

Huon Valley
Attractions and Experiences Prospectus

An invitation for tourism investors and developers



...it's never too late



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Disclaimer:

This document is prepared for information only. It is not intended as advice and should not be relied upon as such. The information contained in this document may change and it is accurate as at April 2013. Any potential investor should make their own enquiries and satisfy themselves of the suitability of any investment or venture for their particular purposes. The Council does not make any representations or warranties with respect to the suitability of the sites, ideas or potential business ventures contained in this document. In particular, the Council does not warrant that the Council, acting as a Planning Authority, will exercise its discretion in any particular manner.

Approved by the Huron Valley Council

Resolution No.

Welcome

The Huon Valley has everything to offer a tourism investor and/or developer, right now.

The Huon Valley prides itself on its pristine environment, rich living history, strong maritime connections, temperate wilderness, unique accessible wildlife, world renowned food and wine, and seasonal climate variations. The region enjoys a relatively high number of day visitors. Its array of products and services suggest that it is also a multi-day destination and its appeal will certainly increase as new and revitalised visitor experiences are developed.

Unique accommodation development opportunities await the investor with a robust and established tourism market steadily increasing.

The Huon Valley, as with the whole of Tasmania, is a self drive destination located geographically south of Hobart (only a thirty five minute drive from Tasmania's capital city and major tourism gateway). The region appeals to intrastate, interstate and international markets, with all groups enjoying a unique mix of tourism products and services compared with other regions in the state.

The region leverages from its two major tourist attractions - *Tahune AirWalk* and *Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs*. These two experiences are destinations in their own right, however are fast reaching maturity requiring substantial reinvigoration to attract both new and return visitors. Visitors today are seeking new interactive experiences, and while the region has access to what could easily make for some

inspiring activities, having dedicated access to these highly sought after activities is lacking.

The Huon Valley Council actively promotes and encourages investment and development in the area for the purpose of tourism. A supportive business environment awaits the commercial operator through a range of business support services, an active business community, proactive and strategic economic development agencies at both Local and State Government levels and for the tourism operator, a vibrant and proactive tourism program through the promotion of the Huon Trail and supporting services.

Documents prepared by the Council have identified several key tourism opportunities for the investor and/or developer in the following categories:

1. Arts and Culture
2. Food, Wine and Beverage
3. History and Heritage
4. Nature-based/Wilderness Experiences
5. Waterbased Activities

The Huon Valley is the idyllic location and we welcome your investment now.



MAYOR
CR ROBERT ARMSTRONG



Huon River, Huonville



South West National Park / World Heritage Wilderness Area

*Unique investment opportunities
- in a region of great beauty and
inspiration*

Valley of Surprises

The Huon Valley Council covers 5497 sq. kms and is the southernmost local government area in Australia. Despite its proximity to Hobart, a 35 minute drive away, the area retains the beauty, charm and heritage of a bygone era. The population of the Huon Valley is spread across the five main townships of Huonville, Franklin, Cygnet, Geeveston and Dover.

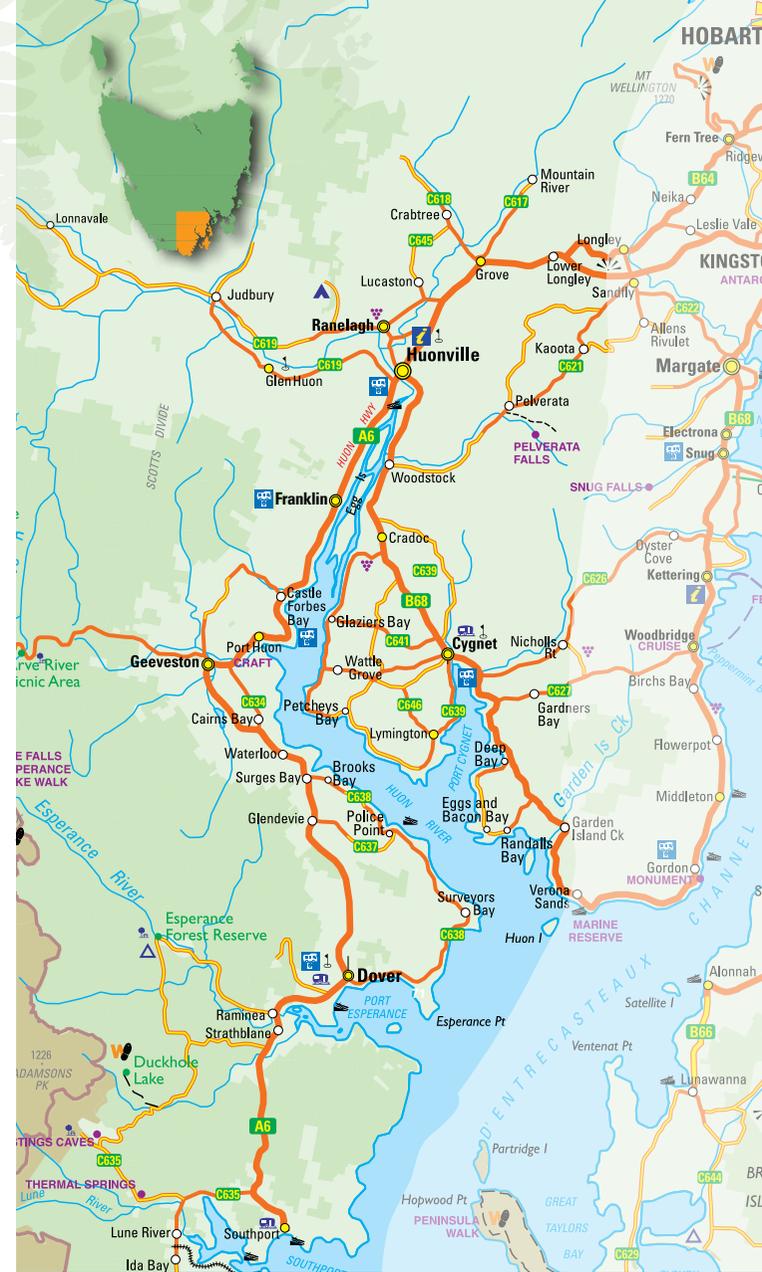
The Huon River is an iconic natural feature of the Huon Valley, meandering through the commercial hub of Huonville and making its way through the boating township of Franklin. The township is home to the Wooden Boat School where the tradition of carving fine local timbers into sea worthy vessels is continued. The Franklin community has a strong link with the Huon River, utilising the river and foreshore for sports and recreation as well as community events.

The forest township of Geeveston is the gateway to the Great Southern Forests and home to the popular attraction, the *Tahune AirWalk*. The forests in the region provide the idyllic setting for bush walking, fishing, bird watching and mountain climbing. Further south the seaside town of Dover has a long maritime history. Pristine clean waters provide a haven for marine life. Boats take shelter in the calm waters of

Port Esperance, while just around the corner is Recherche Bay - one of two recognised *World Heritage Wilderness Areas* located within the Huon Valley. Here *D'Entrecasteaux's* expedition made friendly contact with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people in 1792 - a significant moment in Tasmania's (and indeed the nation's) indigenous heritage. A large area of the Huon Valley municipal area is dominated by the *World Heritage Wilderness Area* - encompassing the *Hartz Mountains* and *South West National Parks*.

The natural beauty of the Huon Valley is augmented by a rich cultural heritage. The township of Cygnet is widely known as the artistic centre of the Huon Valley and is home to many skilled artisans and crafts people. The township comes to life every January, as the popular *Cygnet Folk Festival* draws artists, performers, musicians and vendors of fine food into the township.

Each township has a unique identity and history, and something special to offer every visitor to the Huon Valley. Tourism is a key economic driver in the Huon Valley, a sector predicted to experience considerable growth over coming years.



Driving Times		
Hobart to	Huonville	35 minutes
Hobart to	Cygnet	55 minutes
Hobart to	Geeveston	55 minutes
Hobart to	Dover	75 minutes
Hobart to	Southport	85 minutes

A vibrant, semi-rural community just thirty five minutes south of Hobart, Tasmania

Kermadie Hotel and Marina, Kermadie



Above: Southern Furniture Design and Artist's Centre, Geeveston

Prime Market

The Huon Valley provides a unique market opportunity for any developer/investor interested in establishing much needed, diverse product experiences. The region offers a range of existing experiences that can be leveraged from and compliment any new development that may be considered. Coupled with a short commute from the state's major gateway of Hobart, the area boasts a steady stream of visitation. The region is very much seen as a day trip destination, however with the proactive approach adopted by the Council and industry combined to attract investment and development in key areas such as tourist accommodation, and broadening the range of experiences available in the area, it is anticipated that many of those day trips will be converted into overnight and multiple night stays.

Although tourism nationally has experienced declining visitation due to factors such as the high Australian dollar increasing the appeal of international destinations for Australians, for the same reason, Australia is an expensive alternative. Tasmania and the Huon Valley is in a prime position to overcome these obstacles. Recent media publicity received by the state and the Huon Valley has driven considerable interest about the area, particularly from a domestic perspective.

According to data available in Tourism Tasmania's *Tasmanian Visitor Survey (TVS)*,

visitors to Tasmania are keen to experience a number of activities during their visit to the state. The Huon Valley already has a range of experiences that meet the appeals of the Tasmanian traveller - pristine waterways, wild and rugged natural landscapes, creative and artistic craftspersons, rich maritime and rural heritage, and a diverse range of fresh produce. TVS data identifies the following activities as being the top ten experiences undertaken by visitors to Tasmania in the year ending December 2012.

Activity / Experience	Total no. of Visitors
Browse at markets	632,000
Visit historic sites	348,900
Visit national parks	325,300
Visit craft shops	296,400
Buy Tasmanian made art and craft products	262,300
Visit galleries	252,900
Visit museums	250,200
Visit local food producers	239,700
Visit antique shops	221,900
Bushwalk for less than two hours	208,700

The majority of these experiences are available in the Huon Valley - however the quantity and quality of some of these experiences, along with competition of other regions having similar (or more significant) activities, means the Huon Valley is having to compete more to break through the clutter. Increasing the number of experiences that are aligned to the major reasons for visiting the state, and the region has the very real potential of attracting more visitors to the area, providing a lot of things to a lot of people.

Below: Family bushwalk, Bruny Island



Be apart of the evolution and bring new life to the Huon Valley



Above: Kayakers, Kettering



Above: Bruny Island Cruises, Bruny Island Below: Gourmet alfresco picnic lunch



Tourism Destination

All statistics in this section are sourced from Tourism Tasmania's *Tasmanian Visitor Survey (TVS)*. This survey provides a profile of the characteristics, travel behaviour, and expenditure of international and domestic visitors to Tasmania. The TVS is acknowledged as the most reliable source of statistical data on visitors to Tasmania, being based on an 'exit' sample of more than 9000 visitors to Tasmania each year. Being an island, visitors to Tasmania can be accurately counted as they depart from Tasmania's air and sea ports. This is a real advantage for data collection, making the TVS methodology very robust.

The TVS was first conducted in 1978 and then intermittently through the early and mid 1980s. The TVS became an annual survey in 1988. To access the survey results, visit:

www.tourismtasmania.com.au

TASMANIAN STATISTICS

Tasmania has significant appeal as a key tourist destination. Nature, history and heritage, food and wine are the three main perceptions associated with Tasmania as a holiday destination. Tasmania has become 'top of mind' as a nature-focused destination in Australia according to Tourism Tasmania's Lighthouse Report One. These attributes underpin the State's tourism brand, and the Huon Valley and far south regions are superbly positioned to articulate those strengths. The Huon Valley

is renowned for its cultivating landscapes, quality fresh produce and spectacular sheltered waterways; while the far south concentrates on more remote nature and wilderness.

In the year ending September 2012, the state began experiencing what some believe may be the beginning of an upward trajectory, following several hard years concluding the Global Financial Crisis. The state has enjoyed a one per cent increase in visitation, with a total of 874,400 visitors - up from 861,900 for the previous year. Total nights increased by three per cent to 7.94 million. Visitor expenditure decreased however, by seven per cent to \$1.398 billion. This represents an average of \$1599.00 per visitor. The number of interstate visitors to Tasmania increased by one per cent to 751,100.

In terms of visitor numbers from Tasmania's key markets, Victoria decreased by three per cent, New South Wales increased by four per cent, and Queensland increased by one per cent.

Holiday visitors decreased by four per cent for the year ending September 2012 to just 349,000, along with holiday nights decreasing by five per cent (3.7 million), and holiday expenditure decreased by eleven per cent (\$879 million).

The state's visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market has continued to perform well, with an increase of five per cent for the year. The number of nights spent by VFR visitors increased by fifteen per cent, and expenditure increased by eighteen per cent.

The Huon Valley... an untapped opportunity

HUON TRAIL STATISTICS

The Huon Valley both benefits and suffers from its close proximity to Hobart. From a development perspective, increased accommodation facilities are needed along with marketing activities that encourage people to stay overnight. The following data has been sourced from Tourism Tasmania's *Tasmanian Visitor Survey (TVS)*.

Traditionally, the Huon Trail has experienced a decrease in visitation for the year ending September 2012 with a total of 137,500 visitors travelling throughout the region (down from 144,500 in the previous year). The total number of nights spent on the touring route also decreased last year with a total of 212,300 visitors staying (down from 297,200). Of these 33,800 visitors spent one or more nights on the Huon Trail for the year ending September 2012 (down from 29,200).

While the declining numbers are of concern, it must be noted that the level of decline is consistent with other regional areas in Tasmania. Visitor dispersal out of the major cities of Hobart and Launceston is a critical role of the new tourism structure being implemented at a strategic level across State and Local Governments, in conjunction with industry. It can be safely assumed that with the introduction of a greater variety of experiences and attraction on offer in the Huon Valley, these figures will start to turn as visitors will be drawn out of Hobart either for the day, or for overnight/multiple night stays.

HUON VALLEY STATISTICS

There are four towns from the Huon Valley recognised in the *Tasmanian Visitor Survey (TVS)* and combined they demonstrate the main travel

patterns of visitors to the region. The four towns recognised include Huonville, Geeveston, Dover and Cockle Creek. Of these towns, Huonville is the most visited with a total of 137,000 visitors visiting the town in the year ending September 2012. Geeveston was the next most visited with 82,900 visitors travelling to the area. This was largely as a result of visitors being drawn to the region's major tourist attraction, the *Tahune AirWalk*, which hosted a total of 55,400 visitors in over the same period (down from 65,700 in the previous year).

Dover and Cockle Creek experienced the least number of visitors with 43,000 visitors and 23,000 visitors respectively. These numbers are also down on the previous year's figures by 45,200 visitors for Dover and 24,900 visitors for Cockle Creek. For a remote area such as this, visitor numbers are holding reasonably steady, as the area's major attraction, *Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs* continues to attract over 20,000 visitors each year.

The number of nights spent in each of these towns are as follows: Dover - 62,000 nights, Geeveston - 18,900 nights, Huonville - 95,000 nights, and Cockle Creek - 12,100 nights in the year ending September 2012. Of all of these figures, Geeveston was the only township to experience a decrease in the number of nights stayed, with there being 37,900 nights spent in the area in the same period last year (decrease of 50.1%).

Dover experienced 6,500 visitors staying overnight in the township compared with 8,600 in the previous year (a decrease of 25.1%). Geeveston had 40,200 (an increase from 5,900 visitors), Huonville had 69,700 visitors (an increase from 13,000), and Cockle Creek had just 4,700 visitors (a modest increase from 4,400 visitors).



Above: Wooden boat builder, Franklin



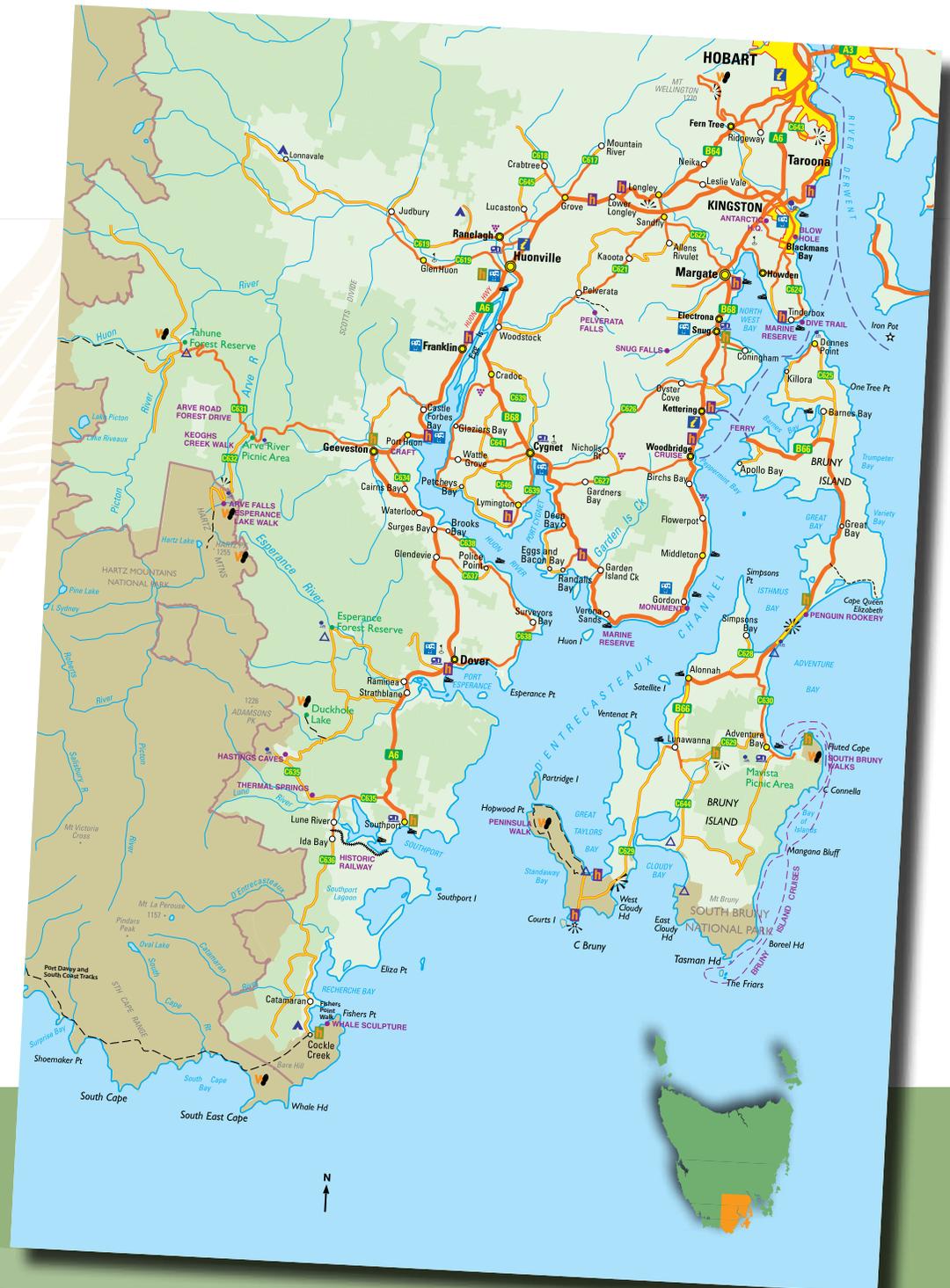
Above: Fluerty's café, Flower Pot

Huon Trail Touring Route

Tourism in the region is supported by a joint initiative between the Huon Valley and Kingborough Councils known as the Huon Trail.

Introduced in 1999, the Huon Trail was the first of the state's touring routes to be developed. It covers the majority of visitor attractions in the area south of Hobart. The Huon Trail concept was highly innovative at the time, being the forerunner to the tourism industry's adoption of 'interpretation' which is now considered essential to a quality visitor experience. The Trail is an important vehicle in raising awareness of the region's considerable attributes and enjoys strong community support.

The Huon Trail commences at Tarooma (on the outskirts of Hobart) and travels south to Kingston where it splits to cover the two distinct areas of the Huon Valley and D'Entrecasteaux Channel areas. The meandering Channel drive exposes the visitor to a series of seaside hamlets dotted along the stunning coastline overlooking Bruny Island. At Kettering the vehicular ferry connects mainland Tasmania with Bruny Island and its wealth of unique visitor experiences including gourmet delights and inspiring wildlife encounters. The Huon Valley provides for an ever changing landscape filled with apple orchards, snow capped mountains and, in the



Below: South Cape Bay



...a journey of pure inspiration

far south, densely forested and rugged terrain. At Cackle Creek, the end of the road greets the visitor - this being the furthest you can drive to in Australia.

The vision of the Huon Trail is to optimise visitor numbers and visitor yield for the Trail through the development and implementation of an effective marketing plan which is aligned with the hierarchy of marketing efforts driven by Tourism Tasmania and the ambitions of the newly created southern regional tourism organisation - Destination Southern Tasmania. A range of marketing opportunities are available for operators located in the area as a result of the joint funding arrangement committed to by the two Councils. Activities include, but are not limited to:

HURON TRAIL TOURING MAP & GUIDE

The A5 brochure is reproduced annually and is the main brochure for visitors travelling to the region. 100,000 copies of the brochure are produced each year and distributed through a strategic and vigorous distribution network. The brochure consists of advertising space purchased by operators from within the region.

HURON TRAIL WEBSITE www.hurontrail.org.au

The website is maintained with news items, hot deals and events that are specific to the touring route. Operators are promoted through the site, however they must be registered with Tourism Tasmania's TigerTOUR database (a comprehensive database of all tourism products and services from Tasmania). The website is adaptable to any size screen and viewing device.

HURON TRAIL SMARTPHONE APPLICATION

The Huon Trail Smartphone Application is operational on iPhones and iPads (iOS 6 and newer). The application provides an exciting, interactive tour of the region, and includes a free listing for all operators that are registered on Tourism Tasmania's TigerTOUR database (as with the website). The application provides point to point navigation, using Apple's revolutionary turn by turn voice navigation which is proving to be extremely useful for visitors in locating attractions, experiences and accommodation providers.

HURON TRAIL E-NEWSLETTER

The e-Newsletter is distributed bi-monthly to an extensive database of potential visitors. Operators provide news items, hot deals and event information for the newsletter.

HURON TRAIL JOINT MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

The Huon Trail Marketing Plan is produced annually in conjunction with industry. The plan sets out the range of promotional activities and allocates necessary funds to progress activities during the year.

The latest Huon Trail Marketing Plan is available for download from the Council website -

www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au/tourismdevsupport

Additional information explaining how you can become involved in the Huon Trail is available in the Huon Valley Council's Tourism Operator Toolkit. Simply visit the Council's website under the 'Business Connect' section.

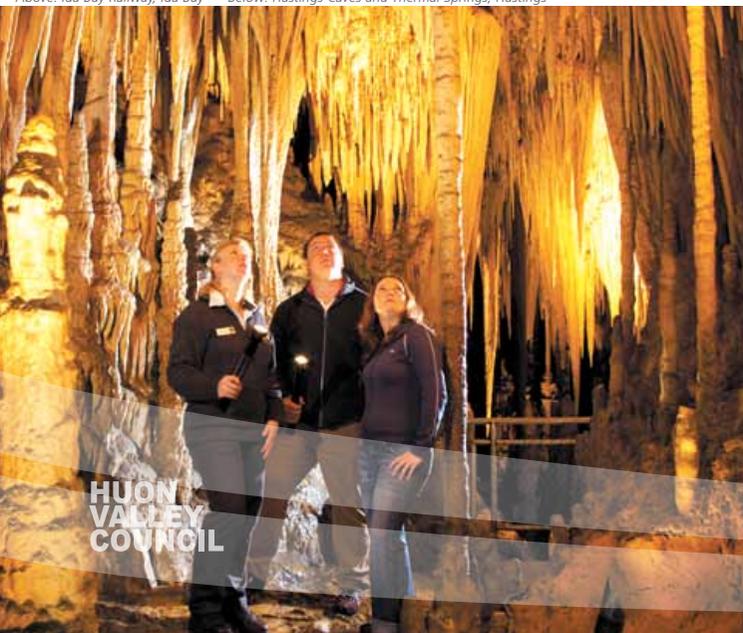




Above: Tahune Airwalk, Geeveston



Above: Ida Bay Railway, Ida Bay Below: Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs, Hastings



State Government Owned Attractions

The *Tahune Airwalk*, *Hastings Caves* and *Thermal Springs* and the historic *Ida Bay Railway* represent the Huon Valley's key attractions, all of which are State Government owned or partially owned.

These long-standing and well established attractions have played a vital role in attracting visitors to the region. While visitation has fluctuated in line with national trends over the years, these attractions have ensured the sustainability of the tourism industry in the Huon Valley and benefited surrounding businesses.

Now well established, these attractions have reached a plateau in their lifecycle and as a result are in need of reinvigoration and investment to ensure their appeal to new and repeat visitors continues. Traditionally the State Government has invested in the sites for this purpose however such assistance is no longer forthcoming due to budgetary restrictions.

The managers of these sites are proving to be proactive and creative in their endeavors to secure funding to progress development; however the level of assistance that is available is limited due to the ineligibility of government-owned enterprises to apply for the majority of grant funding programs.

Details regarding the current state of play, and what is required at each of the sites to improve the overall visitor experience are noted further in this document as case studies. Private investors are invited to discuss potential involvement with site managers directly.

Established experiences – opportunity for rejuvenation

Investment Opportunity ONE

PROJECT:

Commercial Kitchen and Display Centre

LOCATION:

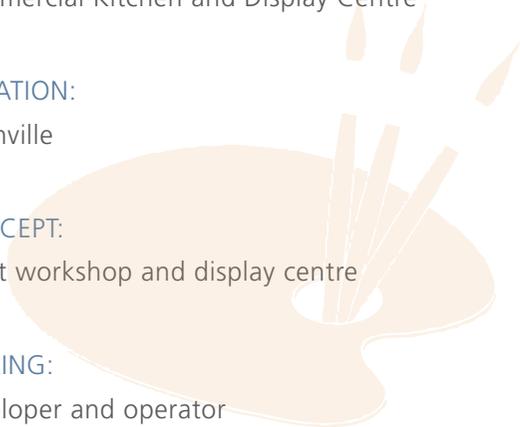
Huonville

CONCEPT:

Artist workshop and display centre

SEEKING:

Developer and operator



... Display Centre

Above: Commercial kitchen Right: View of the Huon Valley



Above: Designer at work, Southern Furniture Design and Artist's Centre, Geeveston



Above: Resident Artist 'Makers on Church St', Geeveston Below: Forest & Heritage Centre Gallery, Geeveston



To harness the region's creative flair, the opportunity exists to ensure local artisans and craftspeople have the appropriate avenues to distribute their products and demonstrate their talent. The unique opportunity exists to establish a communal facility combining a commercial kitchen, storage facility, artisan gallery, tasting centre and providore.

To elaborate further on the artisan gallery, the centre could replicate a similar operation in Burnie, Tasmania where a core number of local artisans are based and use the centre to engage with visitors showing their skills. The centre could provide a number of artist studios where semi-permanent leases could be arranged with individual artists to be based out of the centre. This kind of facility would be of significant interest by the artisan community as it eliminates overheads and ensures visitors can access the experiences. The tasting centre and providore can also provide a retail means for artisan products to be sold. If deemed appropriate following a feasibility, the option to include a substantial gallery space could also be considered and provide a location for roving and local exhibitions to be displayed.

The same facility can be used to support local producers through the establishment phase of their operation. Local producers (particularly smaller producers) have recognised the difficulties for establishing a tourist venture on their properties given the types of facilities required and the substantial investment required to establish a cellar door or tastings space onsite. If a purpose built facility was available for a suitable cost, a number of small producers and artisans from across the region would certainly utilise the facility.

The centre concept would provide a rotation of local producers who could lease the kitchen and store for a particular timeframe adequate enough for them to produce a desirable quantity

of produce that could be used to sell through the onsite providore and other distribution channels. The leasing of this facility would enable small producers to grow their distribution and increase their product awareness – acting as a “stepping stone” for them to expand their own premises for these activities to occur longer term.

The commercial kitchen would need to be state of the art, and provide adequate storage space for produce to be maintained before packaging and distribution. The providore and tasting area will provide an interactive avenue for visitors and locals to access the produce. It is envisaged that the kitchen area can be viewable from the tasting area, so visitors can see the produce being made, and provide an opportunity for the producer to engage with an audience to showcase their talents. Depending on the location of the facility, other revenue raising and traffic generation services could be incorporated including the provision of a permanent site for the Huon Valley Visitor Centre (if located in suitable site in Huonville), a permaculture and bushfood nursery, café and bar (perhaps double as the tastings room), and a market space for a monthly or quarterly food extravaganza. Consideration could also be given to accommodating onsite artist studios and gallery space for local artisans.

The centre would be a purpose built facility, and a comprehensive feasibility study will need to be conducted to ascertain its viability longer term.

Investment Opportunity TWO

PROJECT:

Indigenous Evening Experience

LOCATION:

Recherche

CONCEPT:

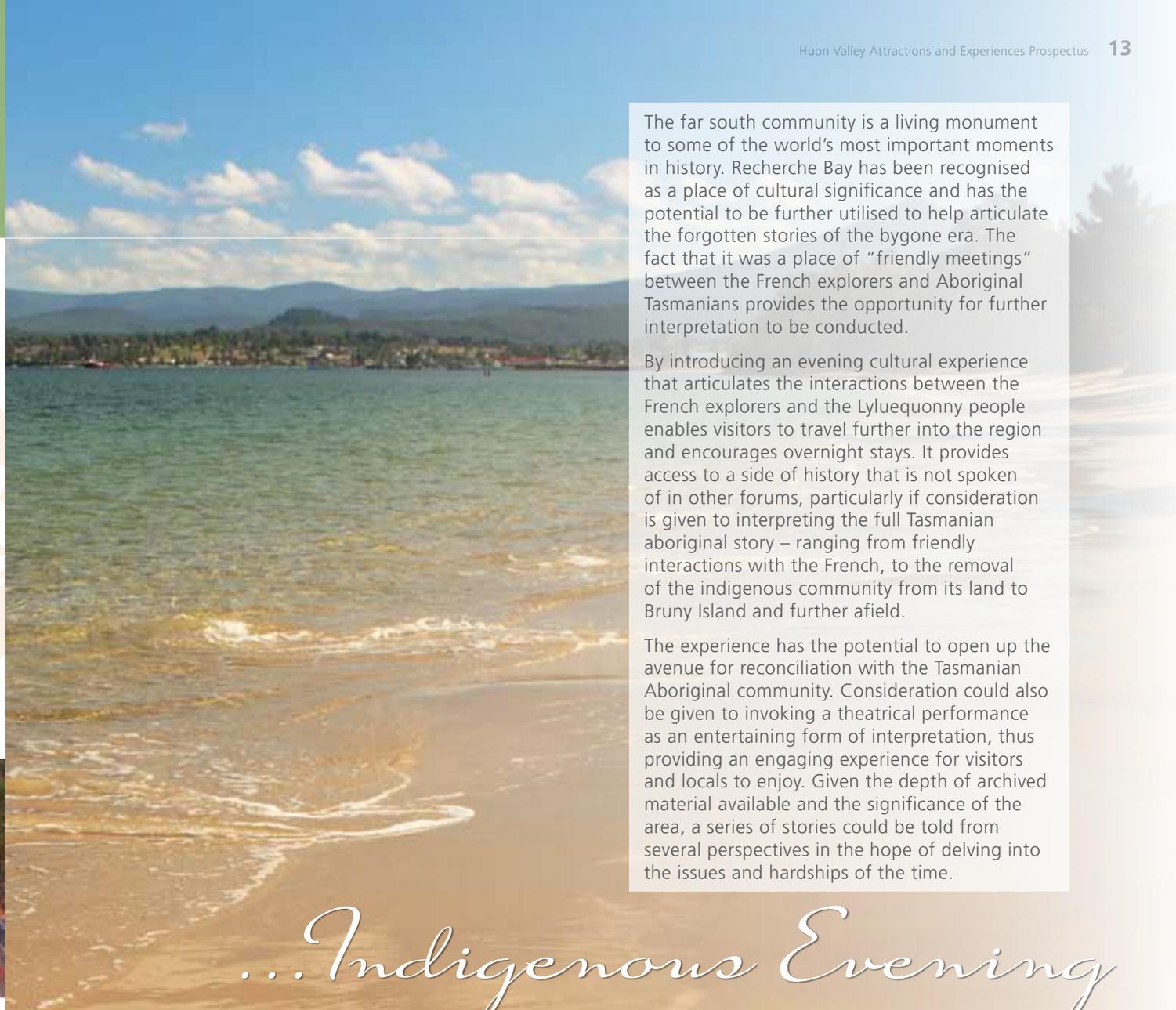
Evening cultural experience

SEEKING:

Tour operator



Above: Indigenous Dancers Right: Cockle Creek, Recherche Bay



The far south community is a living monument to some of the world's most important moments in history. Recherche Bay has been recognised as a place of cultural significance and has the potential to be further utilised to help articulate the forgotten stories of the bygone era. The fact that it was a place of "friendly meetings" between the French explorers and Aboriginal Tasmanians provides the opportunity for further interpretation to be conducted.

By introducing an evening cultural experience that articulates the interactions between the French explorers and the Lyluequonny people enables visitors to travel further into the region and encourages overnight stays. It provides access to a side of history that is not spoken of in other forums, particularly if consideration is given to interpreting the full Tasmanian aboriginal story – ranging from friendly interactions with the French, to the removal of the indigenous community from its land to Bruny Island and further afield.

The experience has the potential to open up the avenue for reconciliation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. Consideration could also be given to invoking a theatrical performance as an entertaining form of interpretation, thus providing an engaging experience for visitors and locals to enjoy. Given the depth of archived material available and the significance of the area, a series of stories could be told from several perspectives in the hope of delving into the issues and hardships of the time.

...Indigenous Evening

Investment Opportunity THREE

PROJECT:

Cideries

LOCATION:

Huonville or Cygnet

CONCEPT:

Cidery with cellar door and tour capabilities

SEEKING:

Developer and operator



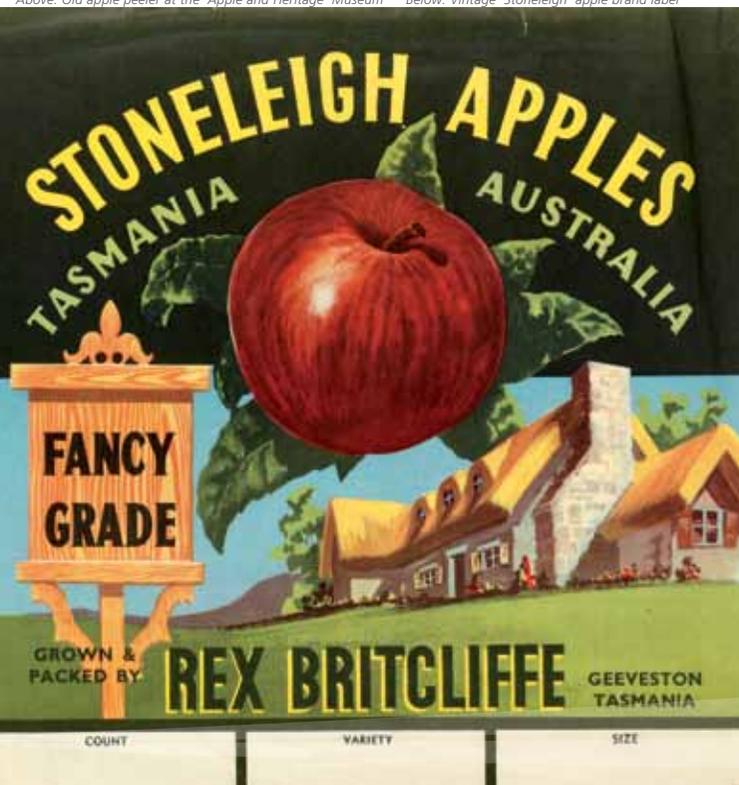
Above: Apple Cider Right: Apple Orchard, Huon Valley



...Cideries



Above: Old apple peeler at the 'Apple and Heritage Museum' Below: Vintage 'Stoneleigh' apple brand label



Tasmania maintains its worldwide reputation as the “Apple Isle”, which stems from the bustling orchards of the Huon Valley. From the 1920s to the 1970s, millions of apples, proudly branded with the brightly-printed labels of the Huon Valley orchardist families, crossed the globe to be sold in the markets of European cities.

When Australia lost access to the European Economic Community in the late 1960s, the industry collapsed. Its gradual recovery has relied on new approaches to markets and marketing. New initiatives have been identified particularly through the production of apple cider. It has been recognised by the regions’ larger (and few remaining) orchardists, that the terms of trade and costs associated with exporting apple supplies from Tasmania, has significantly impacted on the production capacity in the state, and particularly, the region.

The cider industry in Australia is experiencing rapid growth. Trends nationally and internationally suggest that growth will be sustained in the short to medium term. As such, the opportunity to establish a cidery utilising second and third grade fruit from local producers will ensure orchards continue to be financially viable, while value adding to the produce and providing a unique visitor experience in the region.

It has been recognised in research conducted by Tourism Tasmania through its 2011 Motivations Research – Appeal triggers and motivations for tourism in Tasmania, where it identified that Tasmania continues to have significant appeal from people interstate for

experiences that evolve around coastal nature, heritage and wilderness. While these three categories ranked highest consistently across each respondent segment, the report also noted that although less powerful in triggering an increase in intention to visit, food and beverage can be leveraged by associating them with the top ranked experiences. Bearing this in mind, the Huon Valley’s producers are well placed to provide this kind of leveraged experience through its heritage roots and remaining orchard activity. The inclusion of an interactive visitor experience that exposes the operational aspects and provides sampling and picking opportunities to occur can educate visitors about a combination of traditional and modern orchardist practices. With the addition of a cidery, visitors can be shown the entire process from fruit picking and selection to cider production all in a traditional, heritage rich landscape.

Investment Opportunity FOUR

PROJECT:

Salmon experience

LOCATION:

Port Huon

CONCEPT:

Interactive offshore and onshore
interpretive experience

SEEKING:

Developer and operator



Above: Fresh farmed Atlantic Salmon Right: Dinghy's on the shore, Port Cygnet



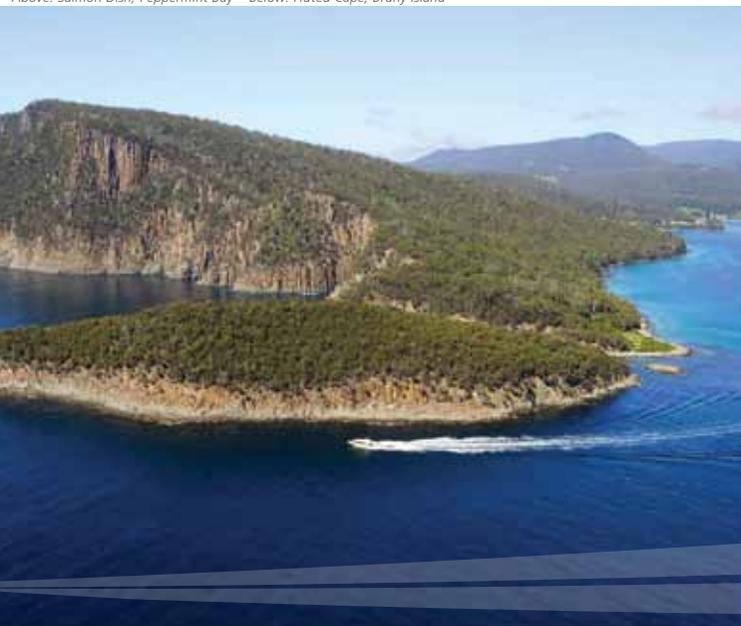
...Salmon Experience



Above: Salmon Farm, D'Entrecasteaux Channel



Above: Salmon Dish, Peppermint Bay Below: Fluted Cape, Bruny Island



The Huon Valley is renowned for its pristine environment. Its extensive network of waterways provides the ideal location for producing some of the world's freshest quality seafoods. Pure fresh water stemming from deep in the Southwest wilderness, travels via the Huon River, and meets with the cold, clean salt water from the Southern Ocean. Recognising the potential for producing high quality Atlantic salmon, several aquaculture operations have established, taking full advantage of the ideal water conditions for farming this highly sought after fish. From many high vantage points throughout the Huon Valley, circular pens are a common site throughout the Huon Estuary.

The Tasmanian aquaculture industry has contributed significantly to the international fish farm community, with innovations such as computerised feeding systems, large diameter pens, and net cleaning technology all being introduced by local producers. These innovations have been pivotal to ensuring the industry remains environmentally conscious and protects the local waterways, and make for a highly educational and interesting experience for visitors and locals alike.

The pens hold tonnes of valuable Tasmanian Atlantic salmon that flourish in the region's seafarms. Producers such as Huon Aquaculture, Tassal and Huon Valley Seafoods to name a few, all operate from within the Huon Valley, and while their primary focus is on fish farming, it has been acknowledged by these companies that a significant gap in the visitor experience is present. A unique opportunity therefore exists in the Huon to introduce a salmon demonstration centre, showcasing the world class, environmentally friendly fish farming

operation. Similar examples have been created internationally, however currently no interactive experience exists in Tasmania where visitors can get up close to a fish farm operation, and be exposed to the full production process.

Opportunities exist for a tour operator to create a partnership with these producers, in order to provide a unique experience for visitors to the Huon Valley. The experience could include a series of demonstrations, all offering a varied level of interaction, including the option for a customised itinerary. The operator could also consider onshore and offshore experiences providing a varied experience allowing for seasonal changes in operation and weather impacts. Depending on what access arrangements can be negotiated, the operator has the potential to provide informative sessions ranging from the fertilisation of eggs, transferring to sea cages, the lifecycle of salmon, understanding the technology, experience a feeding, and be exposed to the weighing of the fish.

Investment Opportunity FIVE

PROJECT:

Food, Wine & Beverage Tours

LOCATION:

Huon Valley

CONCEPT:

Guided tour of existing producers and cellar doors

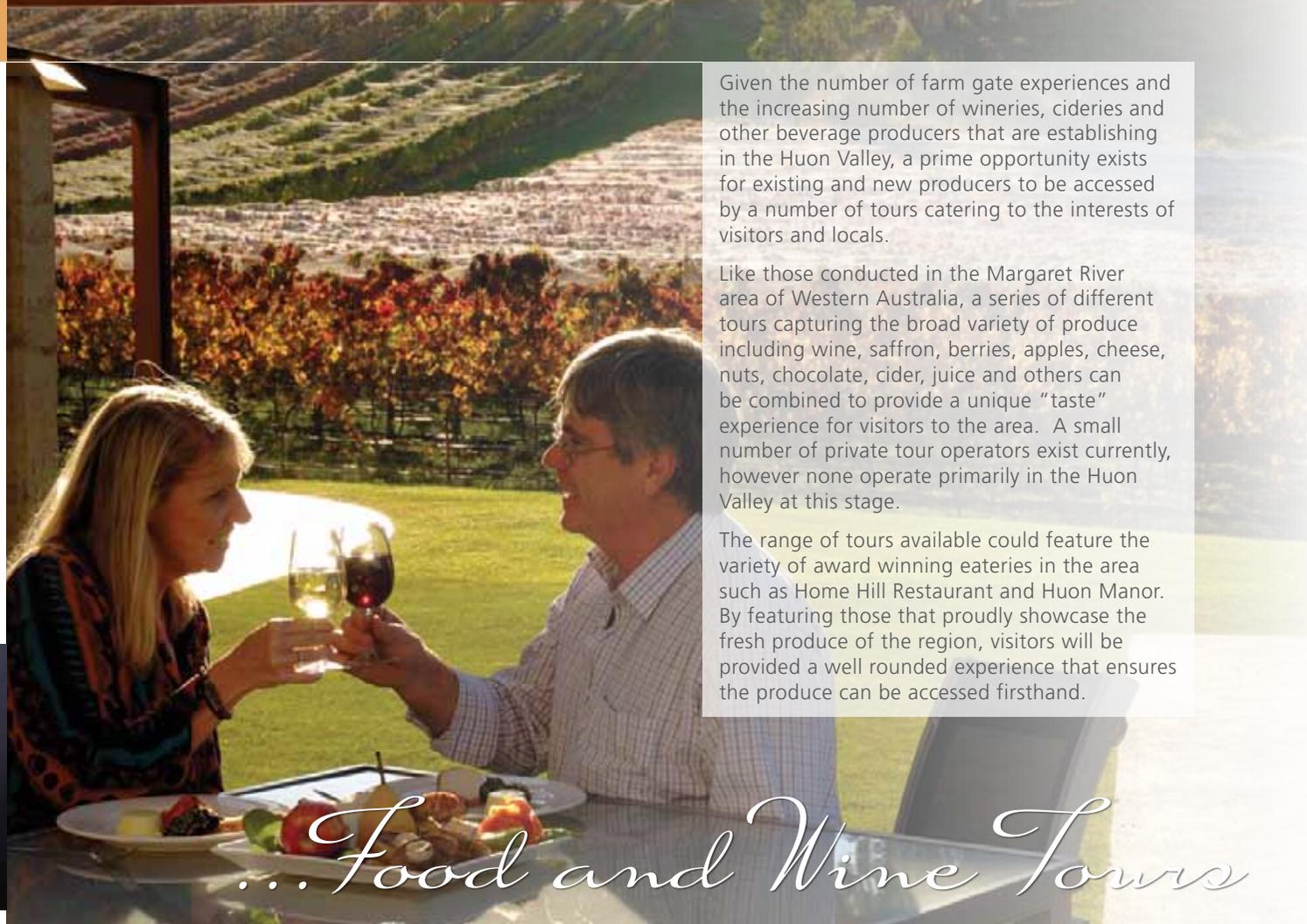
SEEKING:

Tour operator

Given the number of farm gate experiences and the increasing number of wineries, cideries and other beverage producers that are establishing in the Huon Valley, a prime opportunity exists for existing and new producers to be accessed by a number of tours catering to the interests of visitors and locals.

Like those conducted in the Margaret River area of Western Australia, a series of different tours capturing the broad variety of produce including wine, saffron, berries, apples, cheese, nuts, chocolate, cider, juice and others can be combined to provide a unique "taste" experience for visitors to the area. A small number of private tour operators exist currently, however none operate primarily in the Huon Valley at this stage.

The range of tours available could feature the variety of award winning eateries in the area such as Home Hill Restaurant and Huon Manor. By featuring those that proudly showcase the fresh produce of the region, visitors will be provided a well rounded experience that ensures the produce can be accessed firsthand.



... Food and Wine Tours

Above: Lunch at Fluerty's, Flower Pot Right: Home Hill Winery Restaurant, Ranelagh

Investment Opportunity SIX

PROJECT:
Forest and Heritage Centre

LOCATION:
Geeveston

CONCEPT:
Redevelopment of centre

SEEKING:
Developer and operator



... Forest & Heritage Centre

Above: Interpretive display at the Forest & Heritage Centre, Geeveston Right: Forest & Heritage Centre

The Forest and Heritage Centre in Geeveston is the place to be if you want to learn more. You can make all your Adventure Forest bookings at the centre and as a bonus to the AirWalk's admission fee, entry to the centre is included as part of your forest experience. While you are in the centre exploring the forest displays, don't miss a visit to the mezzanine to see some of the heritage woodworking machines, part of the Vin Smith Collection.

SITUATION

The Forest & Heritage Centre is located in the heart of Geeveston. The Centre is situated in the original Town Hall of the Esperance Council. The building is currently owned by the Huon Valley Council and leased by Forestry Tasmania.

The Forest & Heritage Centre was established in 1991, prior to the development of the *Tahune AirWalk*. The Centre was operated by a not-for-profit, community based board consisting of Council officers and industry stakeholders. The Centre formed part of the Southern Forest interpretive experience; a self guided tour of the area. Directed by cassette tape, drivers were taken through southern forest roads while learning the history of the forest and hearing stories of the pioneers of the area.

The Centre was an accredited visitor information centre, displaying timber samples, interpretive signage, The Vin Smith collection (heritage tools and machinery), with quality giftware and souvenirs available for purchase. Upstairs was the Hartz Gallery and conference rooms facilities. A wood-turner working on site provided an extra point of interest for visitors, however he eventually began to rely upon a video recording as a means of demonstrating the craft with visitors, rather than engaging with them personally.

Following the opening of the Tahune AirWalk, the Centre, once an attraction in its own right, gradually became unsustainable. It was closed in March 2010.

In June 2010 the Forest and Heritage Centre was reopened by Forestry Tasmania. It was established as an additional experience to compliment the *Tahune AirWalk*, and serve as a booking office for all adventure forest sites.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

- **Artisan & display opportunities**

The Forest and Heritage Centre is a striking building occupying prime retail space in the heart of Geeveston. The Centre offers great potential to artisans and craftsmen wishing to secure a commercial base for their work, and will be complimented by existing 'makers workshops' and galleries recently established nearby.

In an effort to further enhance the visitor reception and retail area, the Forest and Heritage Centre are also seeking to introduce a range of new products for display and sale. Interested parties are encouraged to make contact with the manager to discuss supply.

VISITATION

At present the Forest & Heritage Centre attracts approximately 40,000 visitors per year.



Above: Old machinery on display



Above: Upstairs Gallery

Investment Opportunity SEVEN

PROJECT:
Ida Bay Railway

LOCATION:
Lune River

CONCEPT:
Restoration and development of heritage railway

SEEKING:
Investor/developer



...Ida Bay Railway

Above: Ida Bay Beach, Ida Bay Right: Ida Bay Railway Locomotive



Above: Lune River



Above: Passengers embarking Below: Passengers enjoying the ride



From Lune River station travel through bushland abundant with birdlife and wild flowers. Cross buttongrass plains and travel along the banks of Ida Bay and Lune River Estuary. The scenic water views are superb, and marked bushwalking tracks lead to Southport Lagoon and Southport Bluff. Near Southport Bluff is the King George III monument which commemorates the 134 lives lost in the sinking of the convict ship, King George III in 1835.

SITUATION

The Ida Bay Railway site, rail and buildings are a State Government owned heritage asset. The railway was leased by a private investor in 2005. At the time the infrastructure of Ida Bay Railway was verging on disrepair.

The future of this significant heritage attraction is threatened due to the capital funds required to restore the infrastructure. The State Government has invested funds for this purpose in recent years how ever are no longer forthcoming with assistance.

The railway infrastructure requires extensive restorative works to continue to operate safely. Following a period of closure in 2011 (26 April to 1 October), a visitor to the site provided a loan of \$50,000 and interim works were undertaken to enable to railway to reopen and operate. Completion of all restoration works is estimated to cost \$150,000.

All other infrastructure on site, including the workshop, community room, cabins, amenity blocks, and café require renovation. The cabins were found to be rotting around the foundation and do not comply with Council regulations and building codes, the locomotive shed and lean-to require rebuilding, and the bathroom and laundry facilities on site require renovation due to their derelict state and damage caused by vandals.

It is estimated that \$350,000 is required to complete all necessary repair/renovation of

cabins, locomotive shed, bathroom and laundry facilities.

VISITATION

Visitation has increased from 5,563 passengers in 2008 to more than 7,361 in 2011 (figures to April 2011). 32% increase in 3 years. Visitor numbers peak during summer months.

(Source: *Ida Bay Railway*)

CURRENT INITIATIVES

- **Proposed new operating model**

New operating model for the long term sustainability of the railway has been drafted.

It is proposed that the Friends of Ida Bay be transferred the management of the railway and assume responsibility of ensuring its preservation as a vital piece of the Huon Valley's heritage.

Due to ownership of the infrastructure being held with the State Government, site management is unable to apply for any significant grant programs. By transferring management to a not-for-profit organization, it would enable the railway to apply for additional funding.

Implementation of the new business model is estimated to cost in excess of \$10,000.

Site management is currently seeking assistance to raise these funds.

..scenic water views are superb

- **Continuing track maintenance**

The site is currently working with the Tasmanian Rail Safety Unit and external track and rolling stock engineering consultants to identify and rectify the most urgent repairs required. 2,500 of 11,000 sleepers need replacing.

- **Establishment of a museum**

Friends of Ida Bay Historical Society Incorporated has been formed with the object of preserving the history of the railway and surrounding areas. They also endeavor to build a museum at the Ida Bay Railway to present this history of the peoples and the places.

The *Friends of Ida Bay* are seeking grant funding to progress the development of the museum on site.

Work has already commenced in relocating two heritage cabins back to their former locations at the site. One will be refurbished back to its original state and will act as a replica of the accommodation that the former quarry workers resided in.

The site has submitted development plans to Council for the construction of a timber framed pitched roof building, adhering to Australian Museum standards.

SHORT TERM GOALS

A plan has been drafted for development of the grounds and buildings to enhance the site

whilst maintaining its unique character. The plan outlines works required as follows:

- **Workshop**

This large building has a timber frame with iron roof and wall cladding. This entire structure requires rebuilding and rewiring. The rebuilt workshop will house the carriages.

Rebuilding this area can allow for extension of the café to accommodate a large dining room and storeroom.

- **Community room**

This structurally sound building with cement floor has been partially upgraded. An additional rain tank is required to meet storm water catchment requirements and the pitched iron roof and awnings require insulation and new guttering.

- **Cabin one**

Structurally sound with timber framing. Some work has been undertaken, however to comply with Council standards the cabin requires further improvements including a new roof and rewiring and replacement of the current rain water tank.

- **Cabins two and three**

These are old cabins of basic sound structure however extensive works are required to the foundations of the buildings. Among other improvements the cabins require rewiring and a rain water tank. Deck extensions are required on both cabins to provide adequate light and ventilation.

- **Cabin four**

This building is structurally sound with



Above: Ida Bay Beach, Ida Bay

potential to be developed into a one bedroom unit with kitchen, dining and lounge, and a separate disabled access bathroom. It contains an internal double sided brick fire place which the Heritage Council requested remain.

- **Shower block**

Extensive renovations are required including replacement of wash basins, insulation and external ducting, and improvements to plumbing.

- **Laundry**

This structure is attached to the shower block as a lean to. Basic renovations are required.

- **Toilet block**

This is a timber framed building with a cement slab floor and corrugated iron external cladding. Improvements to this building are ongoing.

- **Café**

The café was planned and built to Council requirements. While the kitchen is of good size, there is potential for further development/expansion of the dining area.

- **Staff toilet/store room/work room**

Cement floor with timber frame, external corrugated iron walls and roof. Basic improvements required.

- **Platform**

Some work has been undertaken to ensure that the platform is level and safe. When

built, the decked area of the museum will join the platform and enable wheelchair access to the carriages.

- **Picnic area**

Expansion of the picnic area is required and there is potential for development of a BBQ area.

- **Parking**

Plans are in place to upgrade the car park to meet Council regulations and for safety compliance when the museum is built.

LONG TERM GOALS

Further development of the site into a resort-style attraction.

Ida Bay Railway is a unique railway attraction in Tasmania, with many assets and existing infrastructure to enable enhancement of the site. Site management realise the potential for development of the site into a resort-style attraction by making use of the infrastructure already available onsite, including:

- Railway track
- Café/restaurant
- Cabins (self contained accommodation)
- Services for the disabled
- Camping grounds and facilities including camp kitchen, lounge, and BBQ
- Games room
- Interpretive displays

- Steam train for special events
- Walking tracks
- Restoration and relocation of a quarry workers hut.

Also through the development of:

- Museum to showcase the history of the area
- A bakery and general store
- Mini golf course on old tennis court site

Should all repairs and upgrades occur, the following has been forecast as achievable within 5 years:

- Annual repair and maintenance costs reduce from \$64,000 to \$6,000.
- Annual patronage increase from 8,000 per year to 14,000
- Annual patron revenue increase from \$180,000 to \$350,000 (including accommodation fees, increased trips and events, etc).
- Employees increase from 3 fulltime staff to 5 full time staff
- Employees increase from 5 part time staff to 10 part time staff
- Volunteers increase from 8 to 10
- Operation of an additional diesel locomotive (currently 2)
- Operation of a steam locomotive (not currently in use)



Investment Opportunity EIGHT

PROJECT:
Wooden Boat Centre

LOCATION:
Franklin

CONCEPT:
Business expansion and café

SEEKING:
Investor



Above: Boat builders, Wooden Boat School, Franklin Right: Visitors at the Wooden Boat Centre, Franklin

The Wooden Boat Centre Tasmania is a school and visitor centre dedicated to preserving the traditional craft/trade of wooden boat building, and to stimulating and broadening public awareness and understanding of the craft.

SITUATION

The Wooden Boat Centre is a unique and interactive attraction located in Franklin.

It was initially established in 1990 as the Shipwright's Point School of Wooden Boatbuilding, to teach and preserve the skills of traditional wooden boatbuilding. It provides a fully nationally accredited Certificate course which is the only one actively operating in Australia, and possibly the world!

The visitor centre presents the history of wooden boats and boatbuilding in Tasmania, including technique, timbers and tools used, and the history of the school through interpretive displays. Visitors can observe the school's teachers and students at work from viewing windows in the visitor centre.

The Huon River foreshore adjacent to the Centre has been developed to provide public walkways, a wharf apron with picnic shelter and barbecue, and other amenities, as well as a refurbished dinghy shed and modest yacht marina. The whole facility has steadily grown to be a centre for the celebration of the traditional values of wooden boats, boating, the river and its life.

In keeping with the history of boat building in the Huon Valley area, the Centre constructs vessels using local timbers, some of which are considered to be of high conservation value. Supply of such timber may be impacted by the outcome of the *Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)* negotiations.

The IGA is expected to help to establish a balance between the protection of high conservation value forests and ensuring sustainable wood supply to support Tasmania's forest industry. The IGA process will determine what areas of the forest nominated as being of high conservation value will be formally reserved, while ensuring there is adequate native forest available for harvesting and regeneration to meet current wood supply contracts. While this process is being undertaken, an interim conservation agreement has been put in place to protect 99.5% of the forest nominated for immediate protection. How much of this forest will remain protected will be unknown until the IGA is finalised by the negotiating parties.

LONG TERM GOALS

- **Development of a cinema and classroom**

Development of a cinema and classroom at the centre has been identified as an opportunity to further enhance visitor experience and interaction. The cinema would display a suite of documentaries and films relating to the heritage of Franklin, wooden boat building and other relevant material. The classroom would be tailored to school-aged children where model boat building and other specialty programs could be delivered.

- **Small cafe**

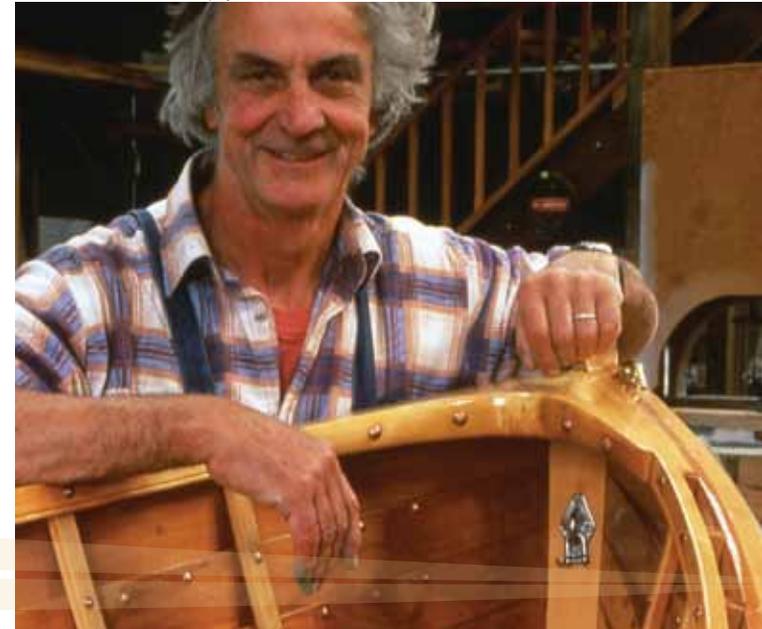
There is potential for the development of a café on site, providing light meals and a scenic outlook to diners. There is significant potential for the further development of the Franklin foreshore, in particular the *Franklin Evaporators* site, as identified further in this document.



Above: Huon River looking onto Franklin



Above: Huon Pine boat on display Below: Boat Builder



Investment Opportunity NINE

PROJECT:

Casey's Living Steam Museum

LOCATION:

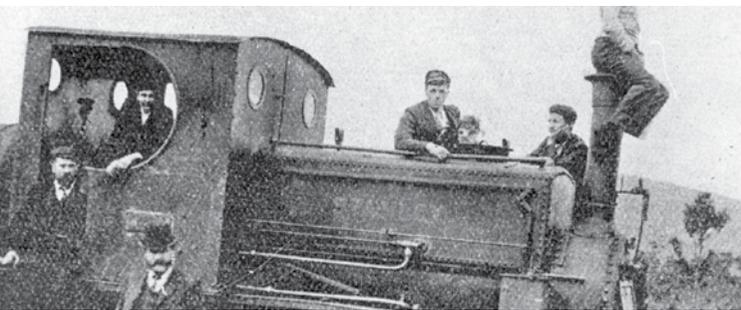
Dover

CONCEPT:

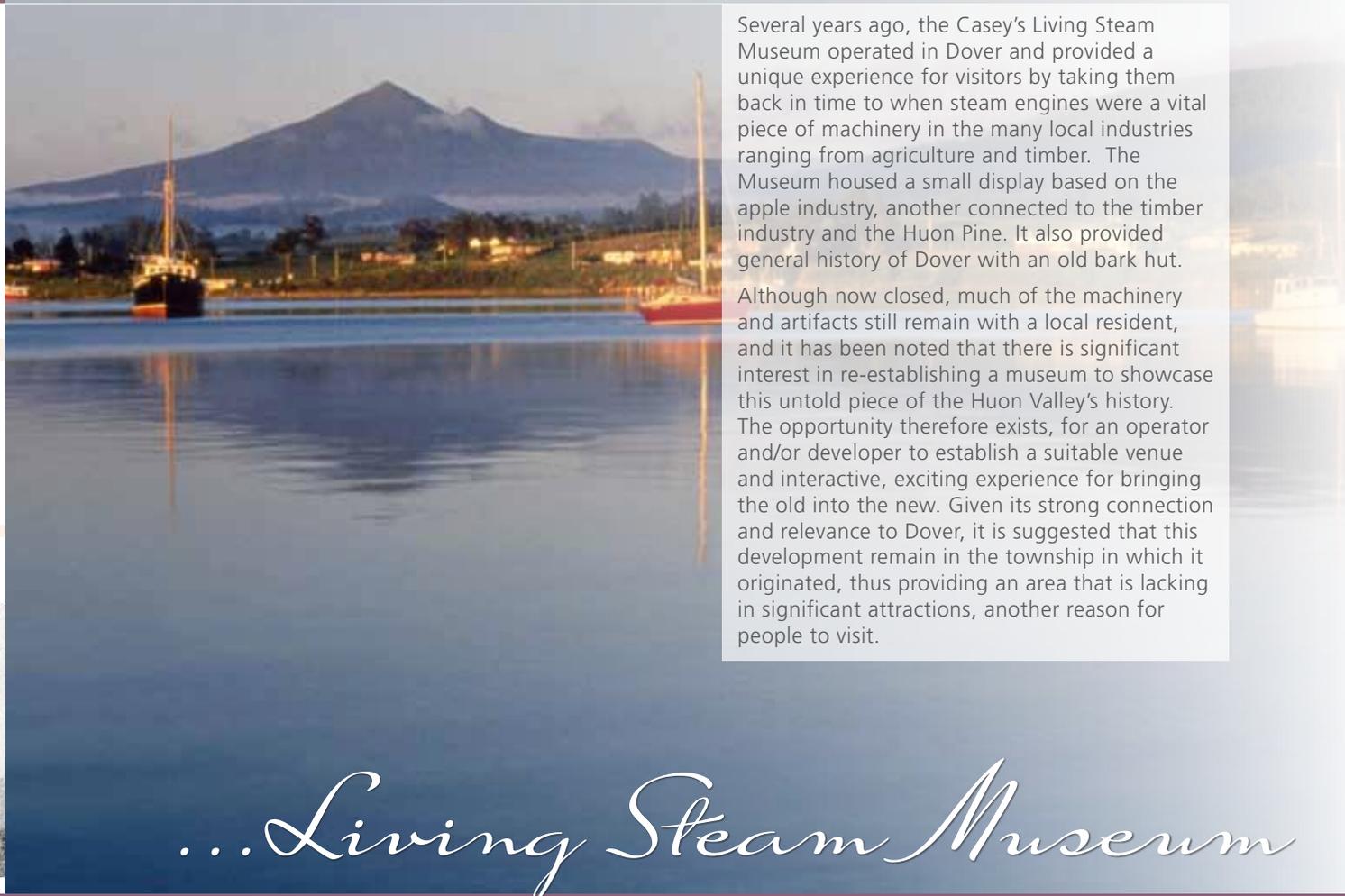
Interactive local industry museum

SEEKING:

Investor and operator



Above: 'Stanley' the steam locomotive Right: Adamsons Peak from Esperance Bay, Dover



Several years ago, the Casey's Living Steam Museum operated in Dover and provided a unique experience for visitors by taking them back in time to when steam engines were a vital piece of machinery in the many local industries ranging from agriculture and timber. The Museum housed a small display based on the apple industry, another connected to the timber industry and the Huon Pine. It also provided general history of Dover with an old bark hut.

Although now closed, much of the machinery and artifacts still remain with a local resident, and it has been noted that there is significant interest in re-establishing a museum to showcase this untold piece of the Huon Valley's history. The opportunity therefore exists, for an operator and/or developer to establish a suitable venue and interactive, exciting experience for bringing the old into the new. Given its strong connection and relevance to Dover, it is suggested that this development remain in the township in which it originated, thus providing an area that is lacking in significant attractions, another reason for people to visit.

...Living Steam Museum

Investment Opportunity TEN

PROJECT:

Geeveston Living History Museum

LOCATION:

Geeveston

CONCEPT:

Living history museum of Geeveston history and heritage

SEEKING:

Investor/developer



...Geeveston Museum

Above: Township of Geeveston Right: Timber cutters, Geeveston circa 1890



Above: William Geeves Below: Group of forest workers



Geeveston has had a long standing connection to the region's agricultural and forestry industries. Over the years, the township has been increasingly referred to as the "forest town" given its access point to Tasmania's southern forests and the World Heritage Wilderness area, in addition to its pioneer heritage.

The Forest and Heritage Centre located in Geeveston has over recent years been the home of the "Vince Smith Collection" proudly owned by the Huon Valley Council. The *Vince Smith Collection* consists of a range of wood working tools and machinery that were used in the local forests. In addition to this collection, local organisation the Geeveston Archives and History Society, also has a wealth of artifacts and material that date back across the region's forestry and agricultural history.

Forestry Tasmania – who currently leases the *Forest and Heritage Centre*, has commissioned an interpretation plan that could be used to guide the development of a display and increase the community's and wider population's appreciation of the Collection's value. The aim of the plan is to provide a framework for transforming the *Vince Smith Collection* into a meaningful visitor experience, by identifying its values, setting interpretive goals and themes, defining target audiences, and by providing a concept for interpretive media.

By effectively using these resources and the with support of *Forestry Tasmania*, the *Geeveston Archives and History Society*, and the Council, the opportunity exists for a purpose built

"Living History Museum" to be developed for the effective presentation of the region's rich history and heritage. The facility would ensure the collection can be adequately curated and interpreted, and ensure the preservation of a significant part of the Valley's history.

Investment Opportunity ELEVEN

PROJECT:

Tahune AirWalk

LOCATION:

Geeveston

CONCEPT:

Site redevelopment

SEEKING:

Investor/developer



Above: Visitor on the swinging bridge, Tahune AirWalk Right: Tahune AirWalk, Geeveston



... Tahune AirWalk



Above: Aerial view of Tahune AirWalk



Above: Diners at the café, Tahune AirWalk Below: Eagle Hang Gliding, Geeveston



Walk among the giants of the forest... Experience the power of nature at the AirWalk. There's always something new at Tasmania's must-see forest experience. With breathtaking views of the forest canopy, spine-tingling swinging bridges across the Huon and Picton Rivers and Tasmanian food and wine in the café, there's a full day of fun for the whole family. Whether you're looking for a peaceful forest ramble or are up for a more challenging hike, one of Tahune's trails is sure to fit the bill. It all adds up to an action-packed day in the great outdoors for everyone.

SITUATION

The Tahune Airwalk, one of the key natural attractions in the Huon Valley, was established by *Forestry Tasmania* in 2001. Identified as one of Parks & Wildlife Service's 60 Great Short Walks, the Tahune Airwalk is well known among tourists.

The flagship walk takes visitors along a pathway suspended 48m above the forest floor, offering views of the forest canopy, Hartz Mountains, and the Huon and Picton Rivers. The AirWalk is one of a number of scenic walks available on the site, others include the Swinging Bridges Walk; during which visitors cross two swinging bridges suspended from the banks of the Huon and Picton rivers, and the Huon Pine Walk; demonstrating the lifecycle of the Huon Pine. Tahune AirWalk is one of the few easily accessible locations in southern Tasmania to see these native trees growing.

The visitor information centre on site provides ticket sales and a gift shop featuring Tasmanian craft and produce including Island Specialty Timber products.

The onsite café serves a variety of snacks and meals, including Tasmanian wines and produce, and offers meal pack options for Lodge guests. For more self-sufficient guests, picnic grounds and barbecues are available, as are camping sites and toilet facilities.

Lodge accommodation was developed on site and opened March 2012. Set among the forest, the twenty three bed lodge has three bedroom wings, and includes bunk rooms for backpackers, family rooms with double and single beds, and a double room suitable for those with disabilities. The lodge also has a communal room, dining area and fully equipped kitchen. Self-guided night tours are available to lodge guests.

A 6km mountain bike track was recently developed around the site suitable for intermediate to advanced riders. Fees are included in general admission and bikes available to hire for those without their own.

VISITATION

Attracting approximately 100,000 visitors per year from opening, the AirWalk bolstered visitation to the Huon Valley, and in particular the gateway town of Geeveston, for a number of years. Visitation has declined in recent times with the site attracting 63,800 visitors in 2011/2012.

Tasmanian residents who have previously visited the site are issued an annual '*Friend of the forests*' card upon their second visit. This card provides the resident with free entry to the site when accompanying a full fee paying visitor, or half price entry if visiting alone.

..walk among the giants of the forest

CURRENT INITIATIVES

- **Eagle Hang-gliding**

Eagle Hang Gliding was acquired by Forestry Tasmania from private operators in June 2012 and is located at the Tahune AirWalk site. The 400m cable glide runs through the tree tops to the forest floor.

Currently managed by AirWalk staff 'on demand', discounted admission is offered to AirWalk visitors to maintain patronization during winter months. A 'free glide Saturday' promotion was held following Forestry Tasmania's acquisition of the attraction which proved popular with visitors. Further promotions of this nature are under consideration. The glider will be attended full time by employees over summer as demand increases.

Forestry Tasmania supports the Raptor and Wildlife Refuge through the supply and transport of central poles for all flight aviaries, and some proceeds of Eagle Hang-gliding ticket sales.

- **Segway tours**

Segways are self-balancing personal transporters that are easy to use, and controlled by weight transfer. Segway tours of the Picton River are available to groups of seven people (minimum) with full Segway Authorised Training provided to participants.

- **Development of a high-ropes course and playground**

Consideration is being given to the development of a high-ropes course and custom-made children's playground to add a further dimension to the Tahune AirWalk experience. Two high-ropes courses of varying difficulty would be placed within the Huon Pine walk at the site. With the option of obtaining exclusive hire of the lodge, such an attraction could attract conference groups, school groups and other camps to the site for a minimum overnight stay.

- **Redevelopment of the Adventure Forests brand**

As previously noted, the Tahune Airwalk is marketed under the 'Adventure Forests' brand with other *Forestry Tasmania* attractions. This concept is to be re-worked, with Tahune Airwalk again becoming a standalone brand with its own website and promotional marketing material.

LONG TERM GOALS

A development plan was created to elevate Tahune AirWalk from being an attraction to a destination. The plan identifies a range of possible activities to undertake in order to broaden the appeal of the site. Such activities include rafting, fishing, and night wildlife tours. The potential for development of additional walking tours of various levels of technicality and points of interest is also identified.



Above: Picton River, Geeveston



Above: Tahune AirWalk structure Below: Side view of the swinging bridge, Tahune AirWalk



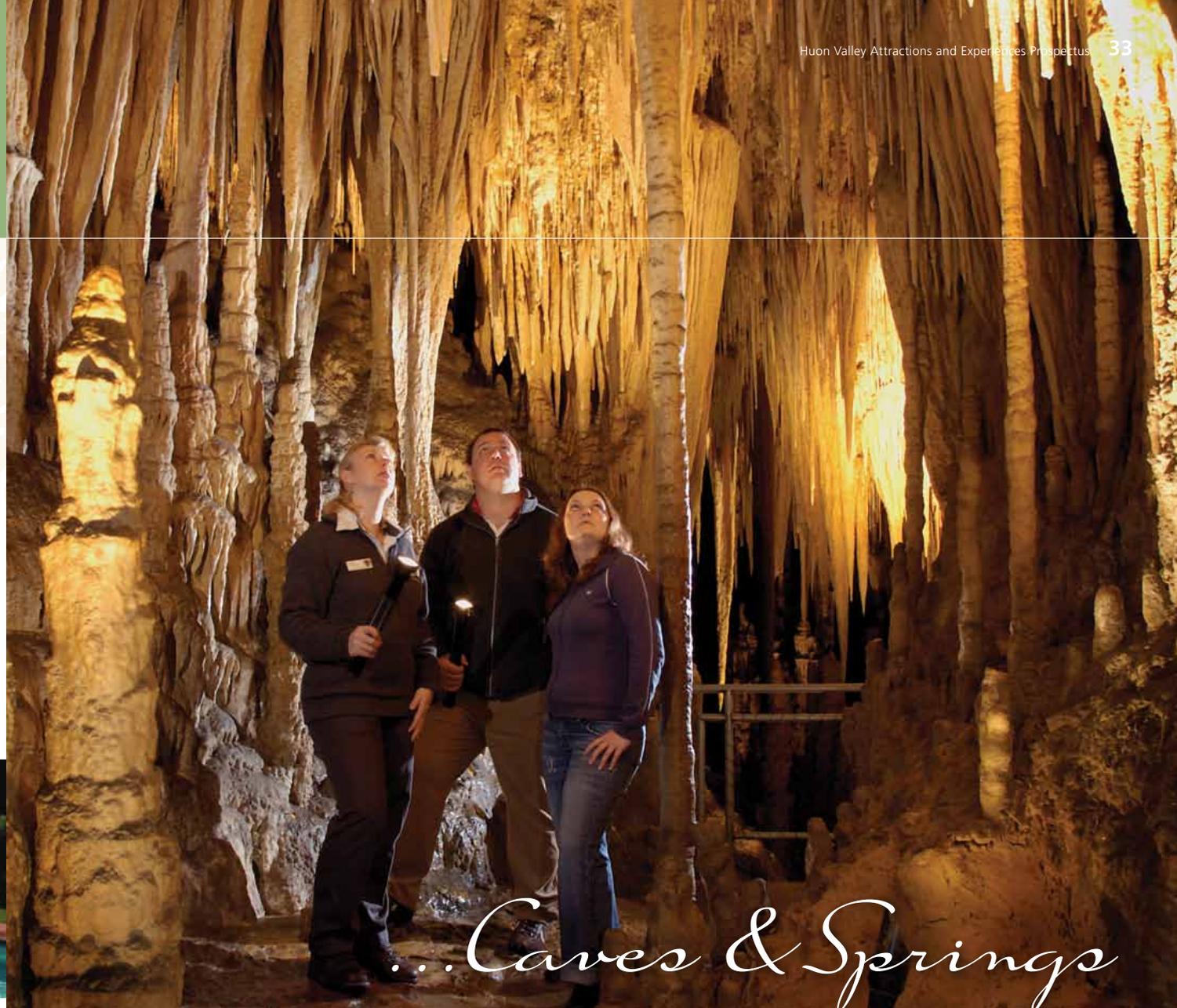
Investment Opportunity TWELVE

PROJECT:
Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs

LOCATION:
Hastings

CONCEPT:
Site redevelopment

SEEKING:
Investor/developer

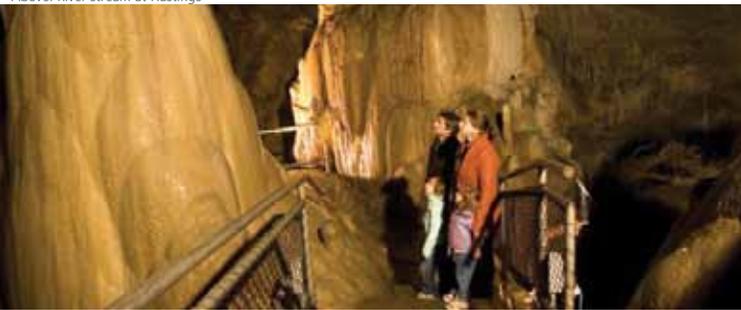


...Caves & Springs

Above: Thermal Pool, Hastings Right: Guided Tour of the caves, Hastings Caves



Above: River stream at Hastings



Above: Visitors in the caves Below: Path to Newdegate Cave



Left: Sleeping Beauty, Huon Valley

The Hastings Caves State Reserve offers visitors a variety of experiences, from relaxing in the warm waters of a thermal springs pool, walking in the rich forests of the reserve and, the unique experience of exploring Newdegate Cave. Both the thermal pool and the trail which leads through the surrounding forests are accessible to wheelchair users.

Named after Sir Francis Newdegate, the Governor of Tasmania from 1917-1920, Newdegate Cave is the largest tourist cave in Australia which occurs in dolomite, rather than limestone. Its richly decorated chambers began forming tens of millions of years ago. Don't miss the opportunity to take a tour of the cave with qualified Parks and Wildlife guides.

SITUATION

Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs is located 90 minutes south of Hobart. The Hastings Caves area has been a reserve since 1919. Newdegate Cave was initially reserved on June 24 1919 to protect its scenic features and to provide for tourism development. In 1941 the thermal springs area was added to protect the geological features and for recreational use. In 1972 the area became a State Reserve with a small section added to the two initial areas. The current operation sits under the *Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE)*.

The state contributes approximately \$250,000 to the management and operation of the site each year, which in recent years has been running at a loss. As at August 2012, revenue from ticketing is down \$40,000 and the onsite kiosk is down \$20,000 on the previous year. The decline in income is due to a number of factors and has resulted in the state commissioning a feasibility

review of the site. The review is currently being undertaken with an outcome expected by October 2012.

It is anticipated that recommendations from the review will result in an increase of ticket prices. The current prices have remained unchanged for four years.

VISITATION

Visitor numbers to the site during 2011/2012 totaled 33,236 (down from 37,305 in 2010/11, and 40,661 in 2009/10). Visitation peaks from January to March, with more than half of all visitation occurring during this period.

Operating hours are extended and additional staff rostered for up to 6 weeks during the peak season and Easter period to cope with demand.

While the tourism industry is currently experiencing an overall decline in visitor numbers, further issues contributing to the downturn of visitors to the site include:

- **Reduction of opening hours**

Parks management passed a decision in October 2011 to reduce operating hours in an effort to reduce operating costs. Whilst previously operating from 10:00am to 4:30pm and offering 5 guided cave tours daily, the site is currently operating from 10:30am to 3:30pm and provides four guided cave tours daily.

Despite an analysis being made of visitation patterns, and the operating hours adjusted to best match, the restricted hours result in a loss of income as visitors arrive at the site out of operating hours. Feedback received from visitors and locals residents of the area suggests that the present operating hours are not adequate.

Approval has been granted for operating hours to be extended during the peak summer period to accommodate increased visitation. From 26 December 2012 to late January 2013, the site will operate from 9am to 5pm and additional tours provided to cater to demand.

- **Unsealed road from highway to visitor centre and cave**

The road into the site is currently unsealed and is found to prevent inexperienced and/or international drivers, and visitors travelling in hired vehicles from accessing the site. Whilst it is regularly maintained, the condition of the road deteriorates rapidly following heavy rainfall which further inhibits access.

A strategic cost estimate provided by *Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER)* on 12 August 2011 indicates that a total of \$4.7 million dollars is required to seal the two sections of road from Lune River Road to Newdegate Cave car park (7.7km). There is potential for the project to be completed in two sections as funding permits, with the first section of road from Lune River Road to the Visitor Centre (3.3km) estimated to cost \$1.6 million, and the second section from the Visitor Centre to Newdegate Cave car park (4.4km) estimated to cost \$3.1 million.

- **Condition of interpretive signage deteriorating**

Interpretation at the site is varied, caters to all levels of interest and is presented quite subtly. Some of the interpretation is weathered to the point of illegibility and requires maintenance or further development to enhance it.

A comprehensive interpretation plan has been prepared for Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs, providing a vision for the development and enhancement of interpretation at the site.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

- **Education Package and Junior Caver Program**

An education package has been created for schools to access from the Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs website to encourage

excursions to the site. The content of the package has been confirmed and will be made available once stylised (expected by end 2012)

The Junior Caver Program is being developed through funding received from Bendigo Bank. The aim of the program is to further engage school-aged children to truly understand the natural wonder of Newdegate Cave and the Hastings Caves Reserve. Educational booklets will be designed as well as 'Junior Caver' branded merchandise as a further value-add. The Junior Caver program was launched in September 2012.

CURRENT GOALS

- **Essential maintenance**

- Upgrade of pool plant
- Replacement of pool lining
- Replacement of water supply system

Quotations have not yet been sought for this maintenance. Estimations and costing will depend on the direction that Parks and Wildlife Service wish to take in future for the thermal aspect of Hastings Enterprise (see 'Redevelopment of thermal pool area' under Long Term Goals).

Estimates for refurbishment of the area it currently stands total \$1.5 million. (Pool liner \$200,000, pool plant \$1 million and water system \$300,000.)

Below: 'The Palace' at Hastings Caves



Below: 'Spring Tail' at Hastings Caves





...relax in the warm waters

Above: Bathers relaxing in the Thermal Pool

- **Implement interpretation plan**

Required actions identified in the plan are listed in order of priority for implementation. Estimated costs for each action range from \$0 to in excess of \$10,000. Funding will be required for the plan to be implemented as the annual signage allocation to the site is only \$6,000.

A concept for consideration that has not been captured in the plan is the development of a smart phone app for the site. Using QR codes on interpretive signage will provide another avenue to engage with visitors. There could be potential for further development of this concept to involve other attractions to encourage and promote visitation to the area via a 'treasure hunt' activity. For example, visitors collect information from QR codes located at various attractions in the Huon Valley to complete a questionnaire and receive a gift or voucher at the final attraction.

Pending the outcome of the feasibility review, elements of the business plan may be progressed. These include:

- **Reinvigoration of the kiosk**

Food available from the kiosk is currently limited to basic hot food, coffee, processed biscuits/cakes, cold drinks and confectionary.

Revitalisation of the kiosk has been identified as an opportunity to showcase local produce and attract visitors seeking a gastronomic experience. A local chef will be employed 3 days per week to prepare food onsite, while dedicated kitchen staff will assemble and serve the meals as required.

Seasonal Tasmanian produce will be used in the kitchen, with a focus on produce sourced from the Huon Valley, benefiting local suppliers. The licensed café will also serve local wines, spring water, and Tasmanian soft drinks.

Stories about the producers will feature on menus to further promote the local food and beverage industry.

- **Adventure Caving**

Adventure caving was trialed for two years from approximately 2002 to 2003 with limited success. Two staff were employed one day per week to undertake the tours 'on demand' but lack of promotion caused the activity to soon become unviable.

Adventure caving has been recognised in the enterprise business plan as an opportunity requiring investigation and costing. Site management recognizes the potential for an adventure caving program as part of the Hastings Experience however a longer term approach (up to five years) is required in order to build a reputable and profitable

client base. A substantial marketing budget is required to promote the activity, as well as dedicated staff trained and available on demand.

Commercial operators are sought to manage the adventure caving program with a commission payable to the Hastings Enterprise.

LONG TERM GOALS

- **Reinstate extended operating hours**

- **Seal road**

Sealing the road into Hastings Caves State Reserve is considered a high priority by site management who are currently seeking funding for this to be progressed.

- **Update road signage**

The current black on white DIER signage detailing Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs is not easily distinguished from regular road signs. The signage from Huonville to Hastings must be upgraded to reflect that the site is a tourist destination.

DIER's 'commercial tourism' style signage (yellow on blue) is more suitable and readily recognised by visitors.

- **Visitor Centre extension including interpretation room and kitchen**

The construction of an interpretation room will compliment the Education and Junior Caver programs, remove interps from the

visitor centre shop area, and also provide an interpretive experience for visitors additional to the guided cave tour.

Expansion of the current kitchen will allow for a designated dining for visitors to enjoy their meals from the improved menu.

Plans for this extension have not yet been designed.

- **Redevelopment of thermal pool area**

The structure of thermal springs swimming pool is currently quite stark in contrast to the surrounding environment. Redeveloping the pool to compliment the environment in which it is situated will drastically improve the aesthetics and more closely align with visitors' expectations.

Remodeling of the thermal pool area including the development of natural spas is estimated to cost from \$1.5M - \$2M.

Revitalisation of the picnic areas surrounding the pool is estimated to cost \$500,000.

LONG TERM GOALS (*concepts not yet endorsed by Parks*)

- **Visitor Centre extension at entrance**

An extension of the building at the entrance to the visitor centre could allow for an additional 2 rooms with separate 'shop front' entrances. It is envisaged that these rooms could be leased to local producers and artisans to showcase their and sell their wares. The adventure cave tour operator

could also make use of the space if so desired.

- **Development of on-site accommodation**

The Chalet located on site was constructed as part of the original development of the site in 1939. It was designed following the 'alpine' theme that was popular amongst developers at the time. Originally a restaurant and kiosk, the chalet was later used as accommodation for rangers based on site, and is currently used as office space for field staff and accommodation for volunteers.

The chalet is of high cultural significance in the area and offers great potential for development into visitor accommodation. Whilst the external appearance of the chalet is maintained to a high standard, the interior requires extensive renovation, at an estimated cost of \$200,000.

Access to the site is currently restricted to 7am – 7pm due to liability. Revision of this policy will be required to enable development to proceed.

Site management has identified an opportunity to feature the tranquility of the site and the health benefits of the natural thermal springs located on site through the development of a health retreat comprised of three spa chalets.

Accommodation concept plans have not yet been developed. A private investor is sought to progress this concept.

- **Twilight wildlife tours**

The Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs site is home to an abundance of wildlife, including lyrebirds, currawongs and other bird life, pademelons, wallabies, platypuses, echidnas, wombats and Tasmanian devils. Whilst birdwatchers are able to appreciate the bird life during the day, most of the other animals are nocturnal and more regularly sighted at night. The wildlife and network of roads linked to Hastings Caves Road provide a wonderful opportunity for the operation of twilight wildlife tours to take place.

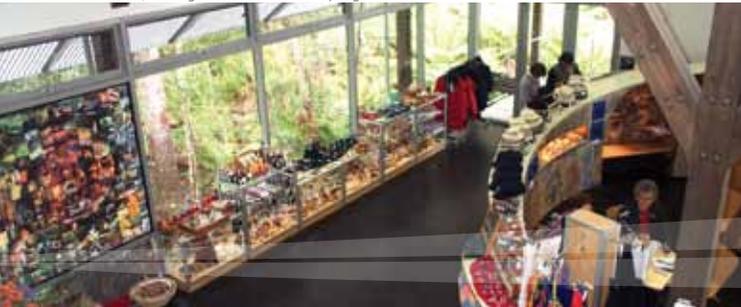
Access to the site is currently restricted to 7am-7pm due to liability. Revision of this policy will be required to allow for tours to take place.

- **Wedding rotunda**

Weddings in Newdegate Cave were once commonplace and continue to occur from time to time. Whilst the cave does not appeal to many as a unique wedding venue, potential lies in the construction of a wedding rotunda in the thermal springs area. Weddings and other events could be catered for by the onsite restaurant.

A 'Friends of the Far South' group is being created to seek funding for projects in the Far South, including the Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs site.

Below: Visitors Centre, Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs



Below: BBQ Area, Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs



Investment Opportunity THIRTEEN

PROJECT:

Guided Star Gazing

LOCATION:

Cockle Creek

CONCEPT:

Star gazing tour

SEEKING:

Tour operator

The Huon Valley provides some of the best viewing locations for the Aurora Australis and other astrological related occurrences. Its far south location provides for clear skies and stunning views for star gazing enthusiasts. Drawing on the region's history, in particular the French expedition's discovery of geo-magnetism while at Cockle Creek provides for a substantial base for an experience to be provided for visitors.

The opportunity exists for a tourism operator to establish guided tours for visitors, which in turn provide another reason for encouraging overnight stays in the region.



Above: Sunset near Cockle Creek Right: Recherche Bay, Cockle Creek



...Star Gazing

Investment Opportunity FOURTEEN

PROJECT:

Hot Air Ballooning

LOCATION:

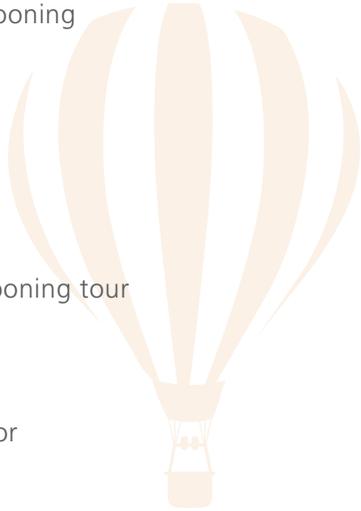
Geeveston

CONCEPT:

Hot air ballooning tour

SEEKING:

Tour operator



Above: Hot Air Balloon Right: Hartz Mountains, Geeveston



The Huon Valley offers some stunning landscapes. Its close proximity to the World Heritage Wilderness Area provides a unique experience for visitors to see the pristine environment. The offering of hot air ballooning is a unique concept for the region, and the state. Other similar experiences are available elsewhere in Australia, however given the region's dramatic mountain ranges, and meandering waterways, the opportunity exists for a tour operator to offer an adrenalin fuelled experience for visitors. Consideration could be given to operating flights at dawn and dusk, as well as during the course of the day, thus providing several different viewing options, capturing the many "faces" of the Huon Valley.

Drawing on the region's variety of fresh, quality local produce and beverages, flight options could include a gourmet picnic option, thus showcasing another side of the region to visitors. Other considerations could include linkages with existing experiences such as *Tahune AirWalk* whereby the balloon could either disembark or arrive at the site, thus complimenting the experience at the site. (Note: necessary arrangements and approvals would be required with the site owner to ensure site access).

...Hot Air Ballooning

Investment Opportunity FIFTEEN

PROJECT:

Walking Tracks

LOCATION:

Various locations

CONCEPT:

Walking track development

SEEKING:

Developer



Above: Walkers at South Cape Right: Wilderness walk, Southern Forest



... Walking Tracks



Above: Bird watcher on the Picton River



Above: Walkers at South Cape Below: Picnic on the beach, Far South



The region offers a variety of walking experiences for a range of experienced or non experienced walkers. The more walking experiences available the more awareness the region will obtain for appealing to the bushwalker market. It all adds up to an action-packed day in the great outdoors for everyone.

Tasmania in general, continues to be most known for its abundance of natural wilderness and associated experiences (in accordance with Tourism Tasmania's Motivations Research: *Appeal triggers and motivations for tourism in Tasmania*).

As such, the Huon Valley is well poised to expand on the current offering of walking experiences, and leverage of the significance of some of the region's more identified tracks such as the South Coast Track traversing between Melaluca and Cockle Creek. Two tracks have been identified in relevant strategic documents, and are detailed in the following.

DOVER TO SOUTHPORT

Local tourism association, Far South Tasmania Inc commissioned a report on the development of a walking track linking Dover bay to Southport bay upon receipt of a grant from Bendigo Bank in 2011. John Hughes was employed to design the track and prepare a report detailing the construction and costs associated.

The objective of the project was to design and construct a suitable track linking the two areas, focusing on and exposing coastal views whilst respecting any sensitive features of the forest habitat. The start of the track will coincide with the conclusion of the existing Tasmanian Trail which stretches from Devonport to Dover. The extension to Southport bay is part of a longer vision that will ultimately see a connection with the highly popular multiday trek – South Coast Track.

Forestry Tasmania manages the state forest in which the proposed track is to be built and received a copy of the report to

enable preparation of a State Forest Activity Assessment. Following a meeting with all relevant stakeholders, the group were informed of areas to be avoided on the track alignment due to presence of raptor nests and threatened species of flora.

The track was assessed to AS2156.1-2001 Walking Track Class 3 standard. It will be 6.1km long and 800mm wide. The work assessment for each section of the track assume that suitably skilled crews will undertake the work, however the track design will allow community and volunteer groups to assist in certain sections under the supervision of experienced track crew.

At this stage this project has halted awaiting the outcome of the pending Inter-Governmental Forestry Agreement, however it can be assumed that providing access can be granted from Forestry Tasmania, and suitable funds can be made available, it is anticipated that the track development will be progressed.

HARTZ MOUNTAINS

The Huon Valley is home to the Hartz Mountains National Park which is part of the World Heritage Wilderness Area. The national park is managed by the State Government through the Parks and Wildlife Service. The area is a popular recreation area for many avid bushwalkers with several walks in the park already available and reasonably well maintained.

Through the Huon Valley Regional Tourism Strategy notes the opportunity for additional tracks to be developed in the park, and as such offering further experiences for bushwalking enthusiasts.

Investment Opportunity SIXTEEN

PROJECT:

Wildlife Experience

LOCATION:

Various locations

CONCEPT:

Wildlife tour

SEEKING:

Tour operator



Above: Swift Parrot Right: Eastern Barred Bandicoot



The Huon Valley was once home of the Talune Wildlife Park which provided visitors with an interactive wildlife encounter in the region. The park was privately operated and due to a change of circumstance, closed several years ago. Since the park's closure, no wildlife experience has been operating, and as such the opportunity has been identified as having considerable potential.

Existing operators have been encouraged to consider the potential of value adding to their current operations, however no formalized arrangements exist. As such, the potential for a new operator to enter the market exists, operating a venture whereby a wildlife refuge could compliment existing experiences well. As a point of difference to other wildlife park operations elsewhere in Tasmania, the opportunity exists for consideration to nocturnal encounters as well. These could be linked with caving experiences or similar depending on the location of the park.

... Wildlife Experience

Investment Opportunity SEVENTEEN

PROJECT:

Adventure Caving Experience / Glow Worm Experience

LOCATION:

Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs or Mystery Creek Cave

CONCEPT:

Caving experience / tour

SEEKING:

Tour operator



The far south region of the Huon Valley is a unique and rugged landscape. Underground is just as impressive as that above, with one of the first formed dolomite caves being Newdegate Cave, part of the Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs experience located in the Huon Valley. The network of cave systems in this area is extensive, and offers a range of opportunities for adventure caving tour experiences to provide access for visitors to an untapped and enchanting world.

The opportunity exists for an adventure caving experience to be established, providing a controlled means of access to the region's impressive caving sites. Exit Cave (being one of Australia's longest cave systems), provides a unique experience for those who are appropriately skilled and hold the required permits. Other experiences are also available for those who are not so experienced. A variety of guided caving options would provide for an additional adventure seeking experience for visitors, and compliment other similar adrenalin based opportunities.

Family orientated caving experiences could also be considered, particularly given the connection already established with school groups and the Hastings experience. Glow worms and other cave fauna could be used to underpin the tour, focusing on the unique wildlife found in the cave system. Night time tours could also be an option, thus encouraging increased overnight stays in the region.

...Caving Experience



Above: Cave formation Right: Visitors in Hastings Caves

Investment Opportunity EIGHTEEN

PROJECT:

Mountain Bike Track and Circuit

LOCATION:

Geeveston

CONCEPT:

Bike circuit and track for beginner, intermediate and advanced bike riders

SEEKING:

Developer and operator

Given the extensive state forest located throughout the Huon Valley, and the increasing interest in extreme sports – particularly mountain biking, the opportunity exists for a purpose built track and circuit that would appeal to this group of enthusiasts. The rugged terrain found in state forest, would provide for a highly regarded mountain bike circuit that could provide a range of challenges – stemming from easy to the extremely difficult.



Above: Extreme mountain-biking Right: Beginners track



...Mountain Bike Track

Investment Opportunity NINETEEN

PROJECT:
Huon Jet Boats

LOCATION:
Huonville

CONCEPT:
Project rejuvenation

SEEKING:
Investor



Above: Riding the 'Huon Jet' Right: Jet Boat on the Huon River

...Huon Jet Boats

Hold on tight and head up the Huon River for the ride of a lifetime. Feel the adrenalin surge as the jet boat quickly accelerates to speeds of up to 80kph. You'll whip along the riverbank, weaving in and out of the forest canopy that overhangs the river, dodge around trees and rocks in the river, bounce through white water and fly into full 360° spins. You may not realise the jet boat has slowed down until you feel your grip relaxing on the seat in front of you! Enjoy true tranquility as you cruise through wide expanses of deep water surrounded by forest, wildlife and mountains in the distance. Gaze into the still waters that show off fabulous reflections of the river and skies. Go close up with Huon pines growing on the river bank. Then before you know it the jet boat is back at top speed and the heart begins to race.

It's the balance between thrills and beauty that sets the Huon Jet apart from other jet boat rides. Both aspects of the jet boat ride will take your breath away. The ride lasts for 35 minutes and in this time you will see 12 kilometres of the majestic Huon River. Your driver will occasionally stop at various points along the river to tell you a little bit about the history of the area and provide a commentary about the river itself. It's a thrilling ride along an ever changing riverscape.

SITUATION

Huon Jet is an iconic attraction which has been operating on the esplanade of the Huon River in Huonville since 1989. At the time Huon Jet was established, the economy of the Huon Valley was at a low ebb. The venture paid off however, with over 200 people benefiting from training and employment provided through its ongoing operations.

Huon Jet offers a thrilling 35 minute jet boat ride along the Huon River as well as pedal boat hire. The onsite café serves coffee, light meals and cold drinks as well as offering a small selection of souvenirs for purchase. Staff photograph passengers to capture the experience and can provide the images to customers for purchase if desired.

VISITATION

The attraction has benefited from periods of considerable visitation, peaking at 11,565 passengers in 2004, however 2012 passenger numbers indicate that visitation have more than halved since.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

- **Sea plane tours**

Tasmanian Air Adventures commenced package tours to the Huon Valley in conjunction with Huon Jet in September 2012. Departing from the River Derwent in Hobart, the seaplane first takes in the views of Mount Wellington before heading south and making a spectacular landing on the beautiful Huon River. Passengers then disembark the seaplane to enjoy a 35 minute jet boat ride along the Huon River.

The awaiting pilot is available to provide short seaplane tours of the Huon Valley for locals or other visitors. Upon completion of the jet boat ride, passengers embark on the remainder of the flight, following the Huon River to the sea, past Bruny Island and D'Entrecasteaux Channel and back to the River Derwent in Hobart.

Tasmanian Air Adventures ticket office is located at Macquarie Wharf Shed No. 1 in Hobart, and the aircraft on the King

Pier Marina on Hobart's waterfront. These locations provide great exposure to tourists arriving in Hobart by cruise ship over the summer period.

- **Helicopter transfers**

Rotor-Lift Aviation also offers a package tour to the Huon Valley in conjunction with Huon Jet. Tours depart from their base at Cambridge, with *Rotor-Lift* offering complimentary return transfers from Hobart. Passengers are flown over Hobart and Mount Wellington, before heading south to the Huon Valley and landing beside the Huon River. Passengers then enjoy a 35 minute jet boat ride along the river following which morning/afternoon tea is served at the Jet Boat café before returning to Hobart.

The location of the helipad used by *Rotor-Lift* on the esplanade in Huonville is not ideal. Due to its proximity to the highway it poses potential health and safety risks for passengers. Investigations are underway in an effort to relocate the helipad to a more suitable and easily accessible site.

LONG TERM GOALS

- **Further development of the café**

Extend the café to provide a waterfront food and wine experience to visitors, showcasing local produce and beverages.

Investment Opportunity TWENTY

PROJECT:
Franklin Evaporators Proposal

LOCATION:
Franklin

CONCEPT:
Waterfront development

SEEKING:
Investor and operator



...Franklin Evaporators



Above: Franklin Evaporators Site, Franklin Right: Huon River, Franklin

The market demand for quality based tourism infrastructure, with the ability to service the wider region, has long been realised. And while the notion of establishing tourist accommodation has been addressed in the Huon Valley Accommodation Prospectus, one property contained within the Council document offers the potential to be much more than just tourist accommodation and conference facilities.

Franklin is located on the Huon Trail touring route just 40 minutes south of Hobart. This beautiful and scenic drive leads to a township where timber shavings curl from the boatbuilders' planes, and traditionally-built craft tug at their moorings beyond the workshop. Nestled on the Huon River, breathtaking views command your attention in every direction.

The property in Franklin, known as the Franklin Evaporators is home to a factory which operated for a century. The factory contains a series of wood fired furnaces which have been used to dry processed apple which was marketed domestically and internationally. The fruit was historically available in abundance and originated from the produce of a quality not suitable to meet market expectations.

In recent years, the availability of fruit (at competitive prices) has become a challenge and overseas import of competing produce has seen the factory's output decline until the facility closed approximately five years ago. The buildings remain intact, however further exploration has shown that the re-establishment of the site as fruit processing facility is not financially viable.

The site is however strategically located and ripe for re-development. The Franklin Evaporators Site Development Strategy has been produced and assesses the development opportunities of the site. The Franklin Evaporators site presents an exciting opportunity for development aligned with the Council's strategic direction for the

region and Franklin in particular, and has the potential to encompass the identity of Franklin by:-

- **Strongly linking with the Huon River and pristine natural environment;**
- **Representing the regions rich historical and cultural identity; and**
- **Providing high quality tourism infrastructure.**

The analysis identified the potential for its redevelopment to accommodate the following:-

- **Retail opportunities;**
- **Tourism accommodation;**
- **Conference facilities;**
- **Restaurant; and**
- **Potential infrastructure to support the world class (and adjoining) rowing facilities.**

In more recent times a proposal has been developed which includes a number of elements identified by the site assessment previously undertaken and further identifies the potential for the incorporation of elements to enhance the opportunities for the establishment of a working port at Franklin. Elements included would be closely aligned with and complement the adjacent Wooden Boat School.

As a result of the above, opportunities would exist for private tour operators to consider establishing more accessible and diverse waterbased activities including (but not limited to) river cruising, kayaking and sailing. The accommodation and conference facilities adjoining the waterfront location would ensure an immediate audience is available to utilise such services.

In addition to the creation of waterbased experiences, a proponent could consider the establishment of a signature café/restaurant experience located on the waterfront adjoining this facility. The unique dining experience will heavily feature locally sourced produce and wine/beverage providing a true "Huon Valley" experience. The café/restaurant can provide a means of interpreting the site's rich heritage and contribution to the local apple industry, coupled with the town's boatbuilding pastime. The design of the premises would hold true Franklin's cultural and historical identity – its river, maritime heritage and industry.

Investment Opportunity TWENTY ONE

PROJECT:

Recherche Bay Interpretive Experience

LOCATION:

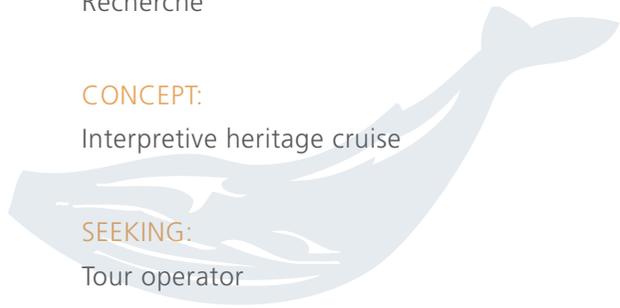
Recherche

CONCEPT:

Interpretive heritage cruise

SEEKING:

Tour operator



Above: Rocky shore, Far South Right: Recherche Bay, Recherche



Above: Whale Sculpture, Cockle Creek



Above: Fur seals, Recherche Bay Below: Sketch of Bruni D'Entrecasteaux and his boat 'The Recherche'



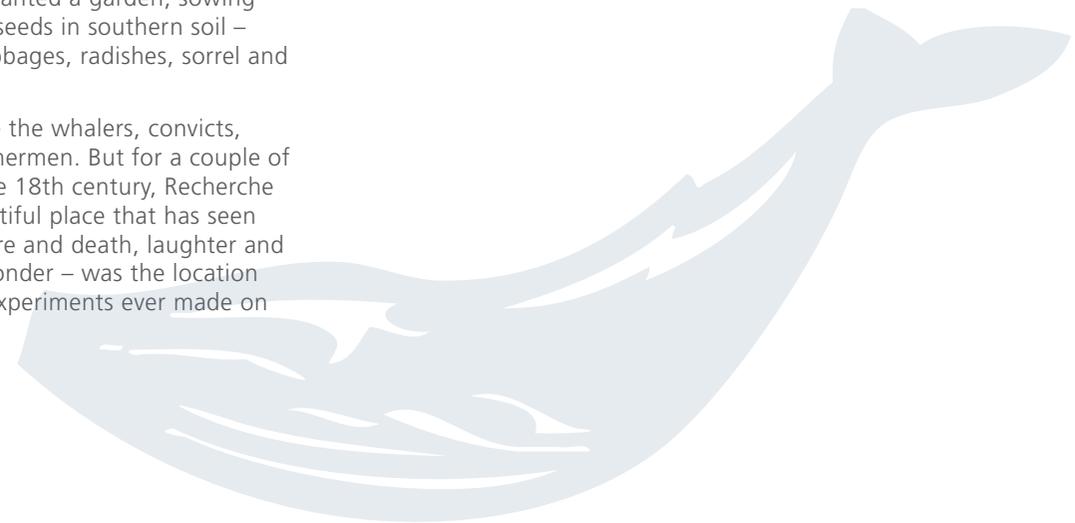
Recherche Bay in Tasmania's far south is the location of the first encounter between the French explorers and the indigenous inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land. It symbolises a wealth of history and state significance through first settlement and worldwide exploration conducted from the site.

Recherche Bay in Tasmania's far south is the location of the first encounter between the French explorers and the indigenous inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land. It symbolises a wealth of history and state significance through first settlement and worldwide exploration conducted from the site.

The bay itself provided shelter from wild weather for the influx of early settlers, sealers and convicts. Original inhabitants – the *Lyluequonny* people first encountered Europeans (French expedition) in 1792 and 1793, and held an amicable meeting which has been considered by many to be a "cultural exchange". The French were focused on the scientific study of native flora, fauna, geology and the waterways of Van Diemen's Land. They built observatories to study the earth's magnetic field and measure its effect on their compasses. On the Peninsula across the bay, they planted a garden, sowing northern hemisphere seeds in southern soil – endives, potatoes, cabbages, radishes, sorrel and watercress.

After the French came the whalers, convicts, timber-cutters and fishermen. But for a couple of years at the end of the 18th century, Recherche Bay – a wild and beautiful place that has seen blood and sawdust, fire and death, laughter and song, curiosity and wonder – was the location of the first scientific experiments ever made on Australian soil.

Given Recherche Bay's rich historical significance, an opportunity exists for a tour operator to operate a sensitive waterbased interpretive experience. A small tourism association – *Far South Tasmania Inc*, has collated a brochure "*A traveller's glimpse into the history of Recherche Bay in the far south of Tasmania*". It is through this collateral and other documentation, that an extensive Recherche Bay experience could be developed, capturing the numerous sites plotted around the area, combined with engaging stories and tales of the characters that once lived and worked in the area. A waterbased interpretive cruise would compliment nearby experiences including heritage listed *Ida Bay Railway* and *Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs*.



Investment Opportunity TWENTY TWO

PROJECT:

Boat Hire Opportunities

LOCATION:

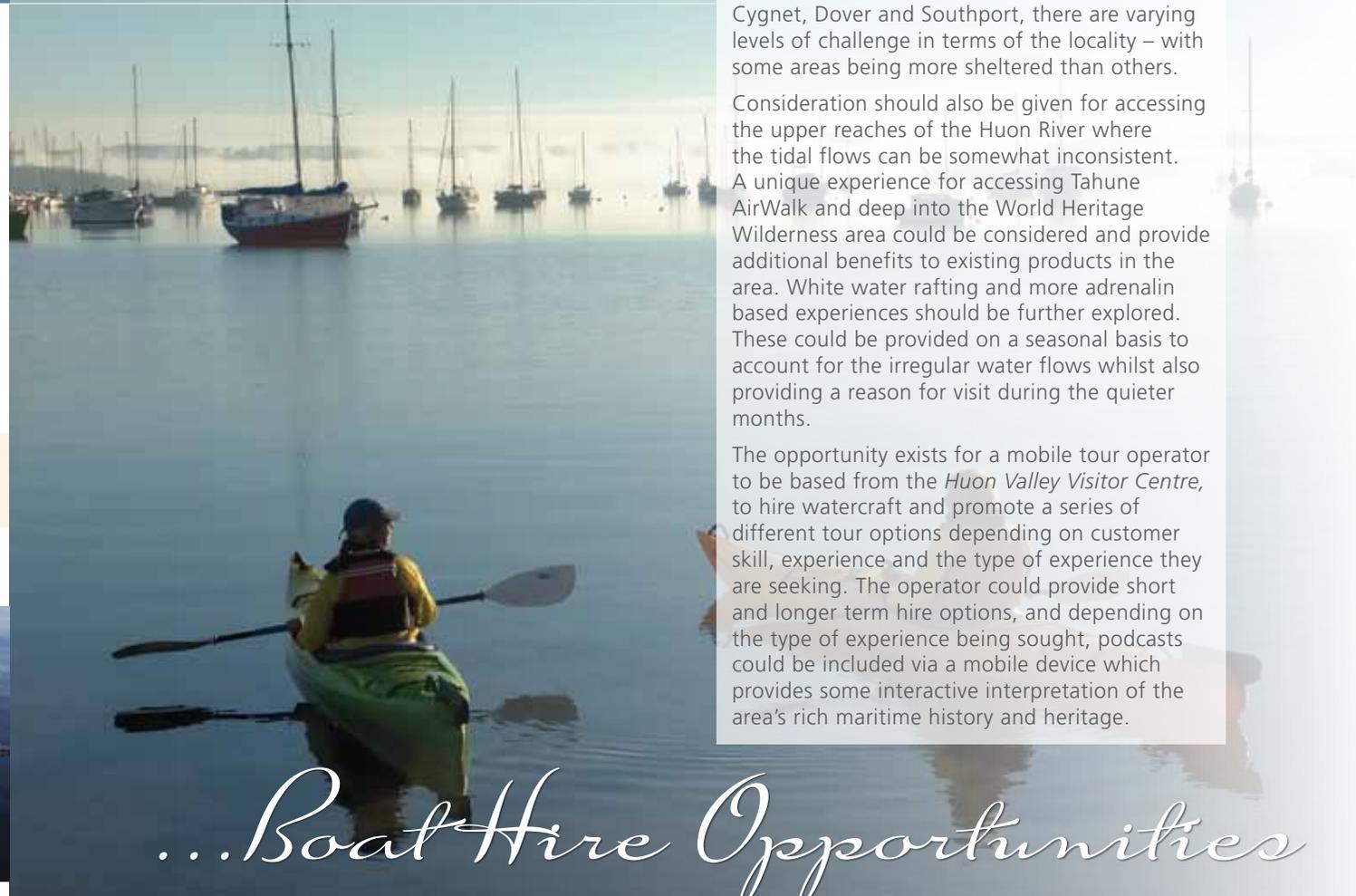
Various locations

CONCEPT:

Boat hire of a range of vessels

SEEKING:

Tour operator



There is a high degree of underutilised waterways throughout the Huon Valley. The calm, tranquil waters of the Huon River provide an abundance of watercraft hire opportunities – particularly for kayaks, canoeing and sailing. At the main townships of Huonville, Franklin, Cygnet, Dover and Southport, there are varying levels of challenge in terms of the locality – with some areas being more sheltered than others.

Consideration should also be given for accessing the upper reaches of the Huon River where the tidal flows can be somewhat inconsistent. A unique experience for accessing Tahune AirWalk and deep into the World Heritage Wilderness area could be considered and provide additional benefits to existing products in the area. White water rafting and more adrenalin based experiences should be further explored. These could be provided on a seasonal basis to account for the irregular water flows whilst also providing a reason for visit during the quieter months.

The opportunity exists for a mobile tour operator to be based from the *Huon Valley Visitor Centre*, to hire watercraft and promote a series of different tour options depending on customer skill, experience and the type of experience they are seeking. The operator could provide short and longer term hire options, and depending on the type of experience being sought, podcasts could be included via a mobile device which provides some interactive interpretation of the area's rich maritime history and heritage.

...Boat Hire Opportunities

Above: Fishing in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel Right: Kayakers at dawn

Investment Opportunity TWENTY THREE

PROJECT:

Sunset Cruise

LOCATION:

Dover

CONCEPT:

Evening cruise with dining

SEEKING:

Tour operator



Above: Gourmet Fish and chips Right: Esperance Bay, Dover



The region has long struggled to appeal to visitors as an overnight destination given its close proximity to Hobart. In an attempt to entice visitors to stay overnight, the creation of experiences that are conducted towards the end of the day or at night will assist in this effort.

It has been identified that the opportunity exists for a sunset cruise to operate from Dover providing a combined waterway/food and wine experience. The dining experience onboard has the potential of showcasing the region's fresh food and wine products including *St Imre Vineyard* (the southernmost vineyard in Australia), while providing commentary about the history of Port Esperance (incorporating Hope, Faith and Charity Islands).

...Sunset Cruise



Supportive Business Environment

HUON VALLEY COUNCIL

The *Huon Valley Council* takes a pro-active approach in the encouragement of sustainable development within the Huon Valley that will establish or expand business, employment opportunities, and local services.

Areas of involvement include:

- Provision of information and advice to potential developers;
- Identification of development opportunities;
- Planning the required support infrastructure and services; and
- Liaison with business, tourism and development organisations.

The Council has produced several strategies which underpin the support it provides to tourism and economic development in the Huon Valley. These strategies include:

- *Huon Valley Regional Tourism Strategy 2009 - 2012;*
- *Far South Tasmania Tourism Development Strategy 2007;*
- *Huon Valley Economic Development Strategy 2009;*
- *Huon Valley Land Use & Development Strategy 2007.*

The Council has also produced a *Huon Valley Tourism Operator Toolkit* which provides useful tips and information relating to establishing a new tourism business in the Huon Valley. The *Huon Trail Marketing Plan* is another

useful resource for tourism operators in the region. Additionally, the *Huon Valley Tourist Accommodation Guidelines* is designed to provide a checklist for any accommodation operator looking to establish a venue in the Huon Valley. The guidelines provide a quick reference to ensuring your establishment meets the necessary regulations and building standards.

In addition, the Council has a dedicated Economic Development unit which is supported by full time staff who are highly skilled and knowledgeable in the area of tourism and economic development. Council employees are available to assist and discuss your proposal, and will provide you with the ability to establish a successful business in the beautiful Huon Valley.

For more information on any of the above, please visit the Huon Valley Council website:

www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au/businessconnect

HUON VALLEY KINGBOROUGH TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Many tourism operators in the region benefit from membership with the Huon Valley Kingborough Tourism Association (HVKTA), which offers great value for money and includes such services as:

Member Promotion: The HVKTA actively assists in the promotion of the Huon Trail through the production of the Huon Trail brochure and maintenance of the website.

...Encouraging sustainable development within the Huon Valley

Regional Promotion: As a member of the HVKTA, you will have the opportunity to participate in regional publications including Tourism Tasmania's marketing activities, regional events such as *A Taste of the Huon*, festivals and media events.

Expertise: The HVKTA endeavours to serve the interests of its members and to represent them through awareness and promotion for our region, particularly through the newly established *Destination Southern Tasmania (DST)*.

Expertise: The HVKTA has regular attendance from key representatives including the Economic Development Coordinator from Huon Valley Council, and Tourism Tasmania's Coordinator Industry Development. The attendance of these employees serve as a direct point of contact to the industry's regional and state tourism bodies.

Communication and Networking: The HVKTA and Council's Economic Development Coordinator and Huon Trail Marketing Officer work together to ensure effective and efficient communication to its members is maintained. The HVKTA holds four General Meetings per year which act as social networking functions where members can share information about their products/services with other operators in the region.

TOURISM TASMANIA / DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the local services offered, the State Government's Department of Economic Development and offices of Tourism Tasmania are also available to provide assistance in the development and establishment of new tourism ventures.

For more information on the services these two departments provide, please visit the following websites:

Tourism Tasmania
www.tourismtasmania.com.au

Department of Economic Development
www.development.tas.gov.au

DESTINATION SOUTHERN TASMANIA

Destination Southern Tasmania was recently established to provide leadership for the tourism industry in southern Tasmania through providing a consolidated voice on key issues impacting the region, and by conducting marketing and industry development activities.

For more information on how the regional organisation can assist you, visit the website:

www.southerntasmania.com.au

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

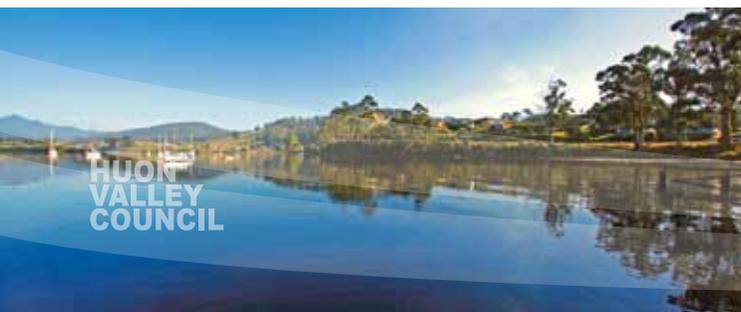
Far South Tourism Network
www.farsouthtasmania.com

Huonville Chamber of Commerce
www.chamberofcommerce.huonville.net/index.htm

Kingborough Community Enterprise Centre
www.kcec.com.au

For further information please refer to the following Council documents and strategies:

- *Huon Valley 2020 Community Plan*
- *Huon Valley Council Strategic Plan 2010 - 2015*
- *Heritage Park Site Development Strategy 2010*
- *Heritage Park, Geeveston - Preliminary Accommodation Feasibility Study December 2012*
- *Huonville/Ranelagh Structure Plan 2010*



... exciting investment opportunities await

