



Australia ICOMOS Secretariat
Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific
Faculty of Arts, Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood Vic 3125
Ph: +61 3 9251 7131
Fax: +61 3 9251 7158
austicomos@deakin.edu.au
www.icomos.org/australia
ABN: 85 073 285 798

27 February 2015

Hon Rob Valentine MLC
Legislative Council
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

By email: tht@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Valentine,

Legislative Inquiry into Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Inquiry. I provide this letter and attachments as a submission on behalf of Australia ICOMOS. However, as noted to Ms Exel previously, Australia ICOMOS wishes to make a presentation to the sub-committee at a later date and will provide a more detailed submission at that time.

ICOMOS – the International Council for Monuments and Sites – is a non-government professional organisation that promotes expertise in the conservation of cultural heritage. ICOMOS is also an Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee under the World Heritage Convention. Australia ICOMOS, formed in 1976, is one of over 100 national committees throughout the world. Australia ICOMOS has over 600 members in a range of heritage professions. We have expert members on a large number of ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, as well as on expert committees and boards in Australia. We have a particular interest in Australia's world heritage sites.

We have canvassed the opinions of AI members in Tasmania and provide the attached submission as a summary of some of their views. We have also encouraged our members to make separate submissions to the Inquiry. Given the broad nature of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, we believe that it would be useful for the Legislative Council to engage in further consultation as part of its deliberations.

In this submission we provide some commentary in response to the Terms of Reference followed by a longer discussion defining the cultural heritage industry and discussing the issue of the value of cultural heritage (across its many facets) and its use by the tourism industry. In addition there is a view held by many that the real opportunities and potential of cultural tourism are yet to be realized in Tasmania for local communities and visitor populations alike. On the other hand Tasmania is in a fairly unique position to be a world leader in the field.

Thank you again for your consideration of the views of Australia ICOMOS. If you have any queries, please contact the Australia ICOMOS Tasmanian Representative, John Wadsley, on 0417 487 289.

Yours faithfully

MS ELIZABETH VINES OAM, FRAIA, MICOMOS
President, Australia ICOMOS

Summary response to the Terms of Reference:

To inquire into and report upon the management, preservation, tourist marketing and promotion of built heritage assets in Tasmania, with particular reference to:

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

Tasmania is in a unique position in Australia to demonstrate (through investigation, research, interpretation, and display) a wide range of periods of European development since the beginnings of European exploration and settlement on the island. Tasmania's heritage, if properly managed and resourced, can be a catalyst for economic growth. We are also fortunate in having good archival resources so that investigation can unravel earlier patterns and uses in the landscape.

2. The role of Government;

To protect our heritage for future generations, there needs to be a coordinated policy of cultural resource management (which integrates not only tourism and heritage management, but also includes the planning system, transport and access networks and our education system). This should enable our rich historical resources to be developed in such a way that the tourism experience offered to visitors and locals can make the best use of our heritage, while ensuring it is protected in a sustainable and appropriate manner.

3. The role of tourism organisations;

Some tourism organisations have recognised the value of historic places; in particular, the conversion or reuse of heritage places for active use as part of the tourist experience. Acknowledging the sustainability of heritage values as part of marketing and the 'how and why' these places are important, must be a key feature, and not just exploitation for commercial gain. Recognising the social and cultural meaning of historic places is critical if we are to make the best use of heritage in the tourism context.

4. The role of heritage organisations;

Besides identifying and promoting built heritage, the regulatory function is the main focus of heritage organisations. However, these organisations are not actually well coordinated or resourced. There is a policy void because of lack of resources, collaboration and coordination. This is particularly evident in the lack of State Government support for heritage studies, thematic studies and planning projects which could support local government planning reform.

The current review of the Tasmanian Heritage Register by Heritage Tasmania could result in a more manageable situation. However, we need to recognise the value of conservation zones / heritage areas and how they have proved to be remarkably effective in Tasmania since 1978. For example, the Battery Point Planning Scheme 1979, Launceston streetscape conservation, and the Hobart City Planning Scheme and its Conservation Zones including Sullivans Cove. There are still some deficiencies in this regard in terms of providing effective consensus and protection.

5. Any relevant considerations in other jurisdictions;

A Heritage awards program and grants program should be encouraged, as conducted by many other states and cities across Australia. The Ballarat Heritage Festival is a case in point. These could offer good publicity that would support tourism activities and appropriate development of heritage places. There also needs to be better integration with the management and planning for heritage places entered on the National Heritage List, Commonwealth Heritage List and the World Heritage List. In particular, the latter includes the Australian Convict Sites which have a number of sites listed in Tasmania – the Cascades Female Factory, Sarah Island Convict Station, Maria Island Convict settlements, Port Arthur and the Coal Mines. This requires the Federal Government to ensure adequate funding of sites under their control.

6. Any other matters incidental thereto.

Australia has made a substantial contribution to Cultural Tourism through a number of organisations and fora, including the International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism. The International Chair is Graham Brooks, a well-respected Australian practitioner. This will be expanded further.

Defining the Cultural Heritage Sector

To provide a meaningful discussion to the Inquiry, it is important to provide some definition.

a) Introduction

Providing a concise definition of the Cultural Heritage sector is a difficult task since it encompasses many different activities and draws on a wide variety of resources. Cultural heritage includes not only built heritage, but also archaeological heritage, natural and landscape heritage, social and community heritage, moveable heritage and intangible heritage. There are many different people involved in working across all these areas, including archaeologists, planners, architects, interpretation specialists, tradespeople working in heritage trades, museum professionals, tour operators and guides, rangers, stone masons, photographers, writers and journalists, surveyors, engineers, asset managers, archivists, educators and historians. And of course, there are the owners and custodians of heritage places who spend so much time protecting and caring for these important sites.

It is necessary to develop a functional definition and establish the parameters of the sector. The Legislative Council's Inquiry Terms of Reference requires some discussion about the activities pursued by various instrumentalities who are involved in the management of the historic environment. In terms of the purpose, focus and practice of what constitutes the cultural heritage sector, it is a cluster of activities that bridges between cultural resources, cultural tourism, recreation and education. The tourist and local community alike do not just want to be entertained, they want to understand and be educated in the process of learning about cultural history and heritage.

b) Definition

The functional definition of the heritage/tourism sector can be devised through an examination of:

- Its purpose regarding the understanding of culture;
- Its focus concerned with the evidence provided by cultural resources and traditions; and,
- Its practice involving the management of the resources.

Purpose

The purpose of the cultural heritage sector is dealing with the understanding, preservation and providing access to, culture. Understanding of the past and present derives from three sources: oral history and traditions, documentary records (written, pictorial and archival) and material manifestations of human interaction with the environment, such as buildings, objects and sites (including archaeological resources).

Focus

Cultural heritage sector activities are concerned with the material or behavioural manifestations of cultural practices (also known as cultural material, cultural sources and cultural property). These consist of:

- Moveable artefacts, including those not necessarily associated with a building or place;
- Fixed artefacts, such as sites, monuments, towns, buildings and building groups, and archaeological sites;
- Cultural landscapes, which may include aspects derived from Aboriginal and European culture; and,
- Intangible aspects, which can include traditions, events, memories and stories.

Practice

The practice that has built up around heritage sector activities has become increasingly multi-disciplinary. Attempts to define boundaries by occupations or skill requirements are too limiting, as illustrated by the listing above. To illustrate what cultural heritage activity encompasses can be described as follows:

- Researching and understanding a heritage place;
- Surveying, locating and measuring the place to know its extent;
- Recording the place;
- Analysis and assessment of the place to understand how significant it is;
- Interpreting the values of the place and its elements, so that people can understand it;
- Formulating policies and devising strategies to manage the place; and,
- Monitoring and evaluating the management of the place.

The above is fundamentally based on the principles and practices endorsed through *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (Australia ICOMOS, 2013) known as *The Burra Charter*, which is recognised globally as the best practice standard in heritage management.

Approaches on Cultural Heritage Management

Traditionally heritage conservation has focused on the conservation of tangible built heritage, particularly through European settlement and the adaptations of English traditions into the Tasmanian Landscape. Subsequently a building's fabric was seen of central importance in the protection of culturally significant structures. *The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (the Venice Charter 1964) outlined that heritage structures must meet the "test of authenticity".

The "*Nara Document on Authenticity*" (ICOMOS Symposia, 1994) was an important turning point in acknowledgment of a multi-faceted layering of meaning of what is deemed culturally significant and where authenticity lies determined by local communities. The document was timely and addressed the rapidly growing interests in cultural heritage at that time. The document pertaining to cultural and heritage diversity specified: "*All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected*". In this regard the cultural context of heritage and its evolution through time is important. Form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors all play a role in the authenticity of heritage and heritage practice.

The criteria and approach for assessing heritage places has moved on considerably as a result of *The Conservation Plan* by J.S.Kerr and the principles of the *Burra Charter*. Buildings and places inform us about the social, political, technical and financial circumstances of their time. Tasmania is extraordinarily rich in a variety of periods as development pressure has not entirely wiped out any one period. It is also fortunate in having good archival resources so that investigation can unravel earlier patterns and uses in the landscape.

Discussions relating to the degree of historic significance of built structures and townscapes are directly tied to their value and worth of conservation. There has been recent discussion concerning cultural heritage conservation issues (such as with the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and Aboriginal cultural heritage). Associated to this has been an increasing recognition of the economic, technical and social values of heritage, alongside discussions on heritage conservation and the use of heritage places as part of economic development. One scenario would be the bringing together of the regulatory framework for revitalising heritage places and how these places can be made useful and relevant for future generations, while still preserving their heritage significance.

The cultural and social values of heritage in society do provide a direct contribution to economically sustainable development (for tourism and other purposes). Heritage also provides stability and preserves community identity. However, heritage conservation cannot successfully operate and be successful if there is no broad approach within government. Saving specific heritage places of particular heritage significance is still important, but such places are in danger of becoming fragmented and lacking cultural context, and ultimately authenticity.

The value of heritage as a driver for economic growth can be enhanced through the participation of community based tourism. The role of heritage as a driver of sustainable economic growth can be enhanced by understanding its contemporary value through a participatory process that activates the role of community in tourism development and management. Heritage tourism that uses local community knowledge to explore both tangible and intangible heritage elements will always be far stronger and more resilient.

Across Tasmania, the interpretation of cultural landscapes is becoming increasingly important, particularly in understanding the relationship between Aboriginal history and cultural heritage and the impact of European settlement. This needs to be explored in more depth. And it should be appreciated that it is not just built heritage, but also the archaeological heritage resource, that needs to be better understood here.

Cultural repositories or tourism assets?

Cultural tourism has been used to justify cultural resource management activities - from the foundation of the Society to Protect Ancient Buildings (SPAB) to the establishment of the Port Arthur Management Authority and the lobbying for the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*. Making use of elements of Tasmania's history has been a central component of tourist marketing for most of the 20th Century and its growth and success is evident in the popularity of Port Arthur as a visitor destination and the enormous growth in colonial accommodation. At the same time fear is frequently expressed about the impact of the tourism industry; that pursuing commercial goals can degrade or destroy the presentation of cultural sources, paradoxically destroying the tourist asset.

Part of that fear springs from the potential physical impact of tourism activities on heritage places and the possibility of visitation overwhelming the integrity of a place. This is a real concern in the area of natural heritage conservation (such as in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area or with Aboriginal cultural heritage sites such as middens and cultural landscapes) but probably less of a potential threat in respect to built heritage resources given the relatively small volume of the total market.

However, this fear also stems from the cultural impact of tourism and tourism marketing: the potential to distort interpretation of historical facts and events; the possibility of presenting an exotic or sanitised view of history so that the community assumes the role of actors, thus becoming alienated from their cultural roots.

An emerging view seems to be that to be that sustainable cultural tourism must be based on the presentation of authentic culture, not manufactured cultural experiences. This view is recognised in recent government tourism strategies and in which social and cultural development and environmental protection constitute key objectives. It is therefore important that we should develop an approach focused on:

- Coordinating collaboration between a broader range of Tasmanian government agencies on managing heritage and tourism opportunities;
- Ensuring a more central role for local government and local communities to discover and present their history to generate cultural tourism activities and assets; and
- Promotion of such opportunities should not just be based on marketing, but providing support through the policy and planning framework so that cultural heritage is valued by all tiers of government.

It is very important that all the activities of surveying, identifying, listing, mapping, promoting, interpreting, funding and otherwise managing cultural property, including the work of museums and collecting bodies are encouraged so that there is a strong basis to our understanding of our heritage and historical resources.

Improving the education and training of people involved in presenting heritage places as part of the tourism experience is also vital. There is currently little coordination between the training of 'front-of-house' staff at tourist sites and our repositories of historical knowledge such as museums, archives and heritage groups. At the local level, tourist operators should be encouraged to support local oral history programs so that they can benefit from the storehouse of local knowledge which is embedded in our communities.

The danger in the current situation is that no cohesive State policy or strategy has been developed for cultural resource management. If cultural resources come, by default, to be regarded as key tourist assets, other values and priorities may become lost or distorted (for example, some archaeological sites which may need to be kept secret for their own protection, would come to have no value through degradation). At the same time, while the need to make heritage places pay their way as a functioning element in the tourism economy may be a compelling argument, a central concern is that some heritage resources have such important and significant values which cannot simply be converted into economic value. The privatisation and the modification of heritage resources into merely tourism sites that have no aim to protect their heritage values conflicts with the traditions of ICOMOS and the best practice standards espoused by the *Burra Charter 2013*.

It is very important that cultural heritage management is articulated in the form of a cohesive cultural resource policy; otherwise it is likely that it will be overwhelmed by the view that culture is primarily a generator of income, not a repository that needs to be preserved. Certainly, this is an interpretation that could be made of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.