



# **PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

## **TRANSCRIPT**

### **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE B**

**Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority**

**Tuesday 15 December 2020**

### **MEMBERS**

Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC  
Hon Ivan Dean MLC  
Hon Jo Palmer MLC  
Hon Tania Rattray MLC (Chair)  
Hon Jo Siejka MLC  
Hon Josh Willie MLC

## **WITNESSES IN ATTENDANCE**

**Hon. Elise Archer MP**, Attorney-General; Minister for Justice; Minister for Corrections; Minister for Building and Construction; Minister for the Arts; Minister for Heritage

**Mr Grant O'Brien**, Chair, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

**Ms Jane Harrington**, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

**Ms Anne McVilly**, Director, Tourism Operations, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

**Mr David Nelan**, Chief Financial Officer, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

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**The Committee resumed at 3.30 p.m.**

**CHAIR** - Good afternoon, minister. This is our last area of scrutiny not only for today but 2020. Thank you very much for being part of it. I will introduce the team at the table and then I will invite you to introduce your team and also provide an overview of the organisation regarding the annual report.

We have Jo Palmer, Rosemary Armitage, Tania Rattray, Ivan Dean, Jo Siejka and Josh Willie; our fantastic secretarial support, Natasha Exel, and Deb from Hansard.

We invite you to provide an opening statement and introduce your team at the table.

**Ms ARCHER** - Thank you, Chair. I will start with introducing the team because as we said off air, it is the first time we have not had our long-standing CEO Stephen Large with us. I will mention that throughout my opening statement.

I have a relatively new PAHSMA Chair, Grant O'Brien, who has managed to get here and on time being a Sydney-sider; Jane Harrington, Acting CEO - Jane is probably familiar to a lot of you and has been with PAHSMA for quite some years. I also have available Anne McVilly, Director of Tourism Operations, you probably know as well and David Nelan, Chief Financial Officer, should we need to call on him.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, we do have spare chairs if you need to take the table at the minister's request.

**Ms ARCHER** - Chair, it is a pleasure to be minister for Heritage. Specifically, the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority sits under my responsibility and with that it manages all of the sites. The recent annual report highlights the achievements of the authority, its sites and its people for the past year, which for the most part, has been one of extraordinary challenges as we all know.

Effectively, conserving and managing three iconic World Heritage Sites - being the Port Arthur Historic Site, the Coal Mines Historic Site, and the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site, bring great responsibility but also noteworthy rewards requiring the commitment of considerable financial and human resources underpinned by expert professional knowledge.

During 2019-20, a total of \$6.245 million was expended on conservation and infrastructure at the sites, including a major part of Stage 3A of the Isle of the Dead walkways project to enable increased access for visitors while further protecting the heritage fabric on the Isle. PAHSMA has committed to being world class and this is substantiated by its continued growth in tourism, heritage and educational offerings.

Notably this year, PAHSMA has progressed plans for the \$5 million Cascades Female Factory History and Interpretation Centre to be built at South Hobart, something I am particularly passionate about. Not only is it in my electorate but it is a project I have helped with from time to time in various roles, and with the financial backing now of both the state and federal governments - the state's contribution being \$3 million ahead of the \$2 million from the federal government - to make up that commitment. This new development will highlight the important stories of the female convicts and their children who spent time at the female factory. With 26 788 visitors last year, it will prove to be an even greater popular heritage

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tourism destination for the state with construction due to commence in 2021. In the meantime, the launch of the new dramatised tour, the *Proud and the Punished*, at the Cascades Female Factory during the year has been extremely successful and is recommended for all.

More than ever before with COVID-19 affecting so many local economies, the Tasman region benefited from the presence of PAHSMA with the workforce comprising 169 employees as at 30 June 2020, with PAHSMA continuing to be the most significant employer in the region. Many tourism businesses on the peninsula have been established and gained leverage from the drawcard of the Port Arthur Historic Site. In addition, PAHSMA engages local contractors to supply service, use local produce, and food and beverage outlets, where possible with 92.4 per cent of purchases being from Tasmanian businesses in accordance with the Government's Buy Local guidelines.

While tourism visits dropped during 2019-20 distinctly as a result of COVID-19, there were still over 335 000 welcomed by PAHSMA across the three World Heritage List sites. There was a period of closure but it was also pleasing to hear of the success of the Port Arthur Historic Site winning the 2019 Australia Tourism Award for major tourism attraction. They have been proudly representing Tasmania in that regard for quite some years. From a Government perspective we continue to support PAHSMA's aims of promoting and conserving our heritage sites for future generations.

In closing I acknowledge the significant dedication shown by the chairs, Sharon Sullivan AO for the first half of the year, and then Grant O'Brien coming on board, as well as the board and management who have led PAHSMA through these difficult times. With the entire PAHSMA team displaying flexibility, professionalism and resilience, PAHSMA continues to represent an exemplar of best practice conservation and tourism operations in our state and nationally.

On behalf of the Government I acknowledge the significant contribution of Stephen Large for his long and dedicated service as PAHSMA's CEO over the past 20 years. It is not an insignificant feat in anyone's book. Twenty years in any organisation is significant but over that period, as we well know, Port Arthur Historic Site has had both challenges in terms of recovery from the tragedy of the massacre but since then developing into a world class tourism destination. It truly is amazing over that time to see that progression. We will be well served by our acting CEO, Jane Harrington. I wish Stephen well for the future. I hope he does get to do some travelling when he can.

If the Chair is amenable, I could throw to the chair to make some opening remarks, as well as the new chair of PAHSMA. I know there are a few things he would say by way of introduction as well.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, that would be fine. Before you do, on behalf of the committee and our colleagues in the Legislative Council, I congratulate Stephen Large on his contribution to Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority and the way that he engaged with the committee through my 16 years, the member for Windermere's 18 years, and so on.

**Ms ARCHER** - We will make sure he gets that.

**CHAIR** - We very much appreciated that.

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**Mr DEAN** - He was my football umpiring coach for about 15 to 20 years as well.

**CHAIR** - Can I suggest that he just gets a caravan and travels around Tasmania? He doesn't need to go anywhere. We have the best.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - As the new chair of PAHSMA, I was appointed almost a year ago now, and I am pleased to be here today representing the PAHSMA board.

Needless to say, this year, my first as chair, has included many unexpected challenges.

**CHAIR** - Not much travel.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Not much travel, no. It has been challenging, not just for our people and our sites, but for the whole of the tourism industry and our beautiful state, Tasmania.

Before anything else, I express my appreciation to the Government for its assistance, particularly during this time. We have worked together to address staff engagement and the financial challenges that have come as a result of COVID-19.

It has been pleasing to establish a strong working relationship with the minister, Ms Archer, as our very dedicated portfolio minister. At the same time, I gratefully acknowledge the support we continue to receive from the Premier, Mr Gutwein, as our previous portfolio minister and Treasurer.

Early in 2020, the Port Arthur Historic Site was celebrated at the 2019 Australian Tourism Awards, winning the Major Tourism Attraction category for the second year in a row. The entire PAHSMA team are to be congratulated on their efforts, and our people collectively who contribute to this national accolade which showcases, not just PAHSMA, not just Port Arthur, but Tasmanian's presence as a tourism leader.

Unexpectedly, only a few weeks after the Premier, Mr Gutwein, accepted that award on our behalf, our sites were closed to visitors, and public-facing employees as well, due to COVID-19 pandemic. This confirms the vulnerability of the industry, particularly the tourism side in which we operate, and in which our people work.

Thankfully, the Government provided financial certainty and job security for the regional community. Very important.

Despite our inability to welcome visitors, the PAHSMA board, management and employees continued to strive to achieve our vision of being globally recognised in telling the Australian convict story through outstanding conservation and tourism experiences.

During the closure period, we successfully implemented a program of alternative duties and projects so that our team were put to their maximum use and the outputs across our conservation and tourism operation areas showed that investment.

While the PAHSMA annual report highlights the detrimental effects of COVID-19 that the minister touched on, the board has scrupulously monitored our financial situation and, where needed, sought ongoing government assistance, which I am grateful to report has since been confirmed.

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The reality is that the current financial year will be even more challenging than the one we have just concluded, and we are reporting on today. Restrictions have meant we have been able to access only a fraction of our previous visitation base to date. Whilst thankfully we are seeing some borders open up again, there remains considerable risk and uncertainty over the next 24 months, and this was recently highlighted by the situation in South Australia.

We are resetting and recovering with a focus on continual improvement, and this is substantiated by the continued rollout of training and development opportunities and structural changes as part of our organisational transformation and review.

Return to pre-COVID-19 visitation and revenue levels may take some time as the world continues to wrestle with the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. We are adjusting to maximise our opportunities by redirecting focus on domestic tourists and providing new and appealing reasons for them to come and visit our sites in greater numbers.

As the minister has mentioned, with statutory approvals and funding now in place, we are excited to be embarking on our next major project in creating a world-class history and interpretation centre at the Cascades Female Factory. That will further substantiate the importance of heritage and the role of convict women particularly and, in the process, introduce a new and highly attractive tourism destination for the CBD of Hobart.

Notwithstanding the many challenges, it has also been a successful year for PAHSMA in relation to employee satisfaction with progression made, particularly within our human resources area, relating to renegotiation of the PAHSMA staff agreement, commencing implementation of a new rostering system, and providing guaranteed minimum hours for permanent part-time employees. This progression highlights the focus of the PAHSMA value that people matter.

Our successes have been also evident in other projects including our nationally recognised responses to climate change impacts, the completion of our Australian Research Council Project Landscapes of Production and Punishment, new dramatic performances, and many smaller conservation projects.

Finally, and with immense respect on behalf of the board, I too would like to acknowledge the two decades of valued service provided by our outgoing Chief Executive, Stephen Large, whose time with PAHSMA is celebrated prior to him leaving in November. Stephen leaves behind a legacy of achievements, paving the way for new leadership into the future.

Again, I would like to sincerely thank the Tasmanian Government for the support offered, not only to PAHSMA but to me as the incoming Chair. I have every confidence that the PAHSMA team will continue to excel in both our conservation and tourism efforts as the borders are reopening and the future looks a bit brighter. I welcome any questions, through you, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Grant. I am not sure we have got any left. You gave such an extensive overview. If the minister put you up to that, I will make sure that next time it is half that length, thank you.

**Mr DEAN** - In your opening, minister, you mentioned the three areas for Port Arthur. I have rejigged that and I have Port Arthur, Coal Mines, Female Factory and Eaglehawk Neck. That is not my question, that will come up later by some members.

My question is the elephant in the room, I suppose. That is the movie that is currently being talked about. We need to get that out in the open and see the impact, where this is going to go, whether you or PAHSMA will be able to have some say or control in this, overviewing of it, reviewing of it? Is there any opportunity for any of that? It is a very raw situation in Tasmania, even today.

**Ms ARCHER** - Yes, Mr Dean, I am very happy to address that in regard to what has been expressed. It is fairly common knowledge now, from questions and question in parliament that I have confirmed that the filmmakers did make contact. I must stress that there has been no Tasmanian Government involvement or funding in this. They did want to meet with me. As you have indicated, because of the nature of this, it is a significant issue for community still.

I responded and basically said that it would not be appropriate for there to be Tasmanian Government involvement. I urged them to understand the enormous sensitivity around the project. Both I and through Screen Tasmania have reinforced that it is sensitive and encouraged them to talk to survivors and people living in the region so they could gain that understanding for themselves.

As you know, to use the phrase, you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. We cannot censor or control films being made. I have since also written and expressed our view to my counterpart in Victoria, the minister for Arts there. Although there is no Victorian Government involvement, I wanted them to understand the significant concerns that we have 24 years on. I have also recently settled and signed a letter to Stan, the company that will screen it, and urged them in their promotions to understand the sensitivities and that the images already being conjured up, media focus and attention, is not welcomed by Tasmanians and, in fact, is having that significant impact already on people.

I am doing everything possible, as is the Premier, to alert those involved that it is sometimes very easy to think with the passage of time, feelings and emotions heal. I have assured them in this instance that I am confident they have not. I know Ms Harrington can also confirm we still have people working on the site who were around at that time. We know people live in the area. We know the broader Tasmanian community, and we know that people moved away because of it. We are doing everything possible to convey all of that to the film producers so they have that understanding. One of the things commented to me was sometimes these stories can be told to analyse why these things happened and with the passage of time we can sometimes do these things. That comment struck a note with me that I needed to assure them that the passage of time in this instance really has not diminished the rawness of this heinous act.

**Mr DEAN** - My concern is the conspiracy theorists and so on. As most people in this state know, I clashed severely with them and they were threatening legal action against me. I am wondering where this is going to go. This so-called movie and what sort of a position it is going to portray at the end of all of this. Obviously, no legal action can be taken by the state Government, no injunctions that can be explored or considered?

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**Ms ARCHER** - No, because basically it is a free speech matter. It is not something we fund as a government. I do not believe Screen Victoria or Screen Australia have any involvement either. All we can do is urge them in the direction I have. There does not appear to be anything else we can do, and certainly not legally either. They are not breaking the law. It is just deeply sensitive and we would prefer that it not occur. At the end of the day, people make a judgment for themselves as to what they do and do not watch, but we know it is a much broader issue. You mentioned yourself the conspiracy theorists, and I imagine that may bring some of them out again. I do not think some of them have ever disappeared and that has caused a lot of distress for those who were in law enforcement.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - My question is with regard to the board and its make-up. Five or six members of the board and their location north, north-west, south, interstate?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - When I began there were six, but the CEO was also a director.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Okay, my confusion was when I saw CEO.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - In consultation with Stephen, when the size of board was reduced. one of the skills sets missing was in the tourism and marketing area. Stephen, who was a director, also relinquished that position, which gave us the ability to have another director without going to the market, if that makes sense to you. We did that recently, and in October we appointed Melinda Percival, a Hobart lady with strong experience in the tourism, food service and marketing areas. She has been a terrific fit and has hit the ground running.

Kristal Buckley has been on the board for some time. Kristal is a world-renowned expert in conservation and interpretation areas and resides in Melbourne. Michael Field who would be known to all of you is the deputy chair. He resides at Eaglehawk Neck for most of the time. Peter McKay, who resides somewhere between Port Arthur -

**Ms ARMITAGE** - He is southern as well. So is it four southern members and two interstate?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Roseanne Heyward is also from the region. The region and state are well represented. There is now a 50:50 split in terms of males and females on the board. I think we're now better represented in terms of the skill sets if you look at Kristal with her conservation; Michael and Peter with their governance and political backgrounds; Melinda with her marketing, and Roseanne with her deep connection to the community, having been a former mayor in that part of the world.

I live in Sydney and my background, I guess, is the corporate world, business.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - With the procurement - you were saying that with Melinda, you went out to the market. Did you employ an agency to find her?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - No, we didn't employ an agency. Not long before I came along, a process was started and an agency was selected at that time, so we went back to them and we got, if you like, the names they had at that time. We put together an independent panel made up of myself, Michael Field and an independent name that's gone out of my head.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - The name of the agency?



**Mr O'BRIEN** - It was used out of the north of the state - Lynne Chapman - originally but we didn't go there specifically for this recruitment.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Thank you. The other thing - the tenure of appointment and terms? How long is a term? I notice that some people have been there for a very long time. Is there a period of a term where you could have a reappointment or is it open-ended?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - The period of time for Melinda's appointment was three years and that's the typical appointment although in the most recent appointments for both Peter and Kristal, that was done for a two-year period because we had a lot of the directors coming up with a uniform date of maturity.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Michael Field has been there since 2005.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes, he has been there for quite a while, as the previous chairman was there for a long time as well. We're going through somewhat of a process of renewal but longevity's not a bad thing, either.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - No, that's right. I just wondered because many boards actually do have one term and maybe a second term.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - From a personal perspective, Michael's presence has been very important for me coming in as a new chairman and him being there for a long time as a deputy chair, and I think that was a deliberate move.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Peter McKay's been there since 2013, so I wondered whether there was an actual time frame.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - We have Peter and Kristal coming up at the end of 2021, which is when their terms are due, so we'll be looking at renewal at that stage in consultation with the minister.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Thank you.

**Mr DEAN** - Is it just a tick to renew or how is it done?

**Ms ARCHER** - It's an independent process and then I get a recommendation. I am very happy for Grant to handle this.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - The process has begun in relation to those who are coming up at the end of 2021. In the case of searching for a new director, it will be through an independent process, typically through an agency, but as I've explained -

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I'd like to get an idea of the cost of the agency. It would be useful to know, seeing the three GBEs we've had today have all used the same agency.

**Ms ARCHER** - It's also about being transparent. My preference has always been - apart from during COVID-19, because reappointments have been for consistency and because of the difficulties in going out during COVID-19 - that even those who are currently in a position and want to continue in it should go through that process as well so there's an opportunity either for

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someone new to put their hand up and compete, and I also think people find it a valuable experience when they have to go through the process again of applying -

**Ms ARMITAGE** - It's a bit like an election, isn't it?

**Ms ARCHER** - It's a bit like that, probably less costly. There are a couple of different processes.

**Mr WILLIE** - Minister, with the downturn in tourism activity, it also provides an opportunity to ramp up the conservation activity on the site. If you look at the 2019 figures in the financial report, the conservation expenses were more than the current year. I note there are infrastructure expenses for the current year, which might have been the Isle of the Dead walkway and other areas, but I'm interested in - you're obviously retaining a lot of the staff, whether in the next financial year, the next reporting period? Are we are going to see a ramping up of conservation activity on the site?

**Ms ARCHER** - I can go to our acting CEO to address that because there has been some heavy involvement there with archaeological works.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - My substantive role is as conservation director, so I am excited to be able to answer that question. Over that period, we ramped up a number of our projects - as they say, never waste a good crisis because sometimes not having lots of visitors onsite provides certain advantages. It allowed us to get into some places and spaces we have not been before.

**Mr WILLIE** - Such as?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Commandant's house. I do not know when anyone was last in the commandant's house. I would suggest it is worth a new look - it is sparkling clean. The conservation processes when you have collection items in there are very intricate and specialised. That give us a good example. We had two extraordinary women who assisted our main curator collections conservator. Two women came from our ticketing area and we had about two to three solid months in that one building alone, which is a luxury rarely afforded to us. We were able to train both of these really passionate people into an understanding of different aspects of conservation. We discovered some interesting things in the interim. For example, one of the pictures hanging on the wall - we had to remove some of the paper behind the picture frame and it turned out to have been made by one of Hobart's earliest and best-known picture framers, which probably wouldn't enthuse most people but was very exciting for us. It was little things like that.

The Isle of the Dead is a conservation cost; because of the way we manage our programs of work, it had to put on hold for a time simply because of the COVID-19.

**Mr WILLIE** - Contractors?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Yes, that is a contractor one. It is always an exciting project because anyone who deals with small islands in Tasmania, to try to get equipment over to them, the easiest way to do it is helicopters. We had problems with spaces in helicopters and taking people over there in boats and various things like that, but we have finished.

What we are looking to do this year is to continue the conservation program. One of the important things for us is when a lot of people said Port Arthur and our other sites were shut down. They were not shut down; they were temporarily closed to visitors. It is important for us to remember that we kept operating. As well as our conservation and infrastructure services, I would like to acknowledge our entire administration branch kept working, including our finance and HR people. Something a bit forgotten in amongst the bad news story about our tourism staff having less to do is that we now have some expert gardeners. The relaxation of gardening is extraordinary. We had the most beautiful gardens for a while. Many of our staff were able to grab a rake and help with cleaning up the site and pulling out weeds and a whole range of different things. We did an amazing amount of painting which we had not done before, including some of our fences. Another project in the commandant's house was sanding the floors; in a house like that, you do not go out and get a sander - it is all done by hand.

That was a lot of work but the interesting thing is we have staff who are still saying, 'How can I come and work with you? How can I do my work in the conservation area?' One of the things that has come out throughout this period, and it is across our entire organisation, is that people want to learn more. They want to be able to learn new skills. They want to be able to see what we do in other areas and they have enthusiasm to do that, and to exchange that information is something palpable and wonderful.

**Mr WILLIE** - You are saying is some of this stuff is very labour intensive, not necessarily capital expensive?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Yes, it is.

**Ms ARCHER** - If you had the painters in, it may have cost more but if you have staff on hand with things to do -

**Ms HARRINGTON** - The really good thing for us is, for example, if I use painting, and I look at general surfaces as well, like limewashing and redoing floors: we are very lucky in that we have two skilled heritage painters. We have an apprentice at the moment, but whilst he could not access the site because he was working with another painter at the time as well, we could oversee those people because we have traditionally skilled TAFE people on staff.

**Mr WILLIE** - Did the downturn provide an opportunity to go to the coalmines as well and put in some conservation work there?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Yes, we did a number of things there. Weed eradication is another one of those things I am sure does not enthuse most people, but we have a lot of issues. I assume everyone here knows the coalmines. It is a really special place.

**Mr WILLIE** - I spent a lot of time there holidaying with my family.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - We had a number of programs out of there. The other thing we did in using staff was an opportunity for us to get down there, with COVID-19, cleaning and also with security patrols. We would make sure there was a staff presence there, even while the sites were closed and then when the sites opened up again, because things were still a lot quieter and we had staff who did not have a lot to do, particularly our guiding staff, and a number of our food and veg. staff jumped at the opportunity to go out there and do a walk around the site and to talk to visitors who were on the site, and there were many.

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**Mr WILLIE** - It is a remarkable site.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - It is really beautiful. A lot of the work we are doing there at the moment is closely related to impacts from climate change, particularly on the shoreline and we have been doing a lot of the main projects. We have been restoring some of the beach works we have been working on.

**Mr WILLIE** - This is probably a question for the minister, but there is another site down there that is not under the control of PAHSMA, that has historical significance - the officer quarters and the dog line at Eaglehawk Neck. We know that the Premier is supportive of PAHSMA potentially becoming responsible for that. There would need to be some capital investment to upgrade the facilities.

**CHAIR** - And the former CEO was very supportive.

**Mr WILLIE** - Yes. As a committee, we were wondering where that is at?

**Mr DEAN** - In the previous report that was done several years ago, the tourism heritage report, chaired by Rob Valentine, I was involved in that as well, it was agreed then, minister, that the Government was supportive of PAHSMA taking control of that site because of its significance to Port Arthur. You have to get through there and that is where it all happened.

**Ms ARCHER** - It is fair to say that the area is under Parks and Wildlife, which is not under my portfolio.

**CHAIR** - They are happy to let it go.

**Mr WILLIE** - And PAHSMA is under your portfolio.

**Ms ARCHER** - If you give me an opportunity to answer, I am quite happy to answer.

**Mr DEAN** - PAHSMA said they would take it if they got the funding.

**Ms ARCHER** - From PAHSMA's perspective, there has been a lot of willingness as you have identified - willing and able to provide support when and as needed. It is not ours to do anything about, is it? It is fair to say we can offer all the assistance in the world, but it is not under my purview as Minister for Heritage. We can have all the want and assistance from our perspective, but unless asked and unless pursued, it is not for us to interfere in that.

**Mr DEAN** - Somebody has to make a move.

**Ms ARCHER** - It is not the Minister for Heritage; I cannot make that decision.

**Mr DEAN** - You only have to talk to them and say, 'Well, look, I think we should have it.'.

**Mr WILLIE** - On that, there has been no formal request from Parks for PAHSMA to take that over?

**Ms ARCHER** - I don't believe so.

**Mr WILLIE** - That is interesting.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - We do work very closely with Parks with that site. As you have noted, it is very much part of our history and our concern. We work with a lot of sites across that area. We have a very close relationship with Parks, with any of their heritage sites, and consult. With various issues that have come up lately, we have spoken to them and continue to do so and provide support when asked. At the moment, the decision needs to be made about the transfer and our board has always indicated that there is an interest in pursuing that. Like a lot of things, at this point it would probably be difficult for us to take it on without there being commensurate availability of funds to support it. As you notice, with our costs currently with conservation, we would not want compromise what we are already doing.

**Ms ARCHER** - Can I add to that? In defence of Parks and Wildlife, they did have \$1.8 million allocated to complete urgent works on Maria Island in 2017. I know there has been a steering committee and I know PAHSMA is represented on that steering committee. It is not like there is no involvement by PAHSMA at all, but Jane is quite correct in terms of taking it over completely, whether that is entirely appropriate as well. Parks and Wildlife officers serve a purpose on that as well.

Again, in fairness to them with COVID, this is probably something that has had to take a back seat while everybody has been looking after things under their jurisdiction and purview. Hopefully, that might be revisited, but certainly from our perspective as a government as well, our focus in supporting PAHSMA has been \$20 million of equity contribution to ensure that PAHSMA can continue its conservation efforts with the sites they currently have as well, which is critical. I am sure with the progression of time, we can revisit that. This last year has been, as we know, an extraordinary one, and I do not think that it has just been able to progress.

**Mr WILLIE** - No doubt, but in the post-COVID recovery, it makes a lot of sense for PAHSMA to become involved in that site because we have heard from some of the groups involved with that site.

**Ms ARCHER** - PAHSMA is involved, Mr Willie, and you could have asked Parks and Wildlife during budget Estimates because that would have been a question for them, not for me.

**Mr WILLIE** - Well, I am asking you, minster, as the minister for PAHSMA,

**Ms ARCHER** - I have said that I -

**Mr WILLIE** - and that is entirely reasonable. The argument is that there are people going to the Port Arthur Historic Site for day trips and coming back out of the region. If there were an investment in that site, they might stay longer; they would stay in the region longer and that is the interest from the community.

**Ms ARCHER** - You have heard from the Premier, you have heard from me. We support that overall context. It is very easy to suggest that it would be very easy for PAHSMA to step in. I do not think it is as easy as that and I am sure the Parks and Wildlife communicated that on various occasions with PAHSMA. As I have said, there is a steering committee and there

is involvement from PAHSMA. There is certainly goodwill, I think, from everyone. It is ensuring that there is an appropriate model moving forward.

**CHAIR** - This exact issue was raised with the committee two years ago and we did progress it, but very, very prior to COVID. It is not a new initiative.

**Ms ARCHER** - I have been minister for Environment and Parks, and I am aware of Maria Island and I am fully aware of the issues with the infrastructure there. It is by no means an easy solution by having PAHSMA just coming in and taking over. We need to acknowledge the significant efforts that have been carried out by Parks and Wildlife to date. They have carried out urgent works and I think now we need to give them time post-COVID to re-engage.

**Ms SIEJKA** - I am interested in the impact of COVID on visitation; I am sure there is some. Do you have visitation figures from 2019 to 2020? How do they compare with previous years so far? Is a breakdown available of the impact of COVID-19 on intrastate, interstate and overseas visitor numbers? I guess it is tracked over the seasons as well.

**Ms ARCHER** - Obviously the international visitation is a significant drop, and there was heavy reliance on that, particularly with cruises.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Can I just add to that then? The cruise ship numbers of individuals because I am sure that is of interest as well.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - If it okay with you, minister, I will start, and, if I could, I will ask Anne McVilly, who looks after the tourism side, to fill in all the details.

To answer your initial question, tourism numbers of visitation across our three sites went down by about 24 per cent when comparing year on year.

What is also of interest is that - and I know we are only talking about the previous financial year in all this, but just for your benefit, we are 78 per cent down year to date on visitor numbers because of the way the markets have been locked from us.

We caught the tail end of it, if you like, in the last financial year, and that is why, in my opening comments, I commented that this year is going to be more challenging. It certainly will be in relation to visitor numbers when we compare them to last year. We should see that improve slightly as people start to move around a little more now that markets are open.

The raw answer is 24 per cent and when you look at the make-up of the visitor base for Port Arthur pre-COVID-19, about 54 per cent of it was from Australia-based independent travellers. I think 14 per cent was from New South Wales, and 15 per cent was from Victoria; they were the two biggest mainland markets, not surprisingly. It was around 18 or 19 per cent for independent international visitors, and a large chunk for cruise ship and groups.

I guess that the component of independent Tasmanian visitors to the sites was about 9 per cent. So, while the sites were closed to everyone except Tasmanian visitors, that is what we had to play with, if you like.

## PUBLIC

Now that we are open to domestic markets, it is a little bigger. However, it is going to be some time before the cruise ships and international markets are available to us. In relation to number of cruise ship visits and the like, would you like to come to the table, Anne?

**CHAIR** - Anne McVilly is joining us at the table.

**Ms ARCHER** - Director of Tourism Operations.

**Ms McVILLY** - We are picking up quite substantially now. We have been overwhelmed by the number of Tasmanians who have come out; as Grant mentioned, it was under 10 per cent. Some days we saw 10 visitors, and some days, of late, we have seen 500, predominantly Tasmanians, so it has been wonderful - and the travel vouchers have definitely been an incentive.

Now the borders are open, we are starting to see a greater increase in domestic markets with Victoria and New South Wales especially. In fact, yesterday - I know it is nothing to do with the previous year - we had 540 visitors; the same day last year, 823. Slowly picking up.

Cruise is about 20 per cent of our business, and, as we all know, we probably won't see a cruise ship anywhere in the world until this time next year.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Is that 20 per cent of your business in terms of visitation numbers? I imagine they would also be more likely to spend more when on the site as well.

**Ms McVILLY** - They do spend well, because they tend to stay on our site. About 12 to 15 per cent head out into the region, and see what else there is to do in the Tasman region. They do spend more, on average, than a typical visitor.

**Ms SIEJKA** - Just as a follow-up, also to do with COVID-19. We have heard today, obviously the COVID-19 crisis isn't over yet, and so some of the changes you have had to make to operations and the costs that that incurs will continue. What processes are in place, or what discussions about processes are in place, going forward, as visitor numbers hopefully increase again?

**Ms ARCHER** - Because that's operational, so Jane can address that.

**Ms SIEJKA** - And the cost, how is that being absorbed and ongoing?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Cost is very interesting. Again, it has been an opportunity for us. We were already going through a stage of flux, and recognising that as a larger organisation, it was time for us to look more closely at what we offered our visitors.

I think the proof of our successes with visitation and conservation has very much been our successes with tourism awards, and we have been very lucky to continue to hold that baton for perhaps another year.

I think what we have done is recognise we have to make changes because of COVID-19. Social distancing, numbers on tours -

**Ms SIEJKA** - I was about to ask about numbers on tours and how that was managed.

Some tours, like ghost tours, encourage people to stay overnight or attend other things, and I am sure that is an ongoing issue if those numbers are capped.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Technically they have always been capped, I guess. You can only offer as much as the resources you have available. Our resources are less. We no longer have as many casual staff as we have had before.

Our mantra is what we offer is a premium experience, a high-quality experience, an experience that is delivered by very passionate staff and none of that will be compromised. We may not, for example, be able to offer as many Ghost Tours as we have done before. One response we have had is that we are now open every day of the week but our times of opening every day are 10 a.m. till 5 p.m. We only have the site itself open at night three nights a week when we operate Ghost Tours and we also run our rather lovely restaurant, 1830.

**Ms ARCHER** - The tour groups are smaller, of course.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - The tour groups are much smaller.

**Ms SIEJKA** - How much smaller are they?

**Ms McVILLY** - Ghost Tours used to be 30 capacity and they are now 15. Isle of the Dead was 30 and that is now 12.

**Ms ARCHER** - It is important to highlight that the focus of PAHSMA is now on domestic tourism and how to attract more domestic tourists. We were having a discussion yesterday and realised that Saturday used to be one of the quietest days and at the moment it is one of the busiest because of the local visitation.

**Ms SIEJKA** - I imagine too, given that some of the domestic Tasmanians, there are only so many times people can visit, but you will be wanting to attract repeat visitors as well. Is diversifying your offerings on the cards as well for that reason?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Yes. It's something we can branch out into. Anne and her team have done some marvellous long-table dinners for example. I didn't even get a ticket for the last one because it sold out before I could get a chance to put my head up above the parapet. We have done a couple of makers' markets. They double-up as providing excellent opportunities for the immediate local community to do something for the broader Tasmanian community, but also the local artisans.

**Ms ARCHER** - You haven't mentioned the summer season special.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - At the moment, ever since we have reopened, all children get in free-of-charge. Also, anyone who buys a ticket and comes to the site gets a two-year ticket-of-leave in line with our convict history.

**Ms ARCHER** - Great Christmas present too.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - They can come back for two years, free of charge.



## PUBLIC

**Mr DEAN** - Children to what age?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Seventeen.

**Ms ARCHER** - It also means that they might do other things around the site and spend more money that way.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - It is an entirely different market in some ways.

**Ms McVILLY** - It gives Tasmanians a reason to come back when they are visiting friends and relatives so we have an archaeological dig program under way. We have a travelling exhibition that will start in February. We have a series of new plays in the Separate Prison which is quite an exclusive opportunity - another night-time opportunity. We hope to run more regular events every two to three months.

**CHAIR** - The marketing dollars for Red Jelly?

**Ms ARCHER** - Do we need our finance person?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Can I clarify the quantity or the quality?

**CHAIR** - Both would be fantastic but we start with the quantum.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - The quantity to date, I think we have spent about \$100 000 with them. It was another initiative in terms of something we hadn't really done much before. Technically Port Arthur hasn't had to do much to advertise itself. People come because they come to Port Arthur. Getting back to the previous question, there were a lot of people who came to Port Arthur probably 10 to 20 years ago and want to go back there again.

This was part of an opportunity to provide information to what could potentially have been seen as a marketplace that was starved of that information - being all of our Tasmanian people - so they had assisted us with the communication and marketing strategy which has been useful for us. And - this is a bit of a watch this space - a new summer campaign which is all about 'Stand where the History' was. It is a series of static advertisements and we will have a series of updated videos that will be shown at the airport and ultimately as things pan out next year into the brave domestic market, the opportunity to also go out to interstate markets.

**Ms ARCHER** - It's amazing what's happened on site from a few years ago so it's reminding people.

**Ms McVILLY** - If I may add to that, it's to give people the chance to see the importance of convict ancestry in today's life and connected to today's life - the broader convict story and it was done through a competitive tender process.

**CHAIR** - My question is around the \$4 million from the state Government and it was an equity contribution. Is that correct?

**Ms ARCHER** - Is that the one at the start of COVID-19, or are you talking about the \$20 million in total?

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**CHAIR** - No, the \$4 million for the equity contribution for the support payment.

**Ms ARCHER** - That would have been at the start, would it, Grant?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes, it would have been.

**CHAIR** - Why was it an equity and not a grant?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I don't know the answer to that. David, do you know why it was treated that way?

**Mr NELAN** - From my discussions with Treasury about how this funding is received, it's different from our conservation funding, which is indexed by CPI annually and spread across the Cascades Female Factory site and the Port Arthur site.

The \$20 million -

**CHAIR** - This was a \$4 million -

**Mr NELAN** - Yes, so of the allocation of that \$20 million, \$8 million relates to this current financial year of which \$4 million was a return of monies expended by PAHSMA in the building of the visitor centre and the remaining \$4 million is another equity contribution to PAHSMA to assist with the impacts of COVID-19, the higher cost of working.

**CHAIR** - Again, why wasn't it a grant? It is a grant, a support payment. That was the question that was asked and posed. That's why we're asking it today.

**Mr NELAN** - I don't have the answer because when I discussed with Treasury whether this would be a form of funding in a grant form - that has a positive impact on our revenue - they were very clear to me that it was an equity injection into the business to reduce our TASCORP debt that we're incurring. So when that funding comes in it offsets the TASCORP debt that we're funding our fixed costs of operations with through this COVID-19 period. That's why it's an equity funding because it's going to retire debt.

The Government asked TASCORP to increase our borrowing facilities to \$12.5 million to essentially enable us to continue to pay our staff and operate in a period of very low revenue. That's why, I believe, it's been treated as equity but it wasn't something that I made that decision on.

**CHAIR** - You just took the money. You weren't going to argue about which way it went in.

**Mr NELAN** - Yes.

**Ms ARCHER** - I think it's correct to say he took the advice of Treasury.

**CHAIR** - I can ask that of Treasury at a later date.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Can you expand more on the procurement of services relating to organisational transformation review - a contract worth \$126 086 which was awarded to a

Victorian firm, HR Strategic Partners? Did any Tasmanian firms get the opportunity to bid for the delivery of this review?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Yes, a number of firms were asked to tender for it and there were several Tasmanian firms, I believe. I wasn't part of that process but it was something that we certainly discussed at a broad level, and the importance of getting the right people for the job, but the importance of hoping that that would come from Tasmania.

In terms of the actual contract itself, it's been one of the most important things that PAHSMA has proceeded with in the last five years. Many of us have watched the organisation grow from being a small - we have called it a family business - into something that has become a highly successful conservation, heritage and tourism organisation that has gone from being on the State Heritage Register, to be on the National Heritage Register and managing three sites on the World Heritage list.

We have seen substantial growth in staff numbers. Substantial growth in revenue has risen as well which has been much appreciated and growth in the number of sites. PAHSMA took over the Coal Mines in 2014, the Female Factory in 2011 and maybe Eaglehawk Neck one day.

**Mr WILLIE** - Sounds good.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - We found ourselves in an awkward circumstance where as a state Government agency, our staff participated in the State Service Survey and we were getting very disappointing results.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Two hundred and fifty-two people employed. Tasmanian State Service employee survey satisfaction score of 68 with more than 80 participants in March 2020 in the annual report.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - That is much improved on what it was before. I suggest the 68 actually is not bad overall in regard of the State Service, which is probably a matter for debate, but maybe not in this particular room. It was a circumstance for us where there was obvious dissatisfaction amongst our staff, particular in regard to the leadership and across a lot of workplace issues to do with bullying and harassment and matters like that. With the executive, supported by the board, recommended taking a very good look at what we were doing and how we were doing it with a view we potentially needed to have a cultural shift. What we seeing now, is the benefits of that and is what this contract has been involved with.

It not only came out with a report with a series of recommendations and we have moved forward with quite a number of training sessions with our staff, workshops, massive amounts of consultation which could not have been done with anyone internally. I believe I can speak for my colleagues on the executive that we have seen a vast improvement in regard to how our staff are relating with higher management and with each other.

It is a work in progress. We have made the decision as part of that to slightly restructure our senior management group. Our next step will be to take a more intense view at middle management roles and structures. Without external assistance, it would not be possible to do it.

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**Ms ARCHER** - I was going to add it is probably time to do all of this because of the growth of PAHSMA. Jane was saying it has grown from something that was a smaller business into something which we can all say we, as Tasmanians are very proud of, but it is a big organisation now, dealing with a diverse range of skills onsite. It is also managing all of those expectations.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I was wondering whether HR Strategic Partners were awarded on the cost of the contract or ability to fulfil the need?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - It would have been a combination of both. I apologise to the committee, I was not part of that decision-making process, but I do know how we make decisions when it comes to any matter like this. They are weighted on the basis of my favourite word, quality versus quantity. The decision would have taken both into account, but I am fairly confident it would not have been because they were the cheapest to put forward a price. The support and professionalism with which we have received from HR Strategic Partners has been highly commendable.

**Mr DEAN** - An issue raised last time we were down there four or five years ago related to waste water and water and negotiations with TasWater. I have read some of the annual report and the short part of it in their relation to it, but what is the real hold-up here? Is the cost to TasWater a concern? Where is this going to go? It has been an issue now for a long time and it really does need resolving. Minister, where are we at?

**Ms ARCHER** - There is a whole heap of background, but I am sure you are aware of that. I will summarise. In early 2019, discussions recommenced with TasWater and it was suggested that the option to progress transfer was open for consideration in 2020. At the moment, we know PAHSMA manages that onsite and would love to have TasWater take that over. I know that there were discussions with the then Premier and the Treasurer with TasWater to assist in the resolution of the issue. Subsequently, TasWater undertook a review of the PAHSMA infrastructure.

In February 2020, the CEO of TasWater indicated it would require a full cost-benefit study of the potential transfer with the potential outcome that it would not be feasible for a transfer to proceed. Based on a similar community-based study at Coles Bay, this could cost up to \$200 000. Then the progress of that investigation seemed to be put on hold because of COVID-19.

That is where we are with TasWater. I do not know if you can add anything in relation to that excruciating process.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Jane has been following that, minister. With this one I am happy to pass it on.

**Mr DEAN** - I was just going to add to your answer, now that COVID-19 - it has not gone but it is still with us, but it is in a more relaxed atmosphere, is there going to be progress? Is it normality? Is it going to be progressed?

**Ms ARCHER** - Can you update us?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - I am not sure right at the moment. I have to say that Mike Brewster was a very useful person to sit down and talk to. For the first time we had someone from TasWater who was absolutely upfront and frank. I think the issue for them is that it is about resourcing. It is about commercial interests and commercial viability. I suspect that when he refers to the work done previously with a similar investigation, the issue also tends to be about supply and demand. From their perspective, they make their capacity to fund the running of the wastewater treatment plant based on the number of people who connect to it.

Right at the moment, the number of people or, if you like, organisations are us and a very small number of other local entities. It would depend on the viability of the Tasman Peninsula community in whatever pocket they could reach, to put their hands up and say 'We wish to connect to the wastewater treatment plant.'. I think when told that is going to cost them how many thousands of dollars, even at the best of times, there is likely to be a 'we do not want to connect that much' when it all boils down to it. I suspect right at the moment, for people's pockets, it will be far less desirable. I think it is important ] it is done. Would I identify it as a priority for PAHSMA over the next 12 months? No, not at a cost of \$200 000.

It is about the fact that ultimately, like all infrastructure, it has a life. The issue is not so much the operation of it at the moment. It will be what will happen -

**CHAIR** - But with the council, Jane?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - The council is very keen to promote it but they have the same problem. They see it and I know both the previous mayor and the current mayor are both doing their utmost to see this progress the plant going over to TasWater, but it will not be feasible unless the community responds in an appropriate way. We could probably spend \$200 000 to find out that they don't, in which case TasWater would be unlikely to say they would take it on. They would be prepared - and Mike Brewster made it very clear they would provide us with as much assistance as possible, not necessarily financial, but in advice and support to run such a program of investigation with the community for a feasibility study.

**CHAIR** - That is their role. That is TasWater's role. That is not your role.

**Ms ARCHER** - It is not their asset.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - It is not their asset. I would love to think it is their role, but, unfortunately, it would seem that it's not. At the moment it's not something we could prioritise for that amount of money when it's a 10-year matter for us to consider. It's one I will be discussing with the board as a priority for planning in the next few years, but certainly not for the next 12 months, given everything else we are facing.

**CHAIR** - I find that interesting, given there will be a community benefit as well as a PAHSMA benefit and the whole box and dice, but anyway. One for a later time. That's just a statement, not a question.

**Mr DEAN** - I am not sure, minister, if you would be aware of it - there has not been much said about it - but the Federal Hotel's development: is that still on the board?

**Ms ARCHER** - It's a question you would have to talk to them about directly. From my own knowledge and, just generally, it seems to be on hold. It is disappointing, of course,

because a development of that nature - of Saffire status, for example - would be extraordinary for the region. It would be extraordinary for PAHSMA in domestic tourism as well. You can just think of what you could do in conjunction with each other in offering very special experiences between the two sites. The opportunities would be enormous. Disappointing, but I can understand as well at this time, there being enormous uncertainty around their industry because of COVID-19 and the significant impact it's had there. They have a substantial employee base themselves that they have their challenges with as well.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - I just noticed in the annual report, on page 6, that the deficit increases by \$150 000 with tourism trade debtors written off, or provided for as doubtful in collection, totalling \$169 000. Can you elaborate further on that?

**Ms ARCHER** - I think that's one for our finance person.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - It's a lot of money.

**Mr NELAN** - Yes, it's a lot of money. I can report that we've had a fair amount of success since the annual report, in recovering a large chunk of the amount we've provided for. Our approach has been to support tourism agents and operators and not try to be a burden by making demands or putting them out of business by putting them into debt collection. There are already protections for them anyway.

We have tried wherever we can to work with those agents who owed us money from March and put them on payment plans and suspended payments for a long time. Some have gone into liquidation, but with the uncertainties that existed in June we were obliged under our accounting standards to provide for those as being highly doubtful of being collected. But I can report we've recovered at least \$60 000 of that since.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - The annual report also states that in its conservation capacity, a collaborative project with the University of New England to investigate the development of the industrial workshops adjacent to Port Arthur's penitentiary had commenced, although the major archaeological excavations planned as the central component of this project had to cease in March due to COVID-19. Minister, can you advise why UNE and not the University of Tasmania? Was UTAS approached to participate in this project; or if they turned it down, what reasons did they give?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - UTAS is part of that program as well.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - It's a joint project?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - It's a joint project. We've been working with UNE for a while, as we also work with UTAS. The original Australian Research Council grant application was proposed by UNE. We were one of the partners with it, so was UTAS. We were probably the two major partners with it and the University of Liverpool also. So, it's a multinational project and we work very closely with UTAS on that and a number of other projects. It's very sad that the excavation had to be temporarily closed down. But we are back doing that work.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Restarted? Not yet?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Well, it is restarted, but if you can imagine, it is a bit like having a locomotive with 10 carriages attached. We sort of have the locomotive, but not very many carriages. We have two staff working on it, one of whom is our own staff and one of whom is the excavation director. It is his academic program through the University of New England we are involved with as a partner. He is running that program as part of his own sort of post-doctoral research programs. We regret the fact we had a gorgeous number of archaeologists working with us who we had to send home.

**Mr DEAN** - A while back Anne referred to the travel vouchers and how it boosted visitation to Port Arthur. Are numbers kept on this?

**Ms McVILLY** - It is managed by State Growth. Recently I asked them if they could share any of that information with us. To 17 November, 801 vouchers were redeemed for Port Arthur Historic Site to the value of over \$60 000. They definitely created a stimulus or a demand to visit our region. On our local accommodation operators, I do not have the data, but they noticed an increase in bookings once travel vouchers happened.

**Ms ARCHER** - With the contact tracing measures now with people booking online, it is much easier to track numbers and the like.

**Mr DEAN** - Now the borders have opened up, how much are we concentrating on getting people to the Port Arthur site from other states? Have we boosted marketing in any way in that area?

**Ms ARCHER** - I suppose that is through Tourism Tas.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - It is a combination. Definitely through Tourism Tas, we made a conscious decision under advice we would, as I talk about with our marketing and advertising program, go out with the interstate market after January, simply because most people have already made up their travel plans for December and January. January is our biggest month anyway, so it would be a far greater return on investment for us to be pushing that from the end of January onwards.

**Mr DEAN** - Are you already seeing changes or differences in travel of people because of the unavailability of hire cars? How are they going to get there? Is it tours, buses? What you are doing in that regard? Many people are concerned about getting transportation when they get here. Are we doing anything in that regard to get people to the site?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - It has only hit us recently that is an issue. It would fair to say long-term we have always been concerned about the reliance on cars to come to Port Arthur. It is all part of our approach to sustainable tourism. We could have better roads and better public transport. I think that is the dream of most of Tasmania. It is not a matter of people in Hobart not being able to get to Port Arthur. The impact that is potentially being felt, which is more difficult across the state, is people are cancelling full stop. It is not because they want to necessarily go down to the Tasman Peninsula, but they want to be able to go to the Tasman Peninsula, the Huon, to perhaps go to Bruny Island.

## PUBLIC

The frustration is not getting people who come to Hobart to one destination. It is a fact they cannot drive and they are talking with their fingers and cancelling their accommodation. The process is people book their flights, which has been the biggest issue, but the one there is much excitement about, then booking accommodation and go to book the hire car and suddenly the hire cars are not available.

I wish there would be a simple response which is we could provide something. We are at that stage where Grant and I were talking about it last night and will be talking about tomorrow at an executive meeting, whether there is something we can or cannot do.

**Mr DEAN** - One thing I would have thought and guess you are concentrating would be the ferry transportation from here to Port Arthur - are they still back on at this stage or not?

**Ms HARRINGTON** - No, that has not been offered for a while as the main issue is the weather. There are some things in life you just cannot control and the vagaries of weather have meant that, despite several attempts to create that sort of a transport service and experience, the number of cancellations that eventuate -

**Ms ARCHER** - There are cruises down there but not to get there.

**Ms HARRINGTON** - Yes, there is our internal cruise. The mayor in the Tasman is also very keen to pursue. I do not know how we control those sorts of environmental factors.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. Thank you Anne, Jane, Grant and David, and minister. We very much appreciated the opportunity as we do every two years to provide some scrutiny.

We wish PAHSMA all the best for the next 24 months and beyond. We hear what you say about the challenges still to come for the organisation because it is one of Tasmania's much-loved destinations and it is a well-known fact. Thank you on behalf of the committee.

We wish you a very safe and happy Christmas and a better financial year next year albeit we do not know but certainly a much more settled 2021.

**Ms ARCHER** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - I would like to say thank you very much to the members of the committee and especially thank Deb from Hansard and our secretariat support, Natasha Exel, and Allie Waddington, who are fantastic.

**The Committee adjourned at 4.52 p.m.**