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### **THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT THE PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE OFFICE, CRADLE MOUNTAIN, TASMANIA ON WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2017**

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#### **CRADLE MOUNTAIN GATEWAY PRECINCT AND VISITOR CENTRE**

**Mr ANDREW ROBERTS**, DIRECTOR COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES, **Mr NIC DEKA**, REGIONAL MANAGER NORTH-WEST, **Mr RALF ZENKE**, PROJECT MANAGER, CRADLE MOUNTAIN VISITOR CENTRE, PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND **Mr PETER WALKER**, ARCHITECT, CUMULUS STUDIO, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mrs Rylah) - I would like to pass on our thanks for a lovely lunch to Parks; it was a delight today, so thank you very much. Thank you for appearing before the committee. The committee is pleased to hear your evidence today.

Just before you begin giving your evidence I will inform you of some of the important aspects of the committee proceedings. A committee hearing is a proceeding of the Parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament. It applies to ensure that Parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceeding. This is a public hearing and members of the public and journalists may be present. This means that your evidence may be reported. Would any of you like to make an opening statement?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Thanks for the chance to show you our exciting project. I am sure that just having been out in the field and having had a look, you can see particularly that end of the airstrip view, that wow factor that we're hoping this project will bring. The project itself is a culmination of a lot of planning and effort over the years in building up Cradle Mountain as an icon for Tasmania for tourism, for World Heritage Area conservation and visitor enjoyment. The project we are developing now is the outcome of the Cradle Mountain Master Plan that was put together in cooperation with the tourism industry and the Cradle Coast Authority.

We have a steering committee overseeing the projects, which is chaired by John Perry, the Coordinator-General, and includes representatives from DPIPW, Parks and Wildlife, State Growth, Infrastructure, the Cradle Coast Authority and Kentish Council, all of which contribute the elements of the projects that affect their jurisdictions, so we have a very broad input to the project. The Coordinator-General is also working with some federal money that was made available to explore the cableway possibilities and helping to advance as much as possible the private sector investment we can get into this project to extend its reach and the quality of what we do as far as the visitor experience goes.

The task itself we are looking at is the Cradle Gateway precinct. The \$21 million-odd that was provided by the state Government extends to cover work at Dove Lake but that will be a separate part of the project and we have funds set aside for that. We are not going to chew up all the funds

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on this part and have nothing left for that part because we hear from tourism industry that the Dove Lake side of the project is, in their view, as important as if not more important than this area. Obviously everybody has their own values on where the most money should be spent, but overall all these bits will go to maintain and develop Cradle Mountain as that thing to come to Tasmania for and obviously for locals to experience as well. You have been out there today and got it on a beautiful day. On a bad day it is still a stunning place, but the challenge is in providing a good experience in all those weathers and all those environments and hence the need for this project.

We are intending to focus on the visitor arrival point which is intended to promote a village precinct feel in the development. The idea is that in time that village will grow initially along the crown land flanking the car parking area and then potentially into the private land that surrounds the area in the future, but it will be up to those landowners to take that opportunity up.

As you can imagine, there are more buildings there than we can fund with the government dollars by themselves, so one of the challenges we have is finding that ideal mix of getting in investment, leaseholds and who will construct whichever way we go, but what we are making clear today is the vision and the objective as you see it. A village precinct is the objective of what we are trying to achieve for the project.

I would like to add an addendum to the paper that was provided that identifies and makes very clear that the steering committee is still exploring the investment equation, the investment mix. There was a feeling that was not completely clear in the papers but this addendum should address that.

**CHAIR** - You are tabling that, Andrew?

**Mr ROBERTS** - I am tabling that addendum in evidence. It is not new information, it is just explaining what I have said.

As I identified, in the visitors centre building there are restaurant, café and retail opportunities. Ideally if we can get investors in who might build parts of these buildings, we could build more parts of the site. We will take it from there, but fundamentally we will be delivering a visitor arrival point, gateway reception, tour operator base, inground infrastructure, car parking and all the fundamentals that are required and then we will be enhancing that further the more investment we get.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Before I open the hearing up, I have two small questions which I think your letter partly clarifies. The Governor's message speaks of \$17 450 000 and yet the total in the financials in our submission is \$21.8 million. I gather that we are to exclude \$4.5 million?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Yes, that's what I identified as what is being quarantined, kept aside, for the Dove Lake viewing shelter and that piece of the project. The steering committee was very keen that we quarantined that money so it did not end up short at the end of the project, given that has to go through a separate development approval pathway because it is within the national park within the World Heritage Area.

**CHAIR** - The elements we are approving today in this budget summary are the visitor centre for \$7 million, civil works and site services for \$6.1 million, design contingency of \$655 000 and construction contingency of \$1.310 million, for a total of \$15.065 million, and another \$2.450 million in contingencies or set aside for Dove Lake.

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**Mr ROBERTS** - No. Contingencies are always hard to explain on these projects at Cradle Mountain. The loadings for contingencies up here often can get as high as 20 per cent because it is the most expensive place in the state to build. That is why there is a large contingency in the project.

**CHAIR** - I am trying to work out exactly what the \$17.450 million is going to cover. There is \$15.065 million for the first five elements, so what is the remaining money for?

**Mr ROBERTS** - In front of you is a paper identifying that this money will be spent to provide the gateway building or visitor centre, the car parking, the in-grounds and all the other things that were explained there. Depending on our investment mix and how much we can pre-sell leases or get one of the wings of that building potentially owned and built by a retail operator that frees up money to be spent on the rest of the projects. I want to make it clear we are not locking the options into that one building and one model all government-funded. If we can get private sector investment, more of those buildings will be built.

**CHAIR** - Right. I just want to be clear of what this committee is approving.

**Mr LLEWELLYN** - It seems to me we are approving the \$15.065 million and, even though it is listed in the project, \$4 million is being set aside for Dove Lake.

**Mr VALENTINE** - There is still \$2.5 million outstanding.

**CHAIR** - Yes, and I am trying to find out what that is for.

**Mr GROOM** - What is the other \$2.5 million for?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Chapter 5 says project delivery and has it listed. I think that's what you're trying to clarify.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that is what I am trying to clarify. I am trying to help but I do not want to put words into your mouth. If we exclude the second section on page 19 and just go to the \$15.065 million, and turn the page and go to the project delivery costs of \$2.3 million and the two items under that, is that -

**Mr ROBERTS** - I will ask Peter to explain the project delivery costs.

**Mr ZENKE** - The project delivery costs are consultancy costs, including salaries.

**Mr WALKER** - No, but some of those project delivery costs are specific for Dove Lake and some of them are specific for the gateway. That \$2.3 million for consultant costs and project delivery would be divided partially between Dove Lake and -

**Mr VALENTINE** - So 70:30 or something like that?

**Mr WALKER** - Yes, along those lines.

**Mr LLEWELLYN** - Are we being asked to approve something that has not been designed yet at Dove Lake?

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**Mr ROBERTS** - No, we are not seeking that approval.

**Mr LLEWELLYN** - We need to be able to subdivide that project delivery cost into the two items, if that is the case.

**Mr ROBERTS** - We can give you a clearer breakdown of that, if I can take that on notice to provide that, if that is okay.

**CHAIR** - Yes please. We need it exactly for the \$17.450 million as per the Governor's message. We need to understand exactly what we are doing and compare it to the figures we have here so that we understand that.

**Mr ROBERTS** - I will provide you with figures that are purely related to the costs of delivery of the gateway precinct which we are assessing today.

**CHAIR** - And explain to us how it relates to what we have seen here in these figures. Okay, questions?

**Mr VALENTINE** - Given the type of environment it is and the fact you are going to be operating within that environment at the same time as construction is occurring, can you explain to us the project management side of how you are intending to minimise the impact the construction will have on daily operations?

**Mr ROBERTS** - The key for this project, and the beauty of the site location, is that the gateway precinct area can be built while the existing area remains fully operational. That area will be done to the point where people can move in. All that would be remaining then would be to remove the previous buildings plus finish off about 20 per cent of the car park that the building is sitting on top of.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I am interested in noise minimisation and those sorts of things during peak visitor times during the day. Is there any blasting that has to take place, for example? How is that side of it being managed to minimise the impact on our international visitors who are coming here for a good experience?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Like a lot of these projects, you have to do that with good information and warning if things like blasting were to happen. It is unlikely there would be blasting on the site, it would be more core digging and things. We have done some geology work and we know where the true base is underneath and all that sort of thing. All of it will take management. When we have built these at other sites we have mostly found that as long as you can inform the visitors what is happening and they can see it is going to improve on what is there, their tolerance is usually fairly high.

**Mr DEKA** - We have commenced development of a visitor management strategy for the period of construction. In large part that will wait until we know exactly who the contractor is going to be for the development because we will need to work with that contractor to finish that off, but the primary aim of that strategy will be to ensure the visitor experience is maintained to the extent it can. Obviously there will always be some impacts.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It's probably not likely to have more impact than helicopters coming backwards and forwards.

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**Mr GROOM** - You have included in the submission some projections as to visitor numbers. As was mentioned earlier, we have seen very significant increases in visitor numbers, so how confident are you in the projections identified here? In the event they may be exceeded, what is the capacity of this design to cope with that in the future?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Perhaps we can answer that in two parts. Peter can talk about he has considered it in the design and then we can give you the projections.

**Mr WALKER** - The design is based around those projections; however, there is some room in that. The village strategy is that you disperse people amongst a number of buildings. Having a large forecourt was partly to allow people to wander so you are diminishing peak loads on the building and are not having every single person arriving at once. The building has a lot of circulation space and that is also intentional. We have sized the initial ticketing area for not only peak loads but for a large amount of waiting space that deals with the future projections. There are also circulation spaces and interpretation spaces that allow us to disperse people throughout the building.

It is not just relying on those figures; it allows for disbursement throughout the site, with a reasonable expectation that people will then hop on a shuttle bus or other form of transport and move on to other things or go into the café. Once you consider all of those it accommodates for those figures easily, so there is capacity left over, I guess.

**Mr DEKA** - In terms of the projections, it is never an easy matter trying to project where things will go to, so we've made best effort to come up with a sensible answer to that question. The extrapolation we've done is basically 30 years down the track, so that is around 2045 to 2050 and our estimate is between 400 000 and 500 000 visitors at that point in time. The way we've arrived at that is we've simply used the 2.5 per cent compounding growth for that period of time. Obviously we're not going to get a consistent 2.5 per cent compounding growth, but, as experience will show, you get peaks and you also get troughs. If we look at recent history at Cradle, we had pretty steady growth through the 1990s and into the early 2000s. It peaked at 184 000 visitors in 2005-06 and then there was a decline. It declined to 151 000 and then there was a steady increase of perhaps 3 to 4 per cent per annum. In the last two years we've experienced an extraordinary 16 per cent per annum.

Is 16 per cent per annum going to continue? No, it simply won't. There are all sorts of constraints that will occur to put the lid on that growth. Some of those things are well and truly beyond our control: if the Australian dollar rises in value that is going to affect visitor numbers into Australia; if we have another global financial crash that will affect tourism. If aviation fuel rises that could affect things. We believe that a 2.5 per cent compounding percentage is a reasonable way to project numbers into the future. As Peter just said, that is the number that we've based the size of the buildings on, but there is additional opportunity for dispersal.

**Mr ROBERTS** - Okay. I can add a bit more to that: that 2.5 per cent compounding also is compatible with the Government's objective for a million-and-a-half visitors by 2020-21, so that is compatible with that objective. This has been discussed through the steering committee, because there are all different ways you can do it these figures were based on Parks visits actual figures. Also, you could base it on the tourism visitor survey that Tourism Tasmania runs.

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With that in mind the Office of the Co-ordinator General has recently contracted the BDA Marketing Planning company to rerun the figures on projections, but even that company would say they don't stand on any projection over seven years. They won't give their name to that, but they can give you a general idea. Things after seven years are too far unforeseeable to put a projection on. We are taking it best guess and best information available and we are brave enough to go back and recheck the numbers, as we are in the project right now.

**Mr LLEWELLYN** - Just extending on that question - car parking and the like are obviously important factors in that sort of equation about growth. Are any special issues there related to that, the number of spaces et cetera?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Yes, the challenge with these sites is you have to try to build a really attractive car park for the majority of days, but not the peak days. If you build a car park for the peak days, you would have a tarmac. The idea is we build for the majority of the days, but with overflow capacity. The idea is the unsurfaced area of the airstrip land that is already car park at the northern end provides overflow capacity for the foreseeable future. What we are building is a 270-car capacity in the new car park with the option to overflow further into the other area.

**Mr DEKA** - I think the overflow has 350.

**Mr WALKER** - At least, and it can extend further.

**Mr DEKA** - Yes, and there is a large part of that airstrip envelope that will be quarantined for future growth.

**Mr ROBERTS** - The other consideration is also the way people are getting here. The recent bigger number increases are also attributable to cruise ships and bus tours. They come in big numbers on buses so part of this design also allows room for coach parking. That is less cars but coaches need special treatment as well. They don't like mixing up their parking with car parking.

**Mr FARRELL** - I noticed reading through the submission there is quite a bit of talk about public/private partnerships. Is this the first time Parks has gone into public/private partnerships at this sort of scale?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Probably in this scale, but there are plenty of examples where there has been leasehold investment - Lake St Clair, half of that building and all the cabins and camp grounds are run by private operators. The camp ground here is leased out and run by a private operator. It is fairly common. This one is a bit different in that it is not a national park, it is a village. This is the village that supports the experience on the edge of the national park so it is more private involvement. Hence the project is not just a Parks and Wildlife project; this is a government project to enhance the opportunities here.

**Mr FARRELL** - Where have the lines of responsibility gone so far as what Parks does and what the Coordinator-General's office does? How does that fit in with the process so far?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Largely cooperative, but we know construction, managing people and visitor services, so we are focusing on that side. The Coordinator-General's focus is more on the master planning, proving up the investment and all that side of things. Another tangential project we've identified is a shortcoming in staff housing that is involving the whole valley, not just Parks. All our sites at the moment, as demand for accommodation goes up it is harder and harder to find

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affordable accommodation for staff. The Coordinator-General is also running another project in cooperation with us but they are leading it to look at using some of the government land near the camp ground as a potential site for private investment in staff housing, and it would be limited to that. Only those staff of local business operations can be accommodated there. That way we can get a village feel going for staff but we can also have affordability and delivery. We can help retain staff because they have a decent base.

**Mr FARRELL** - What models have you looked at for the operation of the centre? I image there would be various different way you can do that.

**Mr ROBERTS** - There are some public bits you probably can't get away from - circulation spaces and things like that, cafes, restaurants, retail, all of that mix. If you aware of the Brooke Street Pier in Hobart, that is almost the reverse. That was a private initiative but within that pier there are designated areas because the Government contributed to that project. They said, 'For our money we want designated public areas where you can't exclude the public'. There are public toilets provided in that building and businesses are allowed to come in and set up in those partitions. We imagine a similar thing with our tour operators, that we are making room for those things to come in. Albeit in the same building, you might have a different layering of offerings, like Brooke Street Pier, where you get to the top of the building and you are paying a premium for that experience.

**Mr FARRELL** - There are already a number of private operators around this area so what impact is this development going to have on their businesses?

**Mr ROBERTS** - At the moment the words we hear most often are, 'I'm interested'. They are all very interested in the opportunities this site might provide to enhance their own businesses. So until we put the rubber to the road we won't know what that mix will be. It is a combination of them directly being involved, but most of them are also saying once this is done they will have confidence to invest on their own land, to put that next level of accommodation in. A lot of the accommodation offering hasn't advanced in volume for quite some time and they are saying, 'If you put in this, we'll come to the party'. That is what we are hearing.

**Mr FARRELL** - If this goes ahead, is there any chance that some private developer may stick up a tower in front of the new visitors centre and ruin all your good work on this one?

**Mr ROBERTS** - The local planning scheme restricts that at the moment and it would be a very brave council to change that, I would have thought. The drop off is so quick there would be no need for it but one of the attractions of the signature building being at the end of there is that it cannot be grown or built out. Where we had it in the middle in the original concept, if you look at it now, what seven years ago was a great view of Cradle Mountain, well, now you can't see it because the trees have grown up.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Just on that theme, with respect to the Park's operational costs, is the model structured to provide a certain return back to Parks to assist with that operational aspect and you are not depending on consolidated revenue?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Our premise is to be no extra cost out of it. It is often the way and the reality is that governments often fund divisions like Parks in capital rather than in large recurrent. Things like this, if we are building a building space part of the investment equation we would be seeking to buy the bits we would operate, not necessarily have to pay rent to someone ongoing into the future because that would be an extra cost we don't currently have. We currently get rental income

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from the cafe that operates in the existing centre so that will have to be matched into the equation but the fundamental revenue source for the management of the park and the experience is through park entry fees and the recovery of the cost of running the transport system.

**Mr VALENTINE** - There are probably other questions during Estimates, the minister and things.

I am interested in the event space you spoke of. In the preamble, page 5, in the blue writing where the visitor experience master plan talks about the village feeling acting as a visitor and community space. Then further down it says 'with an impressive central opening by creating a focal point for a range of community gatherings and events'. Have you thought through the sorts of events that might use that space and how they might impact on the general environment? Have you thought about the sort of strictures that might be in place as to what people can do in that space? The reason I ask this is because it would dictate how many people you are likely to have in that space at any one time and whether the facilities we are building now can cope with that level of visitation for one-off events?

**Mr DEKA** - Perhaps I can answer that. It is an interesting question: are the events that currently come to Cradle limited by the opportunity they have, or vice versa? If you look at what we currently get, it is not adequately serviced. That perhaps in part explains the answer. We generally get quite a few requests for events but they are not major, large-scale events. They tend to be more boutique events. One is the Cradle Mountain Film Festival which has recently emerged. That is probably only about three years old but they would desperately like an outdoor viewing space. They thought about trying to have it down at Dove Lake but, my word, you would be in the lap of the weather gods down there so they have not gone there and there is no other venue suitable for a large gathering. That is one existing event that would use that space.

Festival of Voices, as a satellite, and 10 Days on the Island with various artistic events. They have searched for space at Cradle Mountain and there is really nothing suitable. It is those sorts of events that I think are going to lend themselves to the space that is created. There are lots of other events as in touring events that visit Cradle Mountain. In terms of have we developed guidelines and parameters around what might occur? Inevitably that would have to occur because you would want your events to be compatible with the overall visitor experience you are trying to create.

**Mr VALENTINE** - In thinking about that my main concern are the toilet facilities, other facilities like green rooms and things like that. Has that been thought about? I do not think you would be having a rock concert there because it would not fit the environment, I would hope, but maybe you could tell me that is not excluded. You are going to have a lot of people demanding certain amenities at one time that will far exceed what your general visitation would cope with.

**Mr DEKA** - If there is a large peak load, you would probably need to hire portaloos and bring them in. The toilet facilities that will be constructed will be able to be isolated so you can lock up your main buildings but they are still accessible externally.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You have covered it as far as we can see at this point.

**Mr LLEWELLYN** - I am interested in the actual program and the time of the substantial work. Construction will start next July, according to this information, and finish the next year in 2019. Given the discussions about cable car arrangements, vis-a-vis shuttle buses, whether or not this program precludes construction of a cable car simultaneously with the program here.



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**Mr ROBERTS** - As much as we can make compatible at this stage is being considered in the building design, the flank of the building where the ground floor in the current design is for the shuttle bus base to leave. The building has been designed that the cableway could come in on the first floor and those functions can be flipped. That is compatible that way.

As far as co-construction with the cableway, there is a lot of water to go under the bridge to secure a cableway construction. We are moving as quickly as we can with the approval pathways to do this. If the cableway were approved and an investor came along, I daresay we could match it in. At this stage we have not considered that in the construction window.

**Mr LLEWELLYN** - The other issue back - on the private/public arrangements. I hope we have, over time, learned from a lot of mistakes in this area. You mentioned the accommodation at Lake St Clair, because there was longstanding - many years' - litigation associated with that arrangement at Lake St Clair. I hope that has been taken into account.

**Mr ROBERTS** - I very much hope so, too.

**Mr GROOM** - Is that a confession?

**Mr LLEWELLYN** - It is not a confession from my point of view.

*Laughter.*

**Mr ROBERTS** - There is a lot of learning in all this and in a lot of those learnings there are often complexities in why things happen. You can guarantee we will not be trying to repeat anything that did not work.

**CHAIR** - Turning to the building, Peter, can you outline what is it intended to be constructed of? How will the interface work with a thousand people per day? I want to know about heating, the acoustics of the building in those open spaces, and I have a few more after that.

**Mr WALKER** - With construction and materials, at the moment we have done what is called the concept stage and we are about to move into design, development and documentation. While we have broad thoughts on construction, a lot of the development of that is in the next package of work. Having said that, we have already had concept design meetings with the structural engineers to work out broadly how everything works and how it will stay together.

We are working through a number of options in terms of what the cladding material will be, but generally we are proposing it is a masonry-type building, which means cement or some sort of concrete base. There are couple of reasons for that. One is, we want the building to have a civic nature to it.

It is the main building on the site and has a solidness to it that has a civic feel. Other issues we have in consideration are to do with maintenance and upkeep, so a material that will be long-wearing, have an embodied energy in it, a thermal mass that helps with the stability of the internal environment and temperature et cetera. I guess the two options we are considering at the moment relate to whether it is concrete that is poured on site - and we have already talked to concrete batchers about mobilising a portable concrete batching plant up here at Cradle and what issues that might have - versus having something that is more of a panelised system brought in from

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somewhere else. There are advantages and disadvantages with each, so we're working through that, but essentially a masonry construction.

**CHAIR** - On the outside you talk about developing a patina et cetera but concrete doesn't develop much of a patina.

**Mr WALKER** - No, that's not correct; there is concrete and concrete. The type of finish we have in mind is not just a precast poured slab. I could show you many examples of concrete buildings that you would not even realise because over time they have moss growing on them -

**Mr VALENTINE** - Henty House is a good example.

**Mr WALKER** - Henty House is an example of that. Even for the finishes that you put on the concrete, you can pour them so they have a pattern on them or an exposed aggregate. We're looking at those type of things. We don't envisage the building being like a Big W - that would be the worst-case scenario in our view - but something that represents more of a stone-like quality. Shale is probably a good example in that it is something that comes from the site and has a texture that weathers over time. We're not looking at something that has a polished flat finish to it. Even in some of the renderings, you would have noticed there is a texture to the surfaces.

In terms of acoustics et cetera, the spaces are quite large. Internally there is a mixture of hard and soft finishes as well. What we're considering at the moment internally lining with a material called Autex, which is kind of an acoustic panel-type material that absorbs some of that sound. That was one of the early briefing components from Parks and Wildlife because in the current centre it is really hard to hear people, so we are trying to deaden that sound and you can do that not only through ceiling treatment but also in the joinery and those sorts of things and providing some soft finishes in there. The other way of deadening sound is by having gaps in between some of the surfaces so the soundwaves get captured in the skin, so we are looking at those kind of finishes as well.

**CHAIR** - What about the interface of dealing with 1000 people per day in peak times?

**Mr WALKER** - If I get you to turn to appendix 3, the drawing number is DA17 on the second page down the bottom. There is a space labelled RMO1, or room 1, which is a covered entry space. That is the main arrival space and then going through an airlock that is an undercover space that is sheltered and out of the elements. The idea is to form a transition between the inside and outside and places where people can linger without going into the building but still be under cover, maybe take their backpack off, get rid of their raincoat and those types of things. Then the main space, which is labelled room 15, is a foyer/ticketing space. There is a long counter space. The idea is that from that space you have a view to the mountain and we also have a line-up area similar to where you wait for the buses at the moment. Already before you get to that counter the initial briefing was that you are potentially met by a concierge of some sort who asks what type of thing you are after and points you in the right direction, so already you are being given a little bit of information about where you need to go.

That space well and truly accommodates the peak loads we are expecting in terms of the projected visitor numbers of people. What I didn't mention is that the toilet spaces are off to the left as you come in. As Nic said earlier, they can be accessed directly from outside or they can be accessed from inside the visitor centre, so they can be used independently. There is a café space in the top corner, which we envisage as potentially one of the lease opportunities. Then you are

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funnelled from the ticketing area through the circulation corridor space and you are then funnelled through to the bus waiting area, or there is a central staircase and lift core where you can go upstairs to enjoy the view and restaurant and bar facilities.

**CHAIR** - And you believe that will deal with 1000 people a day? There are 10 loos there. That's 100 flushes per loo per day. Could the loos cope with that?

**Mr WALKER** - There are toilets upstairs and in the bus area as well. There are two lots of toilets on the ground floor. There are also toilets in the village part of the site as well that will be implemented as part of the longer term vision, so you are not trying to collect and deal with everybody in this one building. In terms of people numbers, there is enough space. It doesn't deal with 1000 people turning up all at one time. Those 1000 people happen over a period of time. Having a village, as I was saying earlier, was part of trying to disperse people through the site. Not everybody arrives at once but it deals with peak loads of 200 to 300 people at one time and dispersing those.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You have disability access through the lift and all that sort of thing?

**Mr WALKER** - Yes.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Presumably the entry points are all -

**Mr WALKER** - Exactly. Not only that, we were talking with bus operators as to how we provide disabled access onto the shuttle buses.

**Mr VALENTINE** - In that plan, which one is the viewing point to the Cradle? There is another diagram here that shows people looking out a window, so I am interested to know which one of these components is that?

**Mr WALKER** - That is taken from where the entry is. There is a number there which is 868900, just under where it says 'Visitor centre ground floor/visitor services'. The image is taken roughly from that point of view. It has the long counter on the right-hand side and the big window, so you're looking at the window which forms the window to the viewing terrace.

**CHAIR** - Could you describe how this building is going to be heated?

**Mr WALKER** - We haven't settled on any system in particular at the moment. Our brief to the mechanical electrical engineer working with our environmental engineer is that we are looking for something that is not only low maintenance but ongoing and works with the embodied energy of the building. Part of the idea of having the masonry building was that it captures that and has a very stable temperature. The courtyard space faces mainly towards the north so we are trying to capture a lot of the sun and have glazing towards the north as well. As for a final system, we haven't settled on anything at the moment.

**CHAIR** - But will these costings you are asking us to approve include the heating system?

**Mr WALKER** - Yes. The costing has been based on assumptions of square metre rates for a decent mechanical system that would have as part of that some sort of heat transfer system or something like that. We will work within that budget to provide whatever the final heating system is.

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**CHAIR** - I am assuming the windows will be double-glazed in this building and most of the building faces north into the courtyard, but to face south to get the view you have to have big windows that are absolutely unpassive solar so you will be having a lot of heat loss to the south. How are you dealing with that?

**Mr WALKER** - Unfortunately many sites in Tasmania are like that. The best way to deal with it is to build up that glazing to as high a performance as we can, with double-glazing being a minimum standard and having thermally broken frames et cetera, but also trying to capture as much of the heat we gain from the north into the masonry services so that can then be cycled through the building. It is, unfortunately, a given that we are going to lose heat through those windows and it is just a matter of trying to insulate the rest of the building such as the roofs et cetera. As a general rule we over-insulate those other surfaces so we are trapping as much of the heat as we can.

**CHAIR** - In looking at this design there are a number of gaps. I presume they are doorways that don't have doors drawn on the drawing, so I would assume the building is going to be an enclosed space.

**Mr WALKER** - There are lockers and there is a door drawn where it says 'Storage', so that is intended to be an external space so you could enter the toilets without having to go inside.

**CHAIR** - So that's an open space?

**Mr WALKER** - That is an open space. A lot of the building is an undercover area. It is outside but covered, and some of the areas around the outside of the building have large veranda spaces so that people could collect under the building even if it is not being operated.

**Mr LLEWELLYN** - The airlock there looks like it is open at one end.

**Mr WALKER** - Which airlock?

**Mr LLEWELLYN** - Where you were talking about before with the lockers and storage. Just behind that is the room 02 airlock.

**Mr WALKER** - They are sliding doors, so they are both drawn open. The internal space will be a controlled environment. What I am trying to point out is there will be a large number of spaces that are transition-type spaces that are inside but accessible from the outside without having to go through the building. Does that makes sense?

**CHAIR** - Yes, but we want to be sure what we are approving makes sense.

**Mr WALKER** - Where the airlock is will be completely enclosed and the door to room 14, which is the viewing terrace, has a sliding door on it so that will close off. There will be a completely enclosed environment we can heat and control.

**CHAIR** - It does explain that. When I looked at the airlock at the other end of the building in the second drawing I did not understand they were sliding doors. To me it looked like a wind tunnel.

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**Mr WALKER** - It is very hard to show those sometimes on CAD because if you draw them closed they do not look like doors.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I am always intrigued that we don't design solar panels into developments like this or ways of capturing the solar gain we have with that north-facing site with enclosed boards that build heat which you then pump through the building. Did you think about those sorts of things? Is the budget not big enough to do solar panels or evacuator tubes to heat water? Is there a reason that is not in there?

**Mr WALKER** - That is part of the next stage for us in exploring all those things. That is why we have an environmental engineer on board. From my experience, the pay-off on solar panels to provide electricity is still dubious, whereas there is a lot of benefit in having solar hot water and running hydronic systems et cetera. Hydronic systems are excellent but they are very expensive, so it is a matter of trying to balance some of that up. None of those has been discounted at the moment. There is a generous allowance within the budget for a heating system of some sort, but what that is at the moment is part of this next stage in working that out.

**Mr VALENTINE** - I am drawing on my own experience of one particular building and a chemical engineer building a void into his house simply to capture the solar gain and heat the air with a simple 38 watt pump pumping it through the slab. It worked beautifully and didn't have any hydronics associated with it. It was simply air moving through the building and it seemed to me a very simple thing. I wondered whether you have thought about that sort of thing, given the fact that you have such a wonderfully positioned building with hardly anything blocking the sun coming into it. That was the reason for the question and I think you've answered it, but it would be good to see some of these tricks used in the future.

**CHAIR** - Any more questions?

**Mr VALENTINE** - When we were on-site having a look, you were talking about the car park and how you were intending to get advanced shrubs and trees in there to soften it. Perhaps you could explain to us how you are going to do that or what you are doing there for the record. As to stormwater, I think there were some problems with that but I can't remember who I was talking to about it.

**Mr WALKER** - Because of the site and its location we were keen that it did not feel like a car park that you would have at a supermarket or an airport but appropriate for the site. We also were keen that we weren't running culverts, kerbing and those types of things that you find in more civic spaces. To deal with water run-off and stormwater et cetera into the landscaping in the forecourt of the civic area, we are building in tarns that will collect the water as it runs off harder surfaces so that it can seep back into the ground and it is dealt with that way. Not only is that a probably more environmentally sensitive way of doing it, it also introduces landscaping into those civic spaces and helps us break them up and form part of the way finding and leading you through the spaces. We talked about the events earlier on and part of our thinking was that if you used the landscaping to divide up spaces you can have smaller or larger events as well.

**Mr DEKA** - Just in terms of vegetation, we know it's incredibly difficult to rehabilitate at this site so to that extent we are trying to retain as much of the existing vegetation as possible and build

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that into the design. We have already engaged a very good nurseryman who has already collected and begun propagating for rehabilitation where it is going to occur.

**Mr VALENTINE** - How are your toilets being fed? Are they being fed from stormwater receptacles or how is that working?

**Mr DEKA** - That's a tricky business. At the moment the major water supply to the site is a dam that exists above Discovery Park. We have had concerns about the volume of that storage, particularly the year before last, which was incredibly dry, and we ended up having to introduce some water restrictions. The reason I went 'Ah' and smiled is because when the sewage treatment plant was put in, it was intended to use recycled water from it to supply things like toilets. Unfortunately the completion of the plant coincided with a change in the Australian standard for recycled water and we found we weren't able to use that recycled water, despite the fact that all of the piping had been put in as part of the reticulation.

We had some discussions at that time with TasWater which advised it would probably cost \$2 million to \$3 million to upgrade the plant. Since then, though, we've pursued it through some different avenues and we're led to believe it would probably cost around \$30 000 to fit a system to the recycled water header tank, which sits up behind Trackys Camp, and then we can supply toilets. If we're using that recycled water to supply toilets, the volume we currently have in the dam storage is probably sufficient, because toilets consume an enormous amount of water. TasWater did commit to going through all the risk management processes to address that back in November, but then went a bit quiet on it. I have just recently reinitiated discussions on that, but I'm very hopeful that we will be able to resolve that matter and have the toilet facilities for the new gateway site fed from the recycled water tank.

**Mr VALENTINE** - When you say 'recycled water' you're talking about recycled black water?

**Mr ROBERTS** - The major project of the Government in the past has been putting in this sewage treatment system for the whole valley and the piping that has been done for that includes the trenches to all the properties, including this area and they have extended it to this site as well, is a water supply pipe that is currently not used but is there for the future, there is the sewage takeaway and the recycling one. Basically the sewage is taken to the treatment plant and treated and then it comes back through a recycled pipe and goes to the header tank at the top of the hill. If it is not required, it continues on and is deposited in the Pencil Pine Creek at a prescribed rate that we have to control because the background levels have to not be competing with each other.

On that basis you have reticulated recycled water running through the whole community already but it hasn't been accessed because of this change in standard. At the time the design projection was that if there was take-up of recycled water for grey water for all the new developments, there would be a reduction of water needed by 30 per cent. We still have the objective that we would run this centre with reticulated recycled water and, ideally, any new development would be double-piped as well to enable toilets and things to be run with recycled water.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Are you satisfied your water supply is going to be able to cope with the growth in visitor numbers and for this particular development?

**Mr DEKA** - There are two options. If we can get access to the recycled water, which we are reasonably confident we can, then yes. If not, we will have to increase the volume of the storage

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but we have already done the feasibility on that and we can do it. Our preference is not to enlarge the storage if we could simply flick a switch and tap into another source.

**CHAIR** - As to the power for this site, I assume you are on mains power for the entire precinct. What's your back-up and what is being planned in the gateway precinct?

**Mr ROBERTS** - We don't have the specifics of our back-up as an operating building. I am aware the sewage treatment system, for example, or the pump wells and things like that all have design back-ups for generators to keep them going for a number of days until power is restored. You will notice the little boxes on the other side of the bridge; one of them is a diesel generator sitting there waiting to go for that purpose. Those pump wells are seen as the most critical thing to keep going. Any other back-up for power wouldn't be dissimilar to any other business in Tasmania that is dependent on mains power. It wouldn't be seen as a need to have our own generation system.

**CHAIR** - I couldn't see a generator room on the plan.

**Mr DEKA** - If we had a back-up generator it would be an external one. I imagine we will have a generator of some description, it's just a matter of what it might be. Previously we have costed suitably sized units at around \$15 000 to \$20 000, so that is probably what we would do. The critical issue we have is if it occurs during business hours and you lose power, your EFTPOS and all your business systems go down. We will have a back-up generator of some description. I know TasNetworks is actively looking at reliability of supply into the valley so hopefully they might do some things that mean we have less outages into the future.

**CHAIR** - Telecommunications is an issue for everybody when they come to Cradle Mountain. Is that being addressed in this proposal?

**Mr DEKA** - I believe it is being addressed but I can't tell you exactly how. One of the challenges is that you tend to have a lot of people trying to access the ability to send data at the same time. If you talk to the local businesses, they will tell you the critical time for their systems is between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. People get back from their walks and then they want to blast their images around the world, check out their video or whatever, and that's when their systems tend to crash.

We've resolved the issue for Parks by purchasing a guaranteed data package with Telstra. For whatever the technical reasons may be, they can only provide one of those packages on the mountain. I am aware that issue is being looked at actively.

**CHAIR** - Another one on infrastructure: the road and the slowing devices used on the current roadway irritate people. I frequently have comments made to me about that. Can we have some discussion on how we will address those issues that are really frustrating to people?

**Mr DEKA** - As Andrew explained earlier, initially those devices were put in as traffic calming devices to protect wildlife, because when the road was sealed and traffic speeds increased, there was an increase in road kill. They were seen as an effective way of reducing the speed of vehicles. The monitoring that occurred indicates they were effective.

We don't believe that there is an issue now with traffic speed. The traffic goes reasonably slowly now. The chicanes, as they are, have proven to be quite problematic in so much as people approaching from the north are supposed to give way, but 80 per cent of people don't. So you really

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are just taking your chances if you expect somebody to give way to you. In winter people often just run straight over the islands because they -

**Mr VALENTINE** -Can't decide which was to go.

**Mr DEKA** - can't work out which way to go. Then they lock up the car and take the middle line and then the snow plough has a terrible job trying to clear the way around it and often takes out the edges, which you can see in evidence at the present time. Then you get tour coaches who are forced to go the wrong way around them, because of the way they are configured.

We approached DIER - State Growth - some time ago about whether they could be removed. They flipped it back to us and said, 'Well, hang on, it was basically Parks that required these. If you say they are no longer required, we're happy to take them out.' We've begun a process whereby we're demonstrating to State Growth that we no longer require the traffic calming for protecting wildlife and we'd prefer a simpler system.

What we are hopeful of is that we will be moving to a system where the chicanes go and we just rely on narrowings in the road. Basically in those same locations, you will just have a single carriageway and you will just have one sign on either side that says, 'Caution road narrowing'. Then it will be up to intuitive driver behaviour to regulate flow through those narrowings, which is no different to the way the traffic operates on its way into Dove Lake at the present time.

That system operates well in other places around Australia and overseas, for example, New Zealand. There is no reason why it won't work effectively here. Thereby you reduce the number of signs at each of those locations by at least seven. Take the three chicanes: so there go 21 signs, which is a bonus, because I think at present by the time people get to the current visitor centre they were pretty much over the signs. It will also eliminate those other issues with the snowplough, the larger vehicles and so on.

In terms of ensuring we protect the wildlife, we will look at putting in acoustic fencing and also the crossroad strips that create a noise when cars go over them. We believe that will be just as effective as what currently exists.

**CHAIR** - In regard to the road access, and for the record so we have it in evidence, I have received representation in regard to concerns by photographers and people who want to gain access to Dove Lake early in the morning and to get right into the park. What are the plans for road access into the park at this stage? Should a cableway be approved in another stage, will there be road access? Will people be able to get in very early in the morning or come out late at night?

**Mr ROBERTS** - I will let Nic address that in just a second, but just to put a rider on top of that - that is outside the scope of what we're addressing here.

**Mr DEKA** - Currently we are proposing that private vehicles will be taken out of the traffic mix during the operating hours of the shuttle bus. Now in very general terms, during summer that would be between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. and in winter, between 9 a.m. and 4.00 to 4.30 p.m. The reason for that is we are shifting to medium-size buses that present a significant safety issue on the narrow and winding Dove Lake Road. The alternative to doing what we are proposing is that we look at major roadworks to increase the pavement into Dove Lake and that will have a major impact on the visitor experience because the enclosed nature of the road and the narrow, winding of the road is seen to be an important part of that visitor experience.



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We believe that is the best balance. It will still enable photographers to drive in early in the morning for those sunrise shots. It will enable them to go late in the day for their sunset or aurora shots. It will also enable kayakers to take their kayaks in early in the morning or late in the day. Once somebody has driven in there, if someone wants to go for a really long day walk and they want a cracking start, they can drive in there at 6 o'clock, leave their vehicle in there and if they get back at 2 o'clock, there is no problem with them driving out. It will remove the to and fro of private vehicles while those shuttle buses are operating. An important mechanism to ensure the shuttle buses operate safely is that they are all in radio contact with one another.

As part of introducing these new buses, we are constructing an additional six passing bays and that is so the buses can coordinate so they never end up on a narrow section of road where there is a stand-off.

Private vehicles cannot have UHF radios. We will also be looking at winding back the commercial tour traffic to only those buses that are prepared to use UHF radios. We are just starting to engage with commercial tour operators at this point and there is a mix of views there about what they want. Some are happy to use the shuttle service and others wish to retain their own vehicle. We have started that consultation process.

**CHAIR** - When do we move to those medium-size buses?

**Mr DEKA** - We will be introducing at least one medium-size bus this summer but we will look to introduce more of them the following summer. We start the new shuttle bus contract on 1 July next year. In terms of DDA compliance, we should be 80 per cent compliant by December this year.

**CHAIR** - Disability access is that?

**Mr DEKA** - Yes, disability. But because of the protracted nature of the procurement process for the new shuttle bus contract, we are going to be delayed in that. We are seeking an exemption to enable that to occur. I would imagine the new fleet will be fully operational by September next year.

**CHAIR** - I have a few questions I ask of most projects. Do you believe this project you are putting forward to us is fit for purpose? Does it meet your purpose objective?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Yes, very much so and we are very excited about it.

**CHAIR** - Do you believe this is the best solution to meet the needs within the allocated budget? Is it value for money for the Tasmanian taxpayer?

**Mr ROBERTS** - Yes, I believe it is and I believe we will continue to explore how to get even more value by as many partnerships or partners in this program as we can to get the best focus on the visitor delivery. The visitor experience is the champion here.

**Mr DEKA** - I think it will leverage a significant amount of additional investment into the area.

**CHAIR** - Do you think it is good use of public money to leverage that investment?

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**Mr DEKA** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. As I advised you at the commencement of your evidence, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are repeating what you have said to us. Do you understand that?

**Witnesses** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for your time and for our visitors for attending and the evidence you have provided to us.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**