



Australian
Institute of
Architects

Australian Institute
of Architects

Legislative Council
Inquiry into Built
Heritage Tourism
in Tasmania

Submission to
Legislative Council
Government
Administration
Committee 'B'

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SUBMISSION BY

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PURPOSE

- This submission is made by the Tasmanian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) in response to the Legislative Council Inquiry into Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania.
- At the time of this submission the Executive of the Institute is: David Karotkin (National President, Jonathan Clements (President-Elect), Paul Berkemeier (Immediate Past President), Ken Maher and Steve Grieve and the Chief Executive Officer is David Parken.

INFORMATION

Who is making this submission?

- The Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) is an independent voluntary subscription-based member organisation with more than 12,000 members, of which around 330 are Tasmanian.
- The Institute, incorporated in 1929, is one of the 96 member associations of the International Union of Architects (UIA) and is represented on the International Practice Commission.
- The Institute represents the largest group of non-engineer design professionals in Australia.



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The Institute is pleased to provide comment on the management, preservation, tourist marketing and promotion of built heritage assets in Tasmania.

Expertise of the Institute

- The Institute seeks to advance the professional development of the architectural profession and highlight the positive benefits of good design in addressing the concerns of the community in relation to sustainability, quality of life and protection of the environment.
- The Institute promotes responsible and environmentally sustainable design, and vigorously lobbies to maintain and improve the quality of design standards in cities, urban areas, commercial and residential buildings.
- The Institute has established high professional standards. Members must undertake ongoing professional development, and are obliged to operate according to the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct. The Professional Development Unit offers an extensive program at national and state level, continuing to keep members informed of the latest ideas, technology and trends in architecture and the construction industry.
- The Institute represents the profession on numerous national and state industry and government bodies, advising on issues of interest to the architectural profession, other building professionals and the construction industry.
- The Institute has been an active advocate of heritage conservation since the 1930s and has produced the seminal Register of Significant 20th Century Buildings. The Institute has also produced a comprehensive Heritage Policy and participates in the ongoing dialogue surrounding heritage through heritage committees and sustainability and heritage categories of the Institute's annual Architecture Awards.

1. The current and future potential contribution that built heritage makes to tourism in Tasmania.

Tasmania's reputation as a leading tourism destination has grown enormously over the past decade, with the State's built heritage assets playing a major role in attracting visitors from interstate and overseas. From our convict beginnings to our industrial and mining development, Tasmania's rich history is evident in buildings and spaces throughout the state. The state's architectural heritage includes such Tasmanian icons as the Georgian sandstone warehouses in Salamanca Place, as well as many Victorian, Federation and Modern buildings which have been restored to provide tourist accommodation or other facilities. Many of these, like the Henry Jones Art Hotel, and the Elizabeth Street Pier, have become much-loved icons of the state's tourism industry and are held up as exemplary examples of the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.

In appointing Brett Torossi as the new Chairperson of the Tasmanian Heritage Council on 17 January, Tasmania's Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Matthew Groom, said "heritage experts have long recognised that Tasmania's built heritage will be better protected if we can become world leaders in adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, particularly in tourism." Mr Groom said developments such as Pumphouse Point demonstrate the benefits of heritage tourism in attracting visitors and creating jobs, as well as ensuring historic buildings are preserved.ⁱ

The Tasmanian Chapter of the Institute recognises the significant contribution that built heritage has made to tourism in Tasmania. The Institute supports the active use of heritage buildings for tourism, ensuring that our valuable built heritage continues to be used, maintained and accessible, providing that the development of our built heritage is sensitive, well-considered and in accordance with the 'Burra Charter: Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance'.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Institute maintains a register of significant heritage places and accepts the Burra Charter as the guiding principal document for architectural heritage conservation, and the adapted reuse of heritage buildings.

Adaptive reuse involves appropriate and acceptable modification of the existing entity and where necessary sympathetic extensions to reinvigorate the building and to achieve a dignified and viable future. The Institute believes that, in order to achieve this successfully, it is always important to understand the significance of the place and its component parts, its context and setting

and the original design intent at the start of the process. Only with an understanding of the significance of a place can design maintain that significance and allow a development to meet the needs of a new use without compromising the heritage of the place. With the increasing regulation of the building industry, successful adaptive reuse is a highly skilled design process.

Tasmanian Architects are uniquely placed to ensure high quality architectural outcomes for Tasmanian built heritage, having an unparalleled understanding of the Tasmanian built and natural context. Living in this beautiful state, they have “skin in the game”, ensuring sensitive long-term destinations for national and international tourists and the success of the industry as a whole.

2. The role of Government

The current Tasmanian Government has expressed its hope that the state will realise its potential to be a world-leading heritage tourism destination, and believes new opportunities in tourism need to “balance investment in the state’s historic heritage with the kind of adaptive reuse opportunities that enhance and protect our heritage assets”.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Tasmanian Chapter of the Institute agrees that this balance is vital if built heritage tourism is to realise its potential without having an adverse impact on heritage buildings and places. The more significant places will require greater conservation and preservation while other places are able to be more substantially developed. Understanding significance is vital in this decision making. Adaptive reuse is also of significance for sustainability when embodied energy in the materials and the construction of buildings is accounted for. It is increasingly being recognised that measuring energy efficiency should take account of the energy used in construction as a whole-of-life consideration. Therefore, adaptive reuse of valuable heritage has significance in the built environment’s contribution to energy saving. Other resources are also saved if the structure of a building can be retained rather than demolished, as it takes energy to demolish a structure and the materials are frequently wasted rather than recycled. Sustainability’ is becoming increasingly important and the subject of tourist interest itself.

In order to ensure this balance between development and conservation, governments, through their statutory approvals process, must ensure that all development proposals are rigorously assessed against ‘best practice’ standards. This will in turn contribute to the development of excellence in the heritage, tourism and design industries in Tasmania.

As individual buildings are acknowledged as the ‘jewels in the heritage crown’, the Institute also strongly supports recognising and sustaining cultural landscapes through responsive planning schemes and the creation of heritage precincts.

The adaption of heritage places makes sound economic sense. When heritage places are redeveloped to a high standard they can contribute to successful business over a long period. Redeveloped heritage buildings can

also contribute to the economic value of adjacent properties as well as the quality of streetscapes, precincts and villages. It is this quality that gives Tasmania its distinctive character and enriches the visitor experience.

As well as using the Burra Charter as the guiding principle for architectural heritage preservation, the Institute believes governments must ensure the involvement of appropriately skilled architects in relevant decision-making regarding the conservation of listed heritage buildings and places.

3. The role of tourism organisations

No comment

4. The role of heritage organisations

No comment

5. Any relevant considerations in other jurisdictions

No comment

6. Any other matters incidental thereto.

No comment

The Institute appreciates the opportunity to make this submission and would welcome the chance to elaborate further by providing evidence before the inquiry.

ⁱ http://www.premier.tas.gov.au/releases/new_chairperson_of_the_tasmanian_heritage_council

ⁱⁱ <http://australia.icomos.org/publications/charters/>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.premier.tas.gov.au/releases/new_chairperson_of_the_tasmanian_heritage_council