

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Tuesday 5 December 2017 - House of Assembly - Government Businesses Scrutiny Committee
- Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority**

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESSES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 5 December 2017

MEMBERS

Mr Bacon
Dr Broad
Ms Dawkins
Mr Jaensch
Mrs Rylah (Chair)
Mr Street (Deputy Chair)

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Ms O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Will Hodgman MP, Minister for Heritage

Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

Professor Sharon Sullivan AO, Chair, PAHSMA Board
Mr Stephen Large, Chief Executive Officer PAHSMA
Dr Jane Harrington, Director Conservation and Infrastructure
Ms Anne McVilly, Director, Tourism Operations
Ms Nicky Roberts, Chief Financial Officer

The Committee resumed at 3.04 p.m.

CHAIR - (Mrs Rylah) - I pronounce the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority scrutiny open. Premier, would you like to provide a further opening statement?

Mr HODGMAN - I am delighted to be appearing before this committee as the minister for the first time. I acknowledge my predecessor, Matt Groom, for the guidance and support he provided to the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority during his term as minister. I want to congratulate Professor Sullivan and the board, management and employees of the authority on its outstanding achievements and annual results for 2016-17.

An iconic heritage tourism attraction, the Port Arthur Historic Site is often used to market the state as a destination nationally and internationally and contributes substantially to the value added state economy by the tourism sector. The Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority's operations directly employed 162 staff as at 30 June 2017. The authority is one of the most significant employees in the Tasman region. Wherever possible the authority engages local contractors to supply services and uses local produce in the food and beverage outlets.

The authority has continued to record an increase in visitation in 2016-17 with an increase in day visitors to Port Arthur by 9 per cent and to the Cascade Female Factory an increase in visitation of 9.2 per cent on the previous year. Tours conducted in Mandarin increased by 66 per cent on the previous year, resulting in more Chinese-speaking staff being employed. This upturn in visitors is expected to continue, especially with the redeveloped visitor centre costing in the vicinity of \$13 million, which is opening in December. The visitor centre redevelopment was designed by Tasmanian architectural firm Rosevear Stephenson and building works have been undertaken by Tasmanian firm Vos Construction. It is the largest capital project ever undertaken by PAHSMA and has presented significant challenges to the Port Arthur team as they ensure visitors continue to have excellent experiences on site whilst the construction works are underway.

PAHSMA has invested significant effort into attracting greater business from the cruise ship sector and last season saw 21 ships visit Port Arthur with 29 expected this season. PAHSMA's partnership with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service and Pennicott Wilderness Journeys has successfully continued, with 11 527 adventurers undertaking the Three Capes Track, with the experience commencing at the Port Arthur Historic Site. The fee for the walking experience also includes a ticket of leave two-year entry to the Port Arthur Historic Site, and facilities for walkers are to be enhanced when the new visitor centre opens.

Preserving, presenting and maintaining heritage buildings, ruins, landscapes and collections is rewarding but also inherently challenging and requires considerable financial resources. The authority board and staff effectively manage three iconic sites that make up the Australian convict sites World Heritage property, being responsible for the Port Arthur Historic Site, the Coal Mines Historic Site and the Cascade Female Factory Historic Site.

I again commend the authority and the board for their success, including the Cascade Female Factory winning the Tasmanian Tourism Award for Cultural Tourism Attraction in 2016. At the most recent 2017 tourism awards the Port Arthur Historic Site won two major tourism and cultural tourism awards and therefore will again represent our state in the national awards to be held in February next year.

The PAHSMA team also achieved some significant milestones in conservation during the year, including the finalisation of archaeological excavations in the penitentiary ablutions area, X-ray examinations and iron artefacts, the first outdoor factory interpretation area stage 1 of replacing the walkways on the Isle of the Dead, and the conservation and reinstallation of the messenger door at the female factory. In partnership with the University of Tasmania and the University of New

England, PAHSMA has received a prestigious Australian Research Council grant to investigate convict labour in Tasmania, a huge project which will be spread over three years.

PAHSMA has positively addressed the challenges associated with the strong growth in tourism numbers at Port Arthur and will now focus on the Cascade Female Factory, as the current visitor centre, built as a fish factory, doesn't meet the operating requirements for either staff or visitors, hence plans are progressing for a new history and interpretation centre at this site subject to successful fundraising.

Obviously there is a lot more to do, but congratulations to PAHSMA on their achievements over the last year. With the approval of the committee, I will invite the chair to say a few words.

Prof. SULLIVAN - It is a great pleasure to be here. We appreciate that parliament pays attention to what we do. It gives us a really good insight into how parliament is thinking about us to have these opportunities to talk to you and get feedback, so we appreciate that very much.

This last financial year really stands out for me as being in some respects the busiest but also the most successful in terms of what we've been trying to achieve for a long while.

I thank the Premier for his kind words and support. I also recognise the support provided by Matthew Groom during the last financial year.

We have been working very hard on the visitor centre. We will be extremely pleased to officially open it. The Premier will open it for us later this month. The whole team has pulled together very hard on this and has worked very hard and very effectively with Vos Construction to give us a visitor centre which is in the same place as the last one. It has minimum impact on the values of the site, but fulfils our needs for more space and for better conditions, most importantly for our work staff there. So that is very pleasing to us and we think the building will fit in very nicely in the environment and we are very pleased that so far, touch wood, it is on budget and on time.

We do recognise that we cannot stand on our laurels so we are working hard to do other things as well. We are very encouraged by the support we have had from the Government but we are also looking actively always for income generation on our own account. We have embarked on a journey to create a world-class history and interpretation centre at the Cascades Female Factory as the Premier mentioned. We have just launched a design competition for the new centre for the architecture. One of the conditions of that was to have a high input from female architects. We had some fabulous entries and will be announcing the winner of the competition early next year. Arising out of that we hope to do some fundraising to assist with the building of that visitor centre which is urgently needed on the site. As you probably know the visitation numbers are rising all the time. At the moment there is nowhere for anyone to go if it rains apart from anything else. It is difficult working out of an ex-sushi factory, pleased though we are to have it. We are very pleased about that.

During this year, we have relied - as we always have - on our community advisory committee which has been very helpful and important to us in making connections with the Tasman Peninsula. The Premier mentioned we are the highest employer on the peninsula that is true but we are also a bit like the big factory. If you employ most of the people then you have a certain amount of tension within the community and having those people from the community who learned to understand

what we are trying to do and who advise very actively and run events and so on makes a huge difference in the local community.

We rely heavily on the input from our independent expert committee as well, as always, on conservation. That is pretty important to us. We have continued our long-term relationship with our Chinese cultural heritage colleagues. We entertained a number of senior site managers from China this year at the request of ICOMOS China and we are currently engaged in a guide exchange program with them. That is really helpful to us and it is helpful to them as well.

When we started this program we did not think how helpful it would be to us to get their input and advice on what Chinese visitors like and how we can service them best so it is a very good two-way relationship.

We have been in ongoing discussions with Federal, as you know, because they are building a 7.5 star hotel on the peninsula right behind us and we have been very closely involved with them. They will be seeking to use the site as one of the attractions for the people who come there. Also we are very concerned, and they are too, to ensure the building and the experience fits in with world heritage values so we are working closely with them on that. It is ongoing.

We are very grateful to the Tasmanian Government for their ongoing support of PAHSMA and we look forward to continuing to excel in the provision of conservation and tourism services.

As I have said before, and I would like to end with this, we have not achieved this without a huge amount of effort and passion from our staff. No sooner had we finished the Penitentiary, which was a completely unexpected and huge undertaking in terms of skill and teamwork, than we had to deal with the Visitor Centre issues. We had been very fortunate in our chief executive, our executive and our staff in their ability to rise to the occasion. I would like to remind you this is a lot of effort and a lot of work for which we do not pay them. You could not pay them for the amount of passion and enthusiasm they put into this and we are very proud of them.

Mr BACON - Premier, your annual report notes the Maria Island scoping feasibility and options analysis report was developed over a number of months. Is this report public?

CHAIR - Mr Bacon, this is Port Arthur?

Mr BACON - I am reading from the Port Arthur Annual Report 2016-17, Chair.

CHAIR - Fine. I need guidance on this.

Mr LARGE - We were involved in working with Parks and Wildlife and engaging TRC to complete the report and I highlighted that in my CEO report.

Mr BACON - The final bit, the Premier says, 'The report has been provided to the minister.' Is the report public?

Mr HODGMAN - I do not believe it has been made public and the Government has not formed a position in relation to this matter as yet.

Mr BACON - Is it now your responsibility, or is it Ms Archer's responsibility?

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Mr HODGMAN - It will be a matter for the Government to determine our response in relation to the report and the options it canvasses.

Mr BACON - When was the report provided to the minister?

Dr HARRINGTON - October 2016.

Mr BACON - Could you provide some detail to the committee about why this report has sat there for well over a year with no public statement or no decision?

CHAIR - Mr Bacon, I do not understand how that is part of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.

Mr BACON - Because it is in the annual report, Chair.

CHAIR - It is probably mentioned there but I do not understand how that applies to the scrutiny of the Port Arthur Management Authority.

Mr HODGMAN - Strictly not. I am happy to provide some context for the committee. A range of options has been canvassed for a management model for Maria Island. That has been canvassed publicly in the past. It is a matter that is under consideration by government. There are obvious budget implications as well as some issues the authority or any other entity might need to consider were a different governance or management model to be put in place. Those matters are under consideration.

In our last Budget, we have allocated \$1.83 million to Maria Island to assist in investments on the island and infrastructure there. It is not something we are neglecting or not attending to. There is no urgency for us, as a government, to necessarily alter current arrangements nor move to another model that has been canvassed in the work that has been done by government.

Mr BACON - How much did the report cost?

Mr HODGMAN - I would need to take advice as to that, I am not sure.

Mr LARGE - We can take that on notice and provide it.

Mr BACON - In the last couple of days we have seen media reports about the ferry contract and the delay. The ferry contract was suspended and then redone. Has that anything to do with the delay in addressing this report into the management of Maria Island?

Mr HODGMAN - No, that has nothing to do with the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.

Mr BACON - The options for the Government around the options of Maria Island, will there be a decision before the election on those issue? Given we are approaching caretaker mode, is that something you think will take place?

CHAIR - Mr Bacon, I fail to understand how this directly relates to the activities performance procedures of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Committee.

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Mr BACON - The CEO thought it was important enough to put in his report.

CHAIR - There is mention of it, but we are here to scrutinise the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Committee. I am keen to call it out of order.

Mr BACON - Over the past couple of years there has been much discussion in this committee about -

CHAIR - One more question on this, then I will call this out of order. Your final question, Mr Bacon.

Mr BACON - When you came in as the minister to take over from Mr Groom, were you provided with ministerial incoming briefing notes around these issues.

Mr HODGMAN - Yes, I have been briefed as the incoming minister. As I say, it is a matter for Government to consider the options to us and to determine whether there be any change, bearing in mind that there would be implementation issues to consider and cost issues for us to consider as a government. We have not ruled out anything, but we certainly have not decided on anything.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, one of the members of the Port Arthur Board, the honourable Peter McKay, as the annual report quite transparently points out, is a member of the management board of Roche Brothers and Navigators and director of the Brooke Street Pier in Sullivans Cove. Did Mr McKay have any involvement in the Port Arthur ferry tender?

Mr LARGE - None whatsoever. He excludes himself from all meetings in relation to PAHSMA when anything associated with Navigators or Roche Brothers or Brooke Street Pier takes place. I understand the same thing happens with his Navigator's hat on as well.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. So he is quite clear about an actual conflict of interest should he stay when the board deliberates those matters.

Mr LARGE - Absolutely.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

Mr BACON - Were you aware of why the tender was delayed for Maria Island?

Mr JAENSCH - Point of Order, Chair.

CHAIR - Out of order. Ms O'Connor, do you have a follow-up question?

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Professor Sullivan was talking about the increase in visitation, particularly from mainland China. When you have a look at page 27 of the annual report, the bar graph is telling. Clearly, with direct flights from mainland China on the horizon, what is PAHSMA thinking in terms of managing that visitation so you do not (a) have a diminished visitor experience, and (b) potential - for want of a better term - wear and tear on the facilities there?

Prof SULLIVAN - Thank you for that question. We are very concerned about this. We have the same sort of concerns with respect to the rising number of cruise ships. You have seen it down on Salamanca. You will see that it is like an invasion. When there is a cruise ship in for the day,

nobody at Port Arthur does much else, except we have to also look after our ordinary day visitors. We have become aware that we need a carrying capacity study relating to use.

We know this because we have done a lot of work with our colleagues in China. We have worked on carrying capacity studies at Macau in western China. I do not think I would have a Chinese colleague who would have predicted 10 years ago that they now have major problems at their historic sites in China, with too many people. It is frightening to see how quickly this can happen. We have been doing some research on carrying capacity studies elsewhere. We are planning to have a seminar on it. We also have a brief in progress. Jane could tell you more about that than I can, because she has been managing it. We are very actively pursuing a carrying capacity study.

It is important for people to understand that a carrying capacity study does not end up saying 500 or 5000 people can come a day. It is rather more sophisticated than that. It works through the way in which you can manage people on a site so they don't impact. You can have 500 people at a site and if they all go to the same place at once you can have a lot of impact, whereas if you spread people and if you sequence your activities you will have a much better outcome. That is the sort of thing we will be working on.

Ms O'CONNOR - I might throw to Dr Harrington to talk a little bit more about that. The increase in visitation there is sharp and I would imagine it has taken every at PAHSMA a little bit by surprise.

Dr HARRINGTON - We are in the lucky circumstance at the moment where it is recognised as an issue without it becoming critical. That is why we want to do the work now. I will add to Professor Sullivan's comments in that our concern in visitor management is not only the heritage values and the visitor experience but that we are constrained a little by being an organisation. We operate our own wastewater treatment plant and water supply. That is one of the issues we continue to be concerned about as to our core business. Running our own water supply and wastewater treatment is often challenging. Because that has become a larger issue we are working to ensure we understand what our indicators for use are. Clearly, with the cruise ships, which are en masse at any point in time and needing recovery times for resources, it is something we are also looking at.

We recognised when we embarked on our new visitor centre project that one matter we didn't have the resources to deal with was car parking. There is a whole range of indicators we are looking at as part of this but especially visitor experience impact on the heritage fabric and other impact on values, including access to interpretation.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, this follows on from Professor Sullivan's statement regarding cruise ships. Over the period between 23 October 2016 and 2 April 2017, there were 21 cruise ships parked at Port Arthur. As you know, there are cruise ships parking at Port Davey inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, at Binalong Bay, inside the Freycinet National Park. Do you share the concerns of Professor Sullivan about the apparent lack of regulation or any legal framework to prevent this from happening?

Mr HODGMAN - More broadly across the state, industry, communities and government are watching closely the dramatic increase in cruise ship visitation, not only in our established ports but especially in sensitive areas. It is an issue that is now very much of concern to the Premier's Visitor

Economy Advisory Council, which brings together key stakeholders and department officials. It is a matter that does need to be carefully assessed and monitored.

Ms O'CONNOR - You say you are watching it, but there any moves being taken? The Tourism Industry Council is concerned, in fact deeply concerned, about this. I am sure they have made representations to you about it. What is actually being done?

Mr HODGMAN - There is a lot more than just watching. Assessments are being done on the impacts at Port Arthur, for example. Infrastructure upgrades and commitments in our budget have ensured our ports that are able to welcome cruise ships are better equipped. We are investing in infrastructure. It is a matter that is now on the radar as a point of interest for government and industry. I would expect it to continue to be so.

Ms O'CONNOR - What does that mean?

Mr HODGMAN - It will be an ongoing matter of interest for government. If there is a need to prohibit -

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you think it is appropriate that 21 cruise ships park at Port Arthur? Around 15 are coming to Wineglass Bay this year. You have large numbers of cruise ships parking inside sensitive protected areas, World Heritage Areas. Port Arthur is a World Heritage Area and so is Port Davey, and you have the national park at Binalong Bay. Do you think it is acceptable that so many cruise ships are parking inside protected areas?

Mr HODGMAN - They bring significant economic benefit, but we need to balance that against -

Ms O'CONNOR - Not at Wineglass Bay.

Mr HODGMAN - No, I am talking broadly. We are talking about Port Arthur here and 35 601 passengers coming ashore is a lot. They support other local businesses such as eight to 10 coach tours across all areas of the Tasman Peninsula, for example. There are many positive elements and aspects to cruise ships arriving at Port Arthur, but I agree that given the extraordinary growth our visitor economy and tourism industry is experiencing, it is an issue we need to monitor and respond to accordingly.

Ms O'CONNOR - Monitoring is not doing anything.

Mr JAENSCH - Premier, the Government set some ambitious new targets for tourism in our state that are moving from the numbers game we have just been discussing to more nuanced issues of yield and dispersion around the state, particularly outside our major centres. What role can the PAHSMA properties play in helping us to reach and manage these targets?

Mr HODGMAN - Given we have identified three properties, each particularly appealing with World Heritage status and of significance to not only the international community but obviously our local community, we are looking at how we can increase the regional dispersal of visitors, extend their stay and ideally also their expenditure whilst in the state. There is no doubt that these properties play an important role in that. The Port Arthur Historic Site remains the fourth most-visited attraction behind Salamanca Market, MONA and kunanyi/Mount Wellington, and has welcomed over 59 per cent of all holiday visitors to the state, alongside the Three Capes Track,

which continues to exceed expectations with 11 500 adventurers undertaking the trek from Port Arthur in 2016-17. Accessing Port Arthur as well as part of the experience gives people a greater reason to stay in the region. Just over a quarter of the walkers, I am told, choose to stay overnight and join a ghost tour before they depart. It is a wonderful example of adding to the experience by leveraging off this iconic destination but also activating other things in the region for people to stay.

Ms McVILLY - Our research shows 29 per cent of our visitors stay at least one night on the Tasman Peninsula. Of current walkers on the Three Capes experience, 30 per cent of those stay at least one other night after their walk.

Mr JAENSCH - With things like the ghost tour, the accommodation development nearby and the walks in the proximity, are these the sorts of things that enable us to manage carrying capacity so we may be able to retain people in the precinct longer and then manage how they move through a range of different products or attractions?

Prof. SULLIVAN - Yes. That takes a bit of management as we go. We are not completely in control of this, but putting all of those things together enables us to do so. For instance, the ghost tours in the evening are a really good way of spreading people across the site for a longer period, which is always one of the tricks of the trade. If you have a lot of people coming you don't want them all there at 11.00 a.m. It gives us these opportunities to spread our load and also for people to have a diversity of experiences.

Mr LARGE - I know you cut the conversation on cruise ships, but we are a little bit different in relation to Hobart because the cruise ships park in the harbour and people come off by tender, some at 7 a.m. and go back at noon. Those who choose to stay on the cruise ship till lunchtime come off for the afternoon, so not everybody from the cruise ship is on the site at the same time, probably half are, because they have to all get off the ship and all get back on the ship by 4.30 to 5 p.m. when the ship leaves. Whilst we have concerns at the rapid growth, we certainly welcome the business. The visitors who come on cruise ships really enjoy the experience. They get a wonderful trip down there, come off on the tender and then are on a World Heritage site, and the feedback we get from cruise ship clients is how much they like the place, benefit from it and are really pleased to have that experience as part of their cruise.

Ms O'BYRNE - This goes back to the issue we were talking about before which was extensively covered by Mr Groom in the last Estimates where he indicated that there was a role for PAHSMA in the conversations and discussions around the ferry, so I am interested in what broad deliberations took place and exactly what input was given as outlined by Mr Groom at last Estimates.

Mr HODGMAN - In relation to the Maria Island Ferry?

Ms O'BYRNE - The purposes of the ferry. Could you tell us something more about the [??? 3:36:23] you do together? Mr Groom said, 'For the purposes of the ferry we ensured there was representation across each of the key stakeholders', and that was in relation to PAHSMA. That was to ensure we had access to all the different inputs. I am interested in the inputs that Mr Groom said we had an ongoing engagement in.

CHAIR - I do not know whether this is relevant.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is.

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CHAIR - It is not for you to answer, Ms O'Byrne. In regard to the Port Arthur Historic Site Authority I see there is a very minor mention of a report in the annual report but -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Chair. I refer specifically to the coverage of this Estimates in the Legislative Council in 2016 when Mr Groom said that it was a role PAHSMA was having. PAHSMA either has a role or does not. If the minister said there was one last year one assumes that the current minister should be able to identify what deliberations the board have had, given that was Mr Groom said on the record last year.

CHAIR - It is not a point of order but I will seek clarification from the Premier.

Mr HODGMAN - It may more appropriately be something that the CEO might refer to. I am not privy to the context of the discussion the member is referring to, nor indeed the particular interaction of the authority in the Maria Island service.

Mr LARGE - Because of the work we were doing with Parks in relation to Maria Island clearly the transport to and from the island was a concern, and because there was the potential for PAHSMA to have some sort of involvement with Darlington we were asked by Parks to provide a person to be on the tender review committee.

Ms O'BYRNE - Where that heads me to is the delay on the actions that took place around the ferry committee. Has that had an impact on your decisions and your negotiations about your relationship and the future of Maria Island, particularly given that it has been on the table for some time? It is not a new thing.

Mr LARGE - As Jane pointed out, the report was completed by TRC and overseen by a steering group made up of Parks and PAHSMA people. It went to the board and the board agreed with the recommendations in the report. We forwarded the report to the minister outlining the board's position on this and we haven't got a formal response to that as yet.

Ms O'BYRNE - Premier, is the failure to provide a formal response due to the delays and what took place around the ferries? Has that impacted on your failure to provide a response, given that the board obviously have given you their recommendations and you have not seen fit to release it for over a year?

Mr HODGMAN - Not that I am aware of. The points I have referred in previous answers are the pertinent points and they go to quite a significant undertaking to change the management structure, governance structure and funding commitments that would be attached to so doing.

Mr BACON - Can I ask you to clarify that the CEO said that PAHSMA were involved in the tender. Was that the tender that was suspended? When did you become involved? Before the tender was suspended or the second time it was done?

Mr LARGE - The representative was involved throughout the tender process. I don't think it is appropriate that I make comment on a committee that PAHSMA had representation on. That would more a question for the chair of the committee and that is somebody well above my level.

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CHAIR - I will take that as guidance for me so further questions down that line I do not think are appropriate for this Authority to be asked about that so I will rule them out of order unless it is directly relevant to the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.

Mr BACON - These are employees at Port Arthur then who are on this tender group?

Mr LARGE - There was one employee.

Mr BACON - One employee, a visiting employee of PAHSMA?

Mr LARGE - It was me.

Mr BACON - It was you. Okay. You were aware of the reason the tender was suspended?

Mr LARGE - I was part of the tender review and the position we reached was that there would be no comment on the tender process apart from the chair.

Mr BACON - Who was the chair?

Mr LARGE - The chair was the secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment.

Mr BACON - At the time the Government suspended the tender process it was a decision made by the group that only the chair could speak about -

CHAIR - I rule that question completely out of order. It is absolutely nothing to do with this Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority. I will direct a question to Ms O'Connor.

Mr BACON - Except the CEO was part of the tender process.

CHAIR - I am sorry I have ruled it out of order. Ms O'Connor, you have the call.

Mr HODGMAN - No, no that is not -

Mr BACON - That is not true, Premier.

Mr HODGMAN - What is not appropriate is your connections with respect to the scrutiny of this committee as the Chair has pointed out.

Mr BACON - I am keen to ask you questions, Premier.

Mr HODGMAN - That may be so and there are forums in which you can do that but it is an abuse of process to try to utilise what is a scrutiny of PAHSMA to pursue other lines of inquiry.

CHAIR - I have ruled Ms O'Connor has the call.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, as we know Tassal has put salmon in at Long Bay near Port Arthur. As I understand it that is within the line of sight of the Isle of the Dead. Can I ask if you are aware of any concerns raised by visitors to Port Arthur about an industrial fish farm near a world heritage site?

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Mr HODGMAN - I am not aware of any personally. Chief Executive Officer or Chair? No.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, do you think that industrial fish farming in Long Bay there so close to a world heritage site potentially impacts on the world heritage values of that site?

Mr HODGMAN - I have not had any advice to suggest that would be so or that is so.

Ms O'CONNOR - Have you made any inquiries to find out whether it is so?

Mr HODGMAN - I have not received any advice to suggest or to indicate it would be so, no.

Ms O'CONNOR - So as the minister for Tourism and Heritage have you sought advice on the potential impacts on the world heritage values of Port Arthur and the coastline around Port Arthur as a result of an industrial fish farm there?

Mr HODGMAN - The farming operations have to meet the approvals process, which they have done. As far as I am aware, that has not flagged any issues of which the member speaks nor have any being brought to my attention.

Ms O'CONNOR - Was there any consultation - and perhaps I could ask the chief executive officer this or the chair - was there any consultation between Tassal and PAHSMA before the Long Bay lease was revived?

Mr LARGE - Certainly. One of our staff who is an environmental scientist is actually on a consultative committee Tassal has set-up to, I guess, provide information to the community on what is happening with those operations. You can just see from the farm if you are looking at it from the Isle of the Dead. You certainly can't see it from the Port Arthur historic, the main part of the site -

Ms O'CONNOR - No, you see cruise ships instead, often.

Mr LARGE - A very welcome sight too.

Mr STREET - Premier, you mentioned, and the chair mentioned, the redevelopment of the Port Arthur visitor centre can you detail for the committee exactly what that redevelopment means for the site and also for the facility itself?

Mr HIDDING - Yes, certainly. As we have discussed today there is increasing interest in the site. A larger number of visitors coming and the Authority is responding to that. A 9 per cent increase compared to the last year is something that demonstrates again, off the growth in previous years, the need for further investment. The previous visitor centre served well, but the infrastructure was stretched, staff facilities outgrown and the visitor experience was no doubt diminished in the process. PAHSMA responded to the demand with the project for expansion and renovation, as I said in my introduction, being built by Vos Construction, a Tasmanian company. It is around \$13 million and I am advised on budget and on time for an opening within the coming weeks.

It is great news for the local community as well, because as we've discussed, it will provide further flow-on benefits for the Tasman Peninsula community. It is the largest construction project ever undertaken by PAHSMA, entirely self-funded through savings and borrowings, and having visited the building site to see the Historic Site continue to operate around such a major construction

has been very impressive, and a credit not only to the building and construction site, but also the staff on the site.

Completion is expected very soon. The centre was closed completely for visitor access from late May this year, but functions were relocated and the café and gift shop managed to operate in other places. I am sure all the staff - and the Chair might speak a little further to it - will be looking forward to being part of the new centre when it opens, much improved for visitors and staff. It is well expected to adequately meet the anticipated visitor increases for decades to come.

Prof SULLIVAN - We are very pleased with it and as I said the appearance will be good. The footprint is good; the development is sustainable. Because it is in the same place there is a minimum of disturbance. We've taken care, in particular, to make sure that the memorial garden, which is nearby is not impacted visually, but also you don't have a lot of people looking down on it while they are having their dinner, et cetera. It has been carefully sheltered and respected. On the other hand, there will be some spectacular views from the visitor centre out over the site for people doing some fine dining.

We actually do find, and have found, before we closed Felons Restaurant it was becoming increasingly popular, not only for visitors, but also people on the Peninsula for somewhere to go and dine. We hope to continue that.

We hope to have increased the quality, as well as the quantity, of our services. As I said we are, and Ann has been particularly consultative of our staff that they had a major input into the design for the visitor centre. The first thing we did was to find out what the main pressure points were from their point of view. A lot of that has been driven by our staff's requirements. Anne, do you want to add to that?

Ms McVILLY - If I may, we have found in peak periods the spend per visitor was decreased because of overcrowding. Our highest spend is in August when we have smaller visitor numbers. By expanding our services making it easy for people to buy a meal -

Mr STREET - Increase the yield from it.

Ms McVILLY - Absolutely. And it has created five more permanent jobs already.

Ms O'BYRNE - Premier, in evidence to the GBE Estimates committee last year Mr Groom talked about the role of PAHSMA and the ferry contract. The CEO, Mr Large, has said that he was part of the tender panel. The CEO has also said that the panel itself made a decision not to comment on it. I would like to know from you when you knew about it and whether or not you feel that the decision made by the tender panel is somehow more important than the questions of a committee of parliament in this House?

Mr JAENSCH - Point or order, Chair. I challenge relevance of this, please, to the terms of reference of this committee.

Ms O'CONNOR - The bouncers have chimed in.

Mr JAENSCH - Seriously.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

CHAIR - It isn't an activity, performance or practices, or the economic management of the Port Arthur Management Authority. Your question relates to a person involved in another committee, I rule it out of order.

Ms O'BYRNE - To the point of order.

CHAIR - I rule it out of order. Ask another question.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Chair. This is a matter that has been discussed in previous Estimates because it is a responsibility of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority because they do have an ongoing and future relationship with Maria Island. The CEO of PAHSMA sat on the tender panel which made a decision not to talk publicly about it. This is a committee of the Parliament of Tasmania, we have a right to ask these questions about the actions, engagement and input of PAHSMA and their CEO in the decisions around the ferry. It beggars belief the Premier cannot answer any of those questions, when he knew, what he knew and whether regarding the questions about PAHSMA the commitment on the panel is more important than the answers to this Parliament.

CHAIR - Thank you, Ms O'Byrne. I have heard your lengthy description of the point of order. I will rule that it is not an activity, a performance or a practice or economic management question in regard to PAHSMA, so I rule it out of order. Please ask another question, otherwise I will direct the call to another member.

Ms O'BYRNE - We move a motion of dissent.

CHAIR - Could I have that in writing, please? I suspend the hearing until the Speaker rules.

The committee suspended from 3.52 p.m. to 4.01 p.m.

CHAIR - I advise that the Speaker has provided me with a message:

I uphold the ruling of the Chair. The order of the House provides that the committee may ask for explanations relating to the activities, performance, practices and economic management of the Government business under scrutiny. Questioning regarding the CEO's involvement in other capacities does not fall in -

Mr BACON - In his capacity as the CEO.

CHAIR - Order, order.

Questioning regarding the CEO's involvement in other capacities does not fall within the scope of inquiry of the committee.

Signed by the Speaker, Mr Mark Shelton.

As the time of 4 o'clock has passed, the scrutiny of PAHSMA has expired. I have closed the scrutiny. Thank you very much for your attendance.

The Committee adjourned at 4 p.m.