

Submission to the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council by the Board of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Introduction

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) is the Tasmanian Government's museum and art gallery, a statutory authority led by a Board, with custodianship of the State collection on behalf of the people of Tasmania. TMAG is a collecting institution, a tourist destination, a community hub, a centre for research excellence, a focus for community volunteering, an information source, and so much more.

TMAG provides a leadership role for museums and galleries across the state, leading important collaborations such as *Tasmanac*, the new cultural tourism online platform; the Launceston city-deal funded digital cultural experience project in partnership with QVMAG, UTAS and Libraries Tasmania, and enabling the continued and increased regional presence of the State collection on the West Coast and Central Highlands, and loaned to sites in the community right across Tasmania.

Pandemic Response

When TMAG closed in March virtual programming quickly provided a popular way for the community to access our services and hear from our experts, and with our reopening has come to be expected as a new channel to ensure we can be accessed from right around Tasmania – particularly by schools - and beyond. In the three months of closure the reach of TMAG online through Facebook tripled to over 100 000 people per month. With investment in sustainability, and its Digital Transformation, TMAG could continue to expand access to the million objects in the State collection, together with the stories they represent, and in doing so transform the ability of Tasmanians to use their State collection.

TMAG physically re-opened to visitors in June, with a COVID-19 Safety plan and pre-booking in place, and is currently providing a warm welcome for hundreds of community members each day including: families with young children keen to explore, friends looking to reconnect in a safe place now they can get out, and tourists visiting the state capital from around Tasmania.

TMAG is well placed to be an important element of Tasmania's economic and social recovery. For the foreseeable future, TMAG can be ready to deliver its services online and at its sites as circumstances demand. To do this, TMAG requires the capacity to be flexible, nimble and innovative.

Digital Transformation

TMAG and the Tasmanian Archives office (Archives) - part of Libraries Tasmania, Department of Education - preserve and provide access to the documentary and moveable cultural heritage of Tasmania for present and future generations. We are working collaboratively to take a whole of Government approach to infrastructure, data storage and online resources that will make Tasmania's art, science, history and heritage assets readily discoverable online.

Investment in this digital transformation will enable TMAG and Archives to fast track the digitisation and availability of the State's rich cultural assets, and provide flexible support to recovery initiatives, that is adaptable as circumstances change. The initiative will:

- promote cultural tourism, encouraging the return of tourists, by making the State's key history and heritage assets discoverable online

- provide stimulus for Tasmanian creative industries to create unique products based on the State’s history and heritage
- encourage visitors to move from intention to booking their visit within/to Tasmania, through exploration of currently inaccessible cultural and heritage assets, and promote regional dispersal and longer stays
- provide content to support the Tasmanian curriculum for schools that can be delivered online remotely, or to classrooms
- enable the creation of user-generated content to capture the community’s stories and knowledge of Tasmania’s history
- unlock material for researchers that will further enhance the State’s reputation in key areas such as convict history, Aboriginal cultural heritage and the making of modern Tasmania
- enable TMAG and Archives to meet legislative requirements for preservation and access to the state collections
- draw on the expertise of many TMAG and Archives staff for delivery and in addition, provide the equivalent of 4 additional full time jobs over five years for Tasmanians (19.5 person years for the overall project).

The digital transformation will leverage investments already made to deliver comprehensive one-stop access to all the States cultural assets– making Tasmania the first jurisdiction to target and reach this goal.

The *Tasmanac* tourist platform is one pilot already substantially developed. The launch and subsequent building of the profile of this new platform promotes cultural tourism by providing a sneak peak at the State’s heritage buildings, and key objects held in museums around Tasmania, and helps turn intention to visit into firm plans. It is a recommendation in the *T21 Visitor Economy Action Plan*.

The Launceston city-deal funded *Digital Cultural Experience* project includes an augmented reality pilot project for schools, that uses objects and documents from QVMAG, TMAG, Archives and UTAS to provide stories about migration to Tasmania, that can be explored by students in their classrooms, and when working remotely.

TMAG has played a leading role in the State’s digital transformation for culture so far, and by working together, TMAG and Archives can take a whole of Government approach that will lead to savings in procurement, hosting and ongoing support. As visitor-facing organisations, the digital transformation takes a user-centred rather than inward-focused approach to making the State’s cultural assets accessible, and can integrate online and onsite experiences.

Financial Information

| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Cost | | | | | |
| Recurrent | | | | | |
| Capital | 680 | 1225 | 2348 | 2007 | 1238 |
| | 680 | 1225 | 2348 | 2007 | 1238 |

Costs include infrastructure, software, digitisation equipment and asset production, and project staff for delivery.

Financial sustainability

As a museum and gallery with Australia's broadest mandate of history, science, Aboriginal cultural heritage and art, over 80% of the roles at TMAG are single point dependencies. These experts - in the many different areas where Tasmania is unique - provide vital functions and services to the community, including increasingly delivering online content in addition to exhibitions and programs.

Prior to the Pandemic, TMAG-earned revenue had been on an upward trend, underpinned by growth in donations, sponsorships and bequests and supported in 2018-19 by revenue from the ticketed *Dinosaur rEvolution* exhibition. In the short-term, it is expected that the environment for fundraising will be tough, but that in the longer-term there is potential for further growth from 2018-19 levels in the areas of bequests, gifts to the collection, grants and sponsorship.

While providing important funding for the exhibitions and programs, collections acquisition and research, sponsors and philanthropists continue to signal to us that they will not provide support for operational aspects of the Museum's work that are perceived as part of the Government's remit.

To support the recovery, a sustainable TMAG with resources to address identified structural issues in operating budget is needed. TMAG requires a uplift in recurrent funding of \$800 000 to address increased building and utilities costs (particularly associated with the museum's heritage precinct), maintain current opening hours (previously supported through strategic investment funding) and an uplift in salaries funding to address a discrepancy between the provision of funding that assumes a five day operation when TMAG operates on a model of six to seven days. Such investment will help TMAG to help itself, by enabling community confidence and public profile to be maintained in order to further grow opportunities for revenue generation, as it responds to the pandemic by growing its digital offerings.

Financial Information

| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Cost | | | | | |
| Recurrent | 800 | 800 | 800 | 800 | 800 |
| Capital | | | | | |
| | 800 | 800 | 800 | 800 | 800 |

Scott Baddiley

Chair, TMAG Audit and Risk Committee

28 August 2020