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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION B COMMITTEE MET IN DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH TRAINING ROOM, HARRIS BUILDING, BURNIE ON THURSDAY 21 MAY 2015.

BUILT HERITAGE TOURISM IN TASMANIA

Ms TRACY ANDERSON, PRESIDENT; **Mr DEREK BELLAMY**, SECRETARY; AND **Ms LYNNE FERENCZ**, MEMBER, BURNIE TOURISM ASSOCIATION, WERE CALLED, READ THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Valentine) - Thank you very much for coming to present to the committee. Could you please tell us your area of expertise?

Mr BELLAMY - As the secretary of the Burnie Tourism Association, I wrote the submission because I could see an interest from the point of view that we produced heritage brochures which were very successful with tourists and visitors to Burnie. I also have an accommodation business, Hideaway Cottage, which I run with my wife. We get a lot of guests coming through and quite a lot are particularly interested in Burnie and its history. The brochures, when we had them, were of great interest to them. When people spend a lot of money to come to Tasmania, particularly from the mainland, they find things such as this where they can walk around freely at no cost, a real bonus. It has enhanced their understanding of Burnie.

Ms FERENCZ - I am on the executive of the Burnie Tourism Association. I also own and operate the Duck House, which is a group of three self-contained heritage accommodation cottages.

Ms ANDERSON - I am the president of the Burnie Tourism Association and also a representative of the 3BG, which is the three business groups in Burnie now working collaboratively together. We have just produced a new heritage brochure.

CHAIR - Thank you for putting the time and effort into putting in a submission. It is important we hear opinions and have information from all sorts of angles. It is good to get one from a tourism association such as yourselves. The evidence we are taking today is protected by parliamentary privilege but whatever you say outside this hearing is not protected. This is being recorded by *Hansard* and will go onto the website at a later date. Would you like to make a verbal submission to your written submission?

Ms FERENCZ - Burnie Tourism Association would like to commend the Legislative Council for having this inquiry. We think it is a fantastic thing to inquire into and hopefully it will make some recommendations.

The Burnie Tourism Association has been established for more than 20 years. I have the objectives of the Burnie Tourism Association, which I will hand out. The members of the association cover a range of organisations within tourism. There is accommodation, for instance, of all varieties and restaurants, cafes and attractions. We have a registered training organisation that is also a member and we have volunteers and their

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organisations. For instance, the 30 volunteers who every night during the season are down at the beach with the penguins.

CHAIR - What season are we talking about?

Ms FERENCZ - They start in October and finish at the beginning of April. Every night we have anything up to 50 people who will learn about the little penguins that are there. Fantastic.

Mr FINCH - Fifty visitors do you mean.

Ms FERENCZ - Fifty visitors a night, yes. Quite sensational and it has really grown. A lot of them talk about how much better than Philip Island it is because they get close to the penguins and they don't have to pay.

Mr DEAN - Are they tourists that just rock up or do you have bookings?

Ms FERENCZ -No, they literally rock up. The worst night as far as numbers is concerned is round about ten and sometimes it is over 100. A lot of people.

I want to talk a bit about some research Tourism Tasmania has done because we think it is really relevant to what you are investigating and you probably know this, but for *Hansard* we will say it anyway. Tourism Tasmania identifies four of the top attractors. The reason why people are attracted to come to Tasmania.

First, there is nature and gardens and this includes wilderness, national parks, nature reserves and walking trails, look-outs, scenery and man-made gardens. They also have heritage and history which is the built heritage and its people as in indigenous people, convicts, settlers, explorers and pioneers.

Food and wine, who are the producers as in the paddock-to-plate producers, restaurants, cafes, food festivals and vineyards and there is also art and culture which is galleries, museums and festivals that we run here. They are the four top attractions.

They vary from time to time and date to date and year to year, but they are the top and always have been.

I would like to talk to you about what BTA has done to help visitors develop a connection with our built heritage because we understand that is really important.

Five years ago, BTA worked with Christine Crawshaw to develop and print two federation brochures and I would like to hand these out to you again.

CHAIR - We have these two here.

Ms FERENCZ -Yes. Unfortunately we only did a print run of 2 000, and these are the last lucky ones that are available.

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We had to do photocopies and all sorts of things. What they are intended to be and what they are used for is for walks. Walking tours of Burnie, the houses that are there, but also walking tours of the CBD where the heritage architecture is.

The other thing that we did which was seven years ago, a film was made which is now on DVD that outlined the art deco architectural history of the town because that was very big. When the pulp mill was built and when it had its large numbers of employees as in art deco architecture was.

The other thing we have done over a period of years is spoken with the Burnie City Council staff about having owners of CBD premises uncover the beautiful early 1900s facades of buildings whenever external work is carried out.

What I mean by that, and we have had two good examples of that happen, where there was, in the 1960s, a whole pile of corrugated iron of some sort was put over this beautiful detailed heritage facade. What has happened is that when they need to do maintenance work on it, they have taken it off. These people have said 'My goodness, look at this, what is behind here, isn't it fantastic'.

Over the years, certain council staff have worked with people who own Burnie businesses and some of them have done quite a bit to renovate and reveal some of the beautiful heritage architecture that is behind some really hideous 1960s changes.

We have also approached the Burnie City Council Citylink and the Burnie Chamber of Commerce and Industry to form a collective of businesses that wish to promote the city.

Ms ANDERSON - We went to the council with concerns as to how everything was split into silos 20 years ago being the chamber of commerce; the retail arm, which was Citylink; and also the tourism association. That has us all trying to fight the same battle but it diminished each other's membership. One wouldn't pay for one membership when they were wanting to be part of another, for example. When it was tied up with the city, rate differential became a bit complicated as well so we have tried to break down those barriers. At the Governor's dinner which the BCCI is hosting we will sign a memorandum of understanding so we can all move forward to be more innovative collectively and work together to create something for Burnie.

CHAIR - How far out is that?

Ms ANDERSON - Next week. It has been 18 months in the making.

Ms FERENCZ - There are a lot of busy people in the three groups and getting them together has taken that long.

Ms ANDERSON - This is the new brochure we have worked with to reprint. We have revised it with the council to reprint the brochure. I will table that. It is very important from a tourist aspect, that we are a small regional town, but we have so many things here that are free for tourists to walk around and see. Others have to have millions of grants to have tourism walks but we collectively have this that is very popular, especially when the cruise ships come in. You will see people take photos of the icon hotel and all over the place. A lot of the retailers didn't know it was that important. I think these sorts of

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brochures, and things we are trying to work towards, break down that barrier of heritage and heritage tourism being for the oldies and the people who are just interested in heritage. We are trying to make it more open to everybody, that they can engage with the town and see how it was built and the history behind it.

CHAIR - It is easy for us to not be aware of the special things around us until you get something like this being presented.

Ms ANDERSON - We have printed 20 000 of the brochure this time and we would like to see it become part of a school walk, to show the children, and form some community engagement with that.

Ms FERENCZ - There are some concerns BTA has about Burnie's built heritage. Approximately four or five years ago the council commissioned a fantastic heritage study - 550 pages. It is on the Burnie City Council website and is very extensive. Part of the problem we have is that it is our understanding that nothing has been done about it. It has been shelved and there have been suggestions that nothing will happen about it for a variety of reasons, quite a bit of which is financial. However, BTA believes there are quite a few low-hanging fruit that are inexpensive and we could do something about highlighting, building and developing the heritage we have within Burnie. We would hope the council would act upon it. We are concerned that nothing is happening.

Mr DEAN - Do you know what it cost to put that report together?

Mr BELLAMY - An amount of \$20 000 was paid by the Tasmanian Heritage Council and \$20 000 was paid by the Burnie City Council - so \$40 000.

Ms FERENCZ - Just a couple of other thoughts that we have about future projects. This stuff that we have done, as in self-guided walking tours of heritage, we think it would be fantastic if lots of regional and rural towns did something similar. We know how incredibly popular they are. That's basically it.

Ms ANDERSON - In addition to that, the state tourism campaigns always say get to know a local. It's all about engaging with the local community to understand what the town ticks on. It's part of their experience. That's what people want to see. They want to see where to eat, what to do, how the town was formed and all of those sorts of things. Engaging back with that is the way forward.

Ms FERENCZ - One of the ways that it could be done is that if there was a partnership between say the state Government and UTAS Faculty of Architecture, there are students who would love to have an opportunity to take photos, write descriptions, write a bit of history of the heritage architecture. It would be a fantastic assignment that they could do in a whole pile of the regional and rural towns and perhaps some of the bigger towns around -

Mr DEAN - Have you had discussions with UTAS on your idea?

Ms FERENCZ - No, we haven't. But I know that in the Cradle Coast campus we do not have any architecture students there.

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Mr DEAN - They are in Launceston. The architecture is in Launceston but -

Ms FERENCZ - Absolutely. That would be fantastic to be able to do it. Just finally, one other thing -

Mr DEAN - I'll say this because UTAS is always looking for projects and opportunities for all these sorts of things and -

Ms FERENCZ - Yes, and real stuff for their students.

Mr DEAN - That's what they want.

Ms ANDERSON - It is clear with that GHD report that unless the community demands that something is done or enacted out of that report, nothing will happen.

CHAIR - We have questions.

Ms FERENCZ - In the year 2000, my husband and daughter and I went over to the United Kingdom. At that point the Blair government had recently been elected. One of the things they had promised was to look after the heritage of the United Kingdom. They introduced the UK heritage lottery. I know I'm about to talk about a country that has a population of 50 million as opposed to Tassie that has only 500,000, but it was an incredible success.

I don't ever buy any lottery tickets because I only buy raffle tickets if it's for a good cause. I don't buy lottery tickets because I don't necessarily want to make the Tattersalls family even wealthier than they currently are. But if every week I could buy a \$10 Tassie heritage lottery ticket, I would put that \$10, \$20 every week into it knowing that it was going to a good cause and that I'm never going to win anything from it.

So the heritage lottery was introduced and people bought tickets. They literally made millions of dollars every year. There was a group of people that were set up in order to work in heritage areas in villages and towns where they got together and put submissions into the group to say, "This is what we would like a grant for."

CHAIR - A bit like the Tasmanian Community Fund operates their funding. Something similar to that?

Ms FERENCZ - That's right. But specifically to do with heritage. We would like to suggest that we think it is a fantastic model that we could follow and do something similar to the UK. One of the main reasons is that my understanding is that 80 per cent of the convict, colonial, and Georgian architecture that exists in Australia is here in Tasmania. Such a little population to look after such an important and valuable heritage resource, which we need to do. We need to think outside the square in order to look at how we are going to do that.

Mr DEAN - I will start on the funding issue. That is one of the things this committee is looking at very closely - how we can properly fund the maintenance and upkeep of our heritage buildings. The Government struggles to provide the money that is necessary. There are a number of concepts. Western Australia has a similar concept, a lottery.

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There are a couple of other funding methods that have been suggested to us. One is that tourists coming into the state pay a levy on their entry into Tasmania, either \$1 or \$2, at the ferry terminals and the airports. Another one is that when you book your accommodation you pay an extra \$1 or \$2 on top of that as a levy and it is then paid into Treasury over a period of time. Another one that has been suggested is the gambling. We currently take 5 per cent of all gambling moneys and it is paid into a fund to support problem gamblers and sporting organisations. We could increase that to 6 per cent perhaps, to get more funding in that way. A number of things have been put forward, a lottery being one of them. You don't have the money that is necessary to maintain and upkeep your heritage buildings?

Ms FERENCZ - Within Burnie virtually all the heritage buildings are owned privately.

Mr DEAN - Yesterday we were lucky enough to have a look at Brickendon and it is a wonderful place. It is privately owned but the owners have opened it up to the public. This funding ought to be made available to private ownership of heritage buildings in certain circumstances and with certain conditions applying. Are you in agreement with that sort of proposition?

Ms FERENCZ - We have no problems with it. It is grant money, you could apply and get grant money.

Mr FINCH - These brochures are an excellent idea. I am assuming these were presented to the people on the boats who were national and interstate visitors. Did they take to these with alacrity?

Ms FERENCZ - So quickly they were all gone within 12 months.

Mr FINCH - So those visitors took advantage of the directions and the opportunities?

Ms FERENCZ - Absolutely. That was another thing that was terrific. With the town one, for instance - this is spreading the dollars the visitors have - they went into town and had a look at the heritage buildings and while they were there they sat down and had a cup of coffee, had some lunch or did some shopping.

Ms ANDERSON - They don't want to pay for tours if they are on a cruise so they wanted to see what the town was about.

Mr FINCH - In respect of the people who own these houses and the buildings, how did that affect their attitude for their buildings when you started this project? Did they get any support to trick up the front of their buildings?

Ms FERENCZ - No, they were already done.

Mr FINCH - Did it give them a more enthusiastic understanding of the value of their facades?

Ms FERENCZ - I own three of them and our businesses always paid for the restoration and revamping of the buildings, taking it back to the original heritage architecture.

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Mr FINCH - Some of that had to occur for the benefit of the brochures?

Ms FERENCZ - Yes, that had happened before the brochures were done. The interesting thing that I found is that you saw people walk past our place with a thing and then they would stand there and they would take photos. My husband who is a very gregarious individual would quite often go out and have a talk with them and whatever else.

This is what Tracy is talking about. Meet a local, sort of thing. It happened time and time again. People in Queen Street, Princes Street, all have said that.

Ms ANDERSON - There is a certain amount of pride when you have a heritage listed building and you have to go through the process of undoing it, you are not going to do it outside the guidelines anyway number one. You are not going to go through all that extra effort and own one and not be proud of it itself.

In terms of the brochure and connecting back with that. That will be a long term thing. They will get proud about people taking photos.

Ms FERENCZ - It is not listed though. None of the houses that are there are listed.

Mr DEAN - As heritage buildings? In the register.

Ms FERENCZ - Sorry, yes they are. There is only one or two.

CHAIR - One or two are listed.

Ms ANDERSON - Several of them are state listed.

CHAIR - Just a question with respect to the ones that are on the brochure, in relation to the question that Kerry is asking, all the people who own these houses, did you engage with them before obviously putting

Ms FERENCZ - Burnie is a very small place and we know everybody.

CHAIR - So you visited everybody and made sure they were happy to have their building in that brochure.

Ms FERENCZ - Yes.

CHAIR - Sorry Kerry. Have you any other follow-up questions?

Mr FINCH - No, only that it is a fabulous idea. It would also give your local community a better link and an understanding of heritage, as we have discussed, and what we take for granted. We see it every day. We don't think about how special these things are until we have those visitors who then put a different perspective on what we have actually got.

Ms ANDERSON - It is a tourism that is huge because you are talking your own town up. Your own region.

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Mr FINCH - You can see this solid link. What our references are all about is that link between heritage and tourism.

Ms FERENCZ - Absolutely. Particularly when you look at Tourism Tasmania's attractors, that listing that is always up there as to why people are coming to Tassie. Always up there.

Mr FINCH - Do you think that Tourism Tasmania perhaps do not look to that aspect of what we have got in Tasmania in respect of our promotion and our projection of what Tasmania is all about.

Ms FERENCZ - Tourism Tasmania is very much aware of the icons, the heritage icons that we have got, looking at that one up there on the wall behind you.

Mr FINCH - You are pointing at Port Arthur

CHAIR - Port Arthur for the record.

Ms ANDERSON - They are very aware of the icons that we have got. Probably not so much the culture, in a community level of that sense of pride. There are big ones that have big draw cards and thousands of people going to it, but not that things are in every single town.

CHAIR - You are saying that more could be made of our built heritage if (a) it was on the radar and (b) there were more municipalities or communities actually making more of their heritage like this.

Ms FERENCZ - Doing this sort of stuff.

Ms ANDERSON - Yes, that is right.

Ms FERENCZ - Can I say one thing too, it is about Launceston and this is not..? I know you too, the Launceston people. I came down from Sydney when I was 18 and I went into Launceston and I thought it was the most incredible place because I have always been interested in architecture.

Launceston is Australia's perfect city where you look at the history of architecture from your two room worker's cottages in Charles Street in Launceston through to your big grand art deco mansion. It is there in one nutshell. It is just superb. Absolutely superb.

Ms ANDERSON - We on a time and we all have to go. I would like to add a point. The people like Lynn that are absolutely driven by heritage and their culture. People like me, I see the value and I think that we do not take enough notice of it and we can actually spread it more and make it more accessible to the school kids and the community and to grow that.

CHAIR - So you get some community engagement and pride.

Ms ANDERSON - Absolutely, yes.

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CHAIR - We have run out of time. We have that launch that we need to attend. Thank you very much.

Ms ANDERSON - We will see you all there and get into your ears.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr DEAN - Can I put one thing if you don't mind. One of the reasons we set this committee up, a number of reasons. One was that we did not think that there was a strong enough connection or any connection between heritage in this state and Tourism Tasmania. Tourism Tasmania did not make enough of it and you could really be excused if you only believe in Tasmania that we had Port Arthur and convicts. Mona now, probably Mona. But that is all we had in Tasmania. We are looking very much

Ms ANDERSON - What we need is to embrace actually is our history ourselves and share that and actually getting back down to grass roots level in the community and stuff like that.

CHAIR - To close, if you have anything else that comes to mind and you think I should have tabled that, there is time to do that, if you can get it to us in a reasonable space of time. Probably by the end of September, that would be good.

Ms ANDERSON - Thank you for your time.

CHAIR - Thank you. Thank you for taking the trouble, time and effort to put it together and we really appreciate that.

Ms ANDERSON - Is it alright if I hand this little thing to Carol. It is just that it has the URL on it for the heritage, the full ..

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.