - Yes, there was an advertisement in today's paper.

**Mr DEAN** - The list is in there of the places they want to delist?

**CHAIR** - Were they asking for reasons why?

**Mr MORRELL** - The 133 places are in today's paper in a public notice.

**Mr DEAN** - Each place named?

**Mr MORRELL** - Yes, and they have all been advised to their owners in advance.

**CHAIR** - So this is in Launceston only?

**Mr MORRELL** - In Launceston only - 133 out of an intended 1 600 to be removed in Launceston. Horrific. Against a backdrop where there needed to be an increase of 2 000 places in Launceston. It is all going the wrong way.

**Mr ROUTLEY** - What has made it worse and I am sorry we are delaying but this is so important, that one of the strengths of Launceston has been its street scapes and under the interim planning scheme heritage provisions, street scapes were eliminated. It is dire in this city at this point. I suggest to you that this document that Lionel presented is fairly comprehensive and covers a huge area, but there are matters that we need, as a state, to address.

**CHAIR** - Have you contacted the Premier's office to inform him of your opinions on this?

**Mr ROUTLEY** - Yes. There is a representative from the Historical Society communicating today as to how we can get 10 people together to try to review this listing, because there

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are some anomalies in it because it has only been a desktop approach based in southern Tasmania. That has been very unfair and unreasonable on the basis that the Launceston City Council has failed in their obligation of duties with heritage provisions of the interim planning scheme. If you look at that document which I tabled relating to that article in *The Australian*, it is such a positive story and that is the story should be so positive for us in Launceston and for Tasmania as a whole.

**CHAIR** - Tasmania as a whole is the important thing. We need to look at a holistic approach, don't we?

**Mr MORRELL** - The relevance to Launceston at the moment is that there has been a political decision, in my view, to choose Launceston to remove the first 133 to try to get all the politics out of the way, as far away from Hobart as possible. The whole of the Inveresk working class suburb, which was a precinct of railway workers' cottages, very humble timber cottages, has been removed today in this proposal. I would suggest that if you were to remove 133 buildings from Battery Point in Hobart, you would not have the same -

**CHAIR** - Maybe that is what we have coming forward.

**Mr MORRELL** - I don't think you will get to it.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for taking the time and the effort. Obviously you are passionate about it and we are here to listen and we appreciate the passion.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

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**Ms LORRAINE GREEN**, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANGER, NORTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLEARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - This hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege, but any comments you make outside the hearing may not have that same privilege. The evidence that you are presenting is being recorded by *Hansard* and that will be published on the website when it becomes available.

**Ms GREEN** - Quite clearly our economic development committee originated this idea. One of our committee members who may have already spoken with you, Robert Harrison, had a particular interest in it.

**CHAIR** - Robert Harrison has made a submission.

**Ms GREEN** - So it is not really evidence I am giving, but it is a hope that we can get some legs underneath a new concept that we believe has the potential to bring many interstate visitors to Tasmania because of our built heritage, and also many Tasmanians would also get out and do that. Following on very clearly from what I was hearing from the previous speakers, this is about taking the heritage we have. It is not about trying to create something that is Disney World. It is really about saying we have a lot of these magnificent properties that are privately owned. At present we have an open doors program through Heritage Tasmania that opens the doors of properties in the south that are on the whole already open to the public, but it encourages the public to get out on a particular part of the year and look at them. What we are saying is we know we have a wealth of these properties that a lot of people drool to have a look at, but don't get that opportunity unless they get to know the owners of the properties. We look at how many people go to Connorville. Any time that property is open it is just flocked to because people are getting a chance to look behind hedges and gates that are private properties.

We firmly believe that if we could get an open doors program operating it would have that potential to bring many people to the state and get people moving around within the state. The suggestion is that it be open for far more than just one weekend. It could operate maybe initially across three or four consecutive weekends, encouraging people to come down and stay maybe for a week or two weeks, doing all the other things - we know that people just don't come for the heritage - they wish to do in between. Certainly given that many of these properties are in the rural areas it encourages that dispersal that those of us in the rural areas need. We need the visitors coming out of the cities into our communities and spending longer time there.

It is only a concept at this stage. We really firmly believe it is not just something for one council to do; maybe initially it could start with several councils. It certainly needs to have the support across Heritage Tasmania, Tourism Tasmania to get it marketed on the mainland, across the National Trust and local government.

Obviously there would have to be incentives built into it and there are all the privacy issues and potentials that have to be looked at for the properties. As we said in the submission, there may be properties that choose to open the gardens; there may be

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properties that open in part, or maybe outbuildings, and there may be those who are willing to open up the homesteads themselves. We believe it has a lot of potential.

I am a New Zealander, and a Rotary club in New Zealand started this very idea in November last year. They opened up what they called six elite homes in Auckland and 10 stunning gardens, just for one day. They had over 600 people taking part in it. They were charging \$60 a person or \$100 a couple. They also put on a very clever cocktail party and auction that night. They made \$35 000 out of that one day in just Auckland. I would take it from what I said that it really was marketed to Auckland only; it wasn't marketed to get people to New Zealand.

There are concepts around that are working and they have worked through all those issues that I talked about that would need to be addressed for the property owners about having the public on their land. We feel that it is something that needs to get some legs. We are hoping that this can help get those legs.

**Mr DEAN** - Were all those properties in close proximity?

**Ms GREEN** - In Auckland they were all within Auckland city.

**CHAIR** - How many properties are there in your municipality that you are talking about dealing with here, or is it outside your municipality?

**Ms GREEN** - I wouldn't want to put a number on it. Obviously we haven't talked to any of the property owners.

**CHAIR** - It is a significant number, isn't it?

**Ms GREEN** - It would be when you look from Ross right up through the top end, it's a lot of properties.

**CHAIR** - Heritage-listed properties most definitely they would be, wouldn't they?

**Ms GREEN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - If you think of Mona Vale and all of those sorts of properties.

**Ms GREEN** - If you look around Ross. If we were talking about opening four properties a day, you would easily do several days just looking around Ross, let alone getting up to the Campbell Town, Longford, Evandale area.

**Mr FINCH** - It's a bit like the Open Gardens scheme, Lorraine, that type of concept of people coming to pay and have a look. What are you suggesting here, that government should take a hand in this? Tourism Tasmania should take a hand in this and be a driver of it, or a partnering with Robert Harrison or the Northern Midlands Council, what are you suggesting?

**Ms GREEN** - I think the more parties we can get to the table the better its chance of coming to fruition because it's not just something that one party can move forward on. If we really want to get it right and market it to the mainland, we need to have Tourism

## **PUBLIC**

Tasmania at the table. We have a wealth of experience from Heritage Tasmania with Open Doors programs in the south, so they would bring a wealth of information to the table. Equally, Events Tasmania and National Trust have shown an interest, and local government, if we are going to look at any form of incentives for the properties to be involved. I think it does need to have all those minds around it to make it work.

**Mr FINCH** - Is that detail there, Lorraine, of the concept and the project that was undertaken in Auckland?

**Ms GREEN** - It's just out of the Rotary magazine that I stumbled across and I have that.

**Mr FINCH** - Can we have a copy of that?

**Ms GREEN** - Yes.

**Mr FINCH** - Can you table a copy of that please, and then we can have some evidence to present in our report or to look at. It sounds pretty interesting and if it's been done before, it gives some idea as to how it might unfold.

**Ms GREEN** - The more I talk to people about it the more people say, 'Yes, I've always wanted to look at that,' and they just start reeling off the names of the properties.

**Mr FINCH** - And it was about historic, built heritage-style properties?

**Ms GREEN** - Absolutely. They were saying that maybe they should ask if the properties would be on the Register of the National Estate so you know that they are those heritage properties. I can only talk about the Northern Midlands but anyone who drives on any of our back roads constantly goes past those gates with those fantastic names on them. I'm always privileged any time I get a chance to work out a way, if I have meet with somebody, to do it at their property because they have some stunning places out there.

**CHAIR** - Further to that, have you had any conversations with any of the property owners in regard to this at all? I'm just interested to know how they might receive it in terms of whether they would see it as an intrusion on their life or whether they think it would be only twice a year. Is there any concept of how this might be accepted out there?

**Ms GREEN** - We haven't gone out and canvassed people because we felt we didn't want to either raise expectations or anxieties. Quite clearly, we have people on our committee who themselves own some of these properties. The Mayor, who was meant to be with us, would be one of those people as well. I think it's a matter of learning first how to address the issues that could come up as concerns from the property owners, researching - if it has some legs behind it - how other people have addressed those so that when we do go out, we go out with a full complement to be able to work with people who are wanting to open up their doors.

**CHAIR** - Obviously in Auckland they have a certain experience of this; it might be something where their experience could be of value in how they manage to maintain the privacy of the individuals who own the houses, and how it might be able to be progressed.

## **PUBLIC**

**Mr FINCH** - Chair, have you heard about this Open Doors program down the south?

**CHAIR** - I've certainly heard about Open Doors, but I haven't been on the Open Doors program.

**Mr FINCH** - There's a suggestion here that it has been successful since 2008. Is it still going every year?

**Ms GREEN** - Absolutely. As we stated there in our first one, it is currently confined to the south of Tasmania, but it would be fantastic if it could expand to the north as well or alternate to open up more of the doors than what we are currently doing, because it is a southern-based program at present.

**Mr FINCH** - What is the difference between the Open Doors program in Tasmania and what occurred in New Zealand?

**Ms GREEN** - The New Zealand one was on those properties that are usually not open to the public, whereas I am pretty sure all the ones I've seen on the Open Doors program in Tasmania are properties that would be open to the public. I think we mentioned Shene there; whilst it is a private property, they already do guided tours.

**CHAIR** - Yes, they do. I have been there and we are going there as a committee, so we will see that.

**Mr FINCH** - Your suggestion is that it be the same in the north, that they are normally open to the public anyway?

**Ms GREEN** - Yes.

**Mr FINCH** - Will it extend to properties that are not normally open that people might want to have a look through?

**Ms GREEN** - Whilst I would love to see the current Open Doors do that, they are still doing properties that people can choose to look at anyway. My passion is the second one, which is about opening up those properties that you cannot get to see at present. I look at when the National Trust has cocktail parties at properties. I live at Longford and they go to one of the properties down in the town. The people who flock to it want to be part of the National Trust event that night, but they are there because they want to see that property more than just through a hedge or a gate, and hear the property owners talking about it with the stories. Many of them are of the generations of the family that have been there. Just hearing of that is a really special experience that I think locals would really appreciate, let alone the mainlanders who are just having that first exposure.

**Mr FINCH** - Do you get a sense that mainlanders, given the right marketing on the mainland, would come for something like this?

**Ms GREEN** - Absolutely.

**CHAIR** - They don't have the product over there, do they?

## **PUBLIC**

**Ms GREEN** - No. As we were saying, we were lucky that ours was not brought down because of lack of funding in Tasmania and the pressure. We have these properties. Obviously there is the issue if you are charging entry fees as to where that money goes, but that is one of those things to work through if we can get it up.

**CHAIR** - A percentage of it would go to the owners, a percentage would go to the organisers and so much for catering, if there was any, and those sorts of things.

**Mr DEAN** - On this point, it would seem to me that this is where Tourism Tasmania could come in on this by promoting and marketing across the country to say this is an opportunity to come and look at these heritage-listed properties that are normally closed, for a fortnight period they will be open between here and here, come and visit these properties, and give it the proper marketing association of heritage buildings with tourism in this state.

**Ms GREEN** - I think that would be fantastic. Obviously we are not assuming that people are going to come purely for the heritage but it is a call to action to make Tasmania for that particular week or two weeks the place that they will be at.

**Mr DEAN** - You could combine that on the end of, or the week before or a couple of weeks before, say, an AFL game as well during the winter period, which is the slower period as well.

**CHAIR** - It is a great autumn activity, I would have thought, with the change of the leaf colours.

**Mr DEAN** - Or a game in Hobart or Launceston. You could dovetail it in on those games as well during that slower period.

**CHAIR** - A bit of cross-promotion.

**Ms GREEN** - That is why I particularly believe you would need to have all those other players at the table because they have that breadth of knowledge of how to position events. If we were trying to do it as a council, say with the National Trust, we need all that other expertise to get it right and build it.

**CHAIR** - There would be a need to have some fairly heavy consultation with those owners because I imagine some would be feeling that once they opened their doors then people have knowledge of what is inside and there is the threat of people breaking in and stealing things - those sorts of things would come into it. They could do but they might not.

**Mr FINCH** - It is up to them to make a decision about that.

**CHAIR** - And whether they participate or whether they don't.

**Ms GREEN** - I think that is where we would need to learn from others who have been there before as to how they dealt with that because some of these properties I can see in Auckland are stunning, they have collections in them.



## **PUBLIC**

**Mr FINCH** - I am just thinking, a general campaign on the mainland would be quite expensive. The marketing opportunities cost a lot of dollars to achieve but I am wondering whether there could be something like an in-house type of marketing to the National Trusts around Australia. Do you get a sense that you could do it cost effectively?

**Ms GREEN** - Again, that is why I am suggesting you would need to have those other parties at the table. I have been at a meeting today that just scrambled my brain trying to get my head around how you would use social media. You don't have a big marketing budgets but if you use it right, how can you get that message so widely spread that you do not need to be taking out expensive ads or hardcopy campaigns?

**CHAIR** - Facebook campaigns and all those sorts of things.

**Ms GREEN** - Yes. I think there are clever ways that some of those other parties that we would want to have at the table would know how to get that message out and make it happen.

**Mr FINCH** - We've talked quite a bit about the IT space and social media and those sorts of things and how we can best capitalize on that. But of course it's not within the wherewithal of small organisations or small operations to access that or to advantage themselves in that way. So you get a sense that that's where they need support. I know the Tasmanian Government and Tourism Tasmania are supporting small businesses to get up to speed, so it might be opportune. We might be marrying up an idea that might slot in nicely with the way people have been trained and been given support. There could even be more support. I like the idea of it.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Anything further from you, Lorraine, that you wish to impart?

**Ms GREEN** - I am embarrassed by my scruffy little bit of paper out of the Rotary magazine.

**CHAIR** - Don't be embarrassed by it. If it's got information on it that's worthwhile, please -

**Ms GREEN** - I will certainly get a copy of it to you. That's the only one I've got at this stage.

**CHAIR** - Yes. We can probably copy it here. I reckon we can copy it here before you go to save you that trouble, if that's okay.

**Ms GREEN** - No worries.

**CHAIR** - We can take a photo of it or do something and email it to ourselves.

**Mr DEAN** - New Zealand has come up a few times in this inquiry and the way they do tourism pretty well as a country. You've heard now the questioning of the previous witnesses about the funding and so on. Do you have any idea about how we could attract the required funding or the funding away from government? Government cannot throw up the money all the time. Is there a way that you have, an idea? How do they do the funding of their heritage buildings and National Trust buildings in New Zealand?

## **PUBLIC**

**Ms GREEN** - I have to say I have been in Australia more years than I have lived in New Zealand. It would be something where, if there was a committee formed to really drive this, it would be to look at how New Zealand is doing it, what it's doing around the heritage tourism and what's working well.

**Mr FINCH** - Do they do it well, Lorraine, to your knowledge? Do you go back home at all?

**Ms GREEN** - I haven't been back as a tourist. I have only been back to reunions, so I couldn't honestly make a statement on that as to how New Zealand is dealing with it. Quite clearly, the way that Rotary Club did it in Auckland, if that as is being in [?5.07.24]to other towns, quite clearly they have got their head around some interesting things.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for that. Thank you again for putting pen to paper and putting in that submission. It's all worthwhile. It all helps to build a picture for us as to where the issues lie and how we need to be looking at drafting our recommendations to Government. That's excellent.

**Ms GREEN** - Thank you for the opportunity.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**