

Heritage Symposium

'Tasmania: An Historic Environment'

27 November 2008

SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

On 27 November 2008 the Minister for Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts and the Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage hosted a symposium entitled *'Tasmania: An Historic Environment'* in Launceston. This symposium provided an opportunity for owners, developers, tourism operators, business and community groups with an interest in heritage to join forces to discuss options for better managing the State's historic environment.

It provided an opportunity for topical presentations and updated on current initiatives and the cross-fertilisation of ideas with two panel discussions providing owners, developers and small business operators with an opportunity to highlight their experiences as heritage property owners and to discuss current or possible funding opportunities.

Some significant announcements concerning the heritage sector were made. In particular, the Minister announced that she would be asking Tourism Tasmania and Heritage Tasmania to jointly organise a forum for tourism operators and those with an interest in cultural heritage to learn more about emerging trends and hear from local people about what works well and what needs to be developed in mid 2009; and that Heritage Tasmania will be preparing a draft strategy for managing the historic environment in Tasmania during 2009.

Secretary of the Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts, Scott Gadd, announced that Cabinet will be considering a request to draft new legislation to manage historic heritage in Tasmania. If this is supported it is anticipated that new legislation will be in place within the next 12 months.

Other speakers included Mr James Shevlin from the Heritage Division [Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts]; Professor Richard Mackay speaking via pre-recorded audio-video conferencing from the Getty Conservation Institute; Dr Claire Ellis of Tourism Tasmania; Mr Andrew Kemp representing the Community Sector; Mr Don Clark - a private owner/operator; Mr Robert Rockefeller – a property investor; Chris Tassell of the National Trust; Melinda Percival from the Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts; Louise Archer from Brickendon Estate on the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage serial nomination; Bradley Williams of the Southern Midlands Council; and Professor Roger Fay, from the UTAS School of Architecture. Mr Michael Lynch, Chairperson of the Tasmanian Heritage Council, launched the case-study booklet *'Heritage Solutions'*.

The day began with an excellent performance by Tasmanian Aboriginal singer/songwriter Mr Dewayne Everettsmith. The MC for the event was Mr Peter West of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and concluded with a tour of the new School of Architecture, on the Inveresk campus of the University of Tasmania, provided by Professor Roger Fay, and an informal wine and cheese event at the School to thank the day's participants.

Key points from each of the presentations are provided below, followed by questions, queries or comments raised during, and after, the forum by participants.

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

Ms Michelle O'Byrne MP, Minister for Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts:

- Tasmania's historic heritage is a rich and diverse asset, of great importance to the tourism sector.
- The Minister will be asking Tourism Tasmania to organise a forum in mid-2009 for tourism operators and those with an interest in cultural heritage in order to learn more about emerging trends, and to hear from local operators about what is working and what isn't.
- Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings plays an important role in contributing to the sustainability agenda. Reuse of buildings can lead to considerable savings in embodied energy forgone.
- Significant achievements have been made in the heritage sector in recent years including growing community interest and engagement via festivals and events.
- Notable gains and achievements within the heritage sector have been made in recent years by the National Trust, the Heritage Council and Heritage Tasmania.
- The National Trust plays an important role as the state's leading community organisation.
- Proposed legislative reforms are needed to ensure a clear and consistent approach for historic heritage.
- The development of contemporary Aboriginal heritage legislation is another major priority for State Government.

For the full speech please visit: http://www.heritage.tas.gov.au/tas_hist_env.html

Mr Scott Gadd, Secretary, Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts:

- There have been many significant changes in the management of historic heritage both nationally and internationally, since Tasmania's Historic Cultural Heritage Act was proclaimed in 1995.
- Professor Richard Mackay has played a critical role in reviewing early submissions as part of the legislative reform process and has interpreted those submissions into meaningful recommendations.
- The proposed legislative reforms will provide greater clarity, consistency and certainty for protecting and managing Tasmania's historic heritage.

- The key aims of new legislation are to: provide a user friendly approach; ensure appropriate use of scarce resources; provide a more contemporary framework; and balance statutory and non-statutory effort.
- A tiered approach towards identifying and managing heritage will more effectively and efficiently protect Tasmania's heritage, and will require reviews of the Heritage Register and local heritage schedules.
- The systematic and consistent identification of heritage through surveys, although individual nominations will continue to be provided for.
- Introduction of classes works to differentiate between major works that require lodgement of a works application and minor works which do not require lodgement of works applications or consultation with Heritage Tasmania are another key element of the proposed legislative reforms.
- Following Mackay's recommendations, the Heritage Council now undertakes pre-statutory consultation prior to the statutory process commencing, particularly with regards to the listing of heritage places on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.
- Owner pride is becoming a strong driving force for protection and value adding.
- A number of submissions were received following the release of the Government's 2007 position paper 'Managing our heritage', some offering support for aspects of proposed reforms, and others critical.

For Mr Gadd's complete speech visit: http://www.heritage.tas.gov.au/tas_hist_env.html

Audience questions

In response to Mr Gadd's presentation, a number of questions were asked, and comments made by audience members:

- A definition of 'heritage' needs to be well formulated.
- The Tasmanian environment is unique and, as such, definitions and approaches for historic heritage need to be developed from within a Tasmania context.
- A concern was expressed that there is a lack of response to feedback provided to the Government regarding the review and reform process.
- The notion of cultural landscapes is not a new topic for Tasmania, and much work has been undertaken previously. As such, cultural landscapes should be considered as a part of the current reform process.
- Forestry Tasmania will be moving towards further consideration of cultural landscapes in their work.
- A request was made for an update on timeframes for legislative reform.
- Mr Gadd indicated that moveable heritage, archaeology and cultural landscapes would be addressed at a 5-year review of the proposed legislation.

OTHER SPEAKERS

Professor Richard Mackay, Godden Mackay Logan P/L:

- The importance, diversity and richness of Tasmania's heritage and its high level of integrity.
- The two most important recommendations arising from the Mackay review of the Historic Cultural Heritage Act are:
 - The need for a tiered approach to heritage listing and management, consistent with best-practice in Australia and around the world; and
 - The need for adequate resources to be available to assist local government with proposed reforms.
- The review made recommendations for further inclusion of moveable heritage, archaeology and cultural landscapes in Tasmania's heritage legislation.
- A recommendation was made to adopt a nationally-agreed standard set of criteria.
- There is a need to review the Tasmanian Heritage Register to identify gaps – both geographically and thematically.
- Congratulation was expressed for the State Government and Heritage Council in their courage to undertake this reform, and for the positive steps already taken.

Mr James Shevlin, First Assistant Secretary, Heritage Division, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Australian Government:

- There is a tiered approach to heritage places, including World Heritage, National Heritage, State Heritage and Local Heritage, with the bulk of heritage places occurring at the local level (approx 147,000 places around the Nation).
- An outline was provided of the former Register of the National Estate and the more recent National Heritage List.
- The research that is required for assessing sites of National Heritage significance was discussed.
- There is a need to determine which stories are important to the nation in order to understand which places are considered to be of national significance.
- The importance of publicising our heritage places was noted.
- There is a growing value of heritage and cultural tourism and a desire amongst the community for an experience in volunteerism.

Ms Melinda Percival, Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts, gave an update on the World Heritage nomination:

- The nomination document was completed and submitted to UNESCO in January 2008. The World Heritage team are now focusing on readying the sites for the assessment and visit by ICOMOS. The Australian Government expect to be notified in March if the Australian Convict Sites will be assessed in 2009.

Over the past twelve months the team has been busy:

- Darlington, under the management of Jody Steele, has undergone a major maintenance and conservation program which is currently being completed.
- Among its many other ongoing projects, Port Arthur successfully completed the first stage of the Separate prison project.

- The Department recently engaged Jo Lyngcoln to manage the conservation, urgent maintenance and interpretive works at the Cascade Female Factory, and to provide assistance and advice to Woolmers and Brickendon.
- Plans for the immediate works to occur at the Cascade Female factory have been finalised and submitted into the various approval processes. The volunteers and research group continue to play an important part in delivering these plans.
- Brickendon and Woolmers will be undertaking various projects over the coming months, particularly in relation to the assignment periods of the sites' history. Martin Gibbs from Sydney visited both sites late in 2008 with a GPR trying to locate the Male Convict Barracks for this purpose.
- In addition to planned works, education programs engaging both the public and trade educations programs will occur at some sites in the coming months.
- Tourism Tasmania continues to provide advice and assistance in helping create a great visitor experience at the sites.

The journey to date has been a challenging but rewarding and interesting one. The World Heritage team is looking forward to 2009.

Mrs Louise Archer, Brickendon Estate:

- The Archer family has farmed Brickendon for five generations.
- The experience of owning and operating a heritage listed farm and the expansion from traditional farming activities of producing cattle, sheep and crops to the more recent inclusion of a heritage business.
- The melding of farming with heritage protection. For instance, the management of the original hedgerows so that irrigators can pass through them and growing different (drought tolerant) crops where irrigation cannot reach.
- The requirement to manage the place via a conservation management plan and an outline of the landscape plan which identified all the trees on the property and the original hawthorn hedges.
- Currently all the historic paperwork at Brickendon is being documented. A recent find was some magazines dating from 1830 to 1870.

Mr Bradley Williams, Heritage Project Officer, Southern Midlands Council:

- The extent of the Southern Midlands Councils involvement in heritage places and projects.
- The partnership agreement between SMC and the State Government on developing a heritage strategy, and working to complete and implement the findings of a heritage survey project including precincts.
- Current heritage projects SMC is undertaking, including the Oatlands Gaol Restoration Project, Supreme Court House Restoration Project, the Southern Midlands Convict Sites Project, The Oatlands Military Precinct Project, the Green Ponds Heritage Project, and a Traditional building skills/conservation workshop program as part of the public heritage program.

Professor Roger Fay, Head of the UTAS School of Architecture:

- The design processes involved in converting the former Inveresk Railyard shed into the contemporary school of architecture.

- The processes involved in creating an energy efficient design, including choosing to accept a greater range of heat between summer and winter temperatures. Heating and cooling technologies were still used as part of this design.
- Encouraging users of the building to dress appropriately for the climate – wear a jumper in winter and short-sleeves in summer.
- The advantages of having the engineers on board from the beginning with the architects to achieve the best result.

Mr Michael Lynch, Chair of the Tasmanian Heritage Council, launched 'Heritage Solutions':

That the Heritage Council has recognised for some time the importance of balancing retention of the heritage values of a place while at the same time meeting community expectations about what a building in the 21st century should provide.

- The value in the adaptive re-use of a building to achieve environmental sustainability in terms of retaining the embodied energy in buildings and reducing landfill.
- That adaptive reuse can mean new uses for old places, and new uses need to be compatible with the building, retain historic character, conserve significant fabric while introducing new services, modifications and additions.
- That heritage places contribute to the quality of life and cultural identity of local communities.
- The booklet 'Heritage Solutions' shows that it is possible to successfully conserve and reuse heritage buildings to achieve high quality sustainable places that respond and contribute positively to the environment and still retain their heritage values.

To receive a free copy of 'Heritage Solutions' contact Heritage Tasmania on 1300 850 332 or visit the website on <http://www.heritage.tas.gov.au/>

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Two panel discussions and other audience questions and comments highlighted key areas of concern and interest, regarding the legislative reform process and future directions for Tasmania's historic environment.

The first, panel discussion, 'Insights and perspectives', was chaired by Mr Pete Smith, Director, Heritage Tasmania, with speakers Dr Claire Ellis (Tourism Tasmania), Mr Andrew Kemp (representing the National Trust), Don Clark (tourism operator) and Mr Robert Rockefeller (property investor).

The second panel discussion, 'Funding options, opportunities and avenues to explore', was chaired by Mr Michael Lynch, Chairperson, Tasmanian Heritage Council, with panellists Mr Andrew Kemp, Dr Clair Ellis, Mr Chris Tassell (National Trust) and Mr Pete Smith (standing in for Mr James Shevlin, Heritage Division DEWHA).

Ms Claire Ellis, Director, Destination Development, Tourism Tasmania:

- Heritage is an expected and integral part of the tourist experience in Tasmania.
- Tourism today is more experiential than it has been in the past. People want experiences rather than to be passive observers.

- Tourism's economic contribution is greater than simply the direct tourist dollars generated. It impacts indirectly as well. For instance, via sales in pharmacies generated by visitors.
- Three key areas for the future are: increasing diversity of what Tasmania offers; collaboration including the best way to develop and form new partnerships; and financial sustainability.
- Tourism Tasmania does not generally have funds available for heritage places or projects, but funds can be sought where required.
- An over-arching grant body should oversee a strategic alignment of projects and funding.
- Tourism Tasmania focuses on a business plan for heritage as a sound basis for success, rather than looking at dollars and funding.

Mr Andrew Kemp, National Trust and the Community Sector:

- The value of Tasmania's heritage and its custodians.
- The importance of the National Trust in preserving Tasmania's heritage.
- The importance of living in, and loving, heritage buildings as a way of preserving them and ensuring their existence into the future.
- The importance of honouring the past because the future has been entrusted to us.
- A belief that public funds should not be spent for private benefit, where there is no public access or other public gains arising from funding.

Mr Don Clarke, Private business operator – Cascades on the Tasman Peninsula:

- His experiences as a fourth generation farmer and orchardist, within a changing economic environment.
- The diversification of a farm to include restoration of heritage buildings (some dating back to the 1840s) to generate an income after the decline of the apple industry.
- The complexities involved in applying for funding (at the Federal level) and the impact of GST on reducing the real sum that can be directed into restorations.
- The suggestion that reduction of rates for owners of heritage property on large parcels of land would be a significant assistance.
- A suggestion for the introduction of tax exemptions for tradespeople and others who provide vital services to heritage places.
- The suggestion that those involved in managing our heritage places need to undertake further advertising and marketing to improve the image of being a heritage property owner.
- A suggestion that there would be significant value in establishing a network connecting owners for advice and insight.

Mr Robert Rockefeller, property investor and developer:

- His experiences as an owner and developer of a number of heritage-listed buildings (CCAMLR building Macquarie St, Hobart; 40 Molle St, Hobart; the Antarctic Division; and the Salmon Ponds).
- As a developer he has a strong appreciation of the need to look after his heritage assets but there is also a need to obtain a commercial return.
- There are many barriers to investing in heritage buildings via Building Standards Australia, the Disability Act, and sustainability issues.

- Government does not always appreciate the difficulties developers face in achieving a return on commercial premises and it needs to be careful it does not destroy the economic value or potential of heritage places.
- The global crisis could shrink the amount of capital available to invest in heritage buildings.

Mr Chris Tassell of the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania):

- Tasmania's volunteer community makes an important contribution to Tasmania's heritage sector.
- There is a need for volunteers to embrace heritage grants programs and also to look beyond grants programs to consider other opportunities for conserving and working with heritage places.
- There is a lack of funding available for heritage places.

Audience Questions

In response to panel discussions, audience members asked a range of questions, focused on the topics of panel discussions.

Questions and comments arising from audience members included:

- The land tax system is considered unfair for heritage properties, particularly on rural properties.
- Queries were raised over the actions that the community can take in cases where heritage buildings, under private ownership, are falling into disrepair. It was suggested that funding options may be explored to assist in conservation. It was further suggested that there are often a range of different scenarios and creative options which a property owner may be able to take in order to save heritage buildings.
- It was noted that there ought to be greater focus given to ensure that heritage property owners appreciate the values of their place and, thus, might be further motivated to protect their significant heritage places.
- It was further noted that it is crucial that individual's rights to their property are respected in the heritage management process by planning and heritage authorities.
- A need for greater diversity in our heritage tourism places was expressed, to ensure that a range of different audiences are catered for.
- It was considered that adaptive re-use of a place, including issues of sustainability, should value-add, rather than being seen as a hindrance to development.
- A query was made with regards to encouraging the greater community to adopt the Tasmanian brand with regards to heritage character, in recognition that Tasmania's heritage character and visitor appeal extends beyond the commercial sector to privately owned homes.

- A suggestion was made that Tasmania could introduce a volunteer program similar to that of the US Forest Service Program, whereby volunteers have an opportunity to work at a number of different sites and on a number of different projects.
- A request was made that cultural landscapes be included as part of legislative reform, noting that this is not a new concept either within Tasmania or elsewhere.
- Greater funding assistance was requested and it was noted that, only a small amount of funding is available, which is not long-term or predictable.

Subsequent feedback which has been provided, following from the Symposium:

- The need to ensure that local government is adequately resourced to implement the reforms.
- A concern about the ability of some planning authorities to adequately protect heritage places.
- The need for greater community involvement in heritage and the legislative reform process.
- The desire to include archaeology, moveable heritage and cultural landscapes within the current proposed reforms.
- The need for funding to be made available for private property owners, primarily through grants.
- The need for consistent planning schemes across the State.
- The importance of our historic places as an important commercial asset.
- Tasmania's historic environment is important as part of Tasmanian's identity.

Conclusion

This Symposium was a timely event, providing meaningful discussions for the future of Tasmania's historic environment, as the State Government progresses with proposed legislative reform, and was well received by those who were present.

It helped to mark several recent achievements within the historic heritage sector, including the serial nomination of convict sites to the World Heritage List, comprising a number of Tasmanian sites; projects within the heritage sector being undertaken in local government; and national approaches to heritage management.

Presentations made during panel discussions, and resulting questions and comments from audience members, highlighted a number of current concerns and topical issues with which the heritage sector is currently faced. The State Government will draw on these discussions in its development of a Historic Heritage Strategy.

An Historic Heritage Strategy will be developed in 2009 to draw together a range of different initiatives, and provide a holistic management framework for Tasmania's statutory and non-statutory management of the historic environment into the future.

Thank you to those present and those who participated.