Proposal:  Maria Island Wildlife and Heritage Experience

Proponent / s
Mr Ian Johnstone
The Maria Island Walk

Location
Maria Island National Park

Description of proposal

The Maria Island Wildlife and Heritage Experience is a proposed overnight journey that focuses on the island’s wildlife and heritage. The experience, based around the heritage precinct of Darlington would involve the rebuilding on the site of the historic ‘Adkins House’ as an overnight accommodation base. The reconstruction of this former 1880s house which was destroyed by fire in 2001 would provide another accommodation option for visitors to spend two days on the island experiencing the unique wildlife and heritage in the company of two knowledgeable guides.

The two day, all-inclusive experience would cater for small groups and be designed to appeal to both domestic and international visitors. It would also showcase Tasmania’s wonderful food and wine offerings.

Guests would enjoy a variety of activities exploring the fascinating heritage of the World Heritage Precinct of Darlington; observing at close quarters the island’s wildlife of wombats, kangaroos, geese and Tasmanian Devils; climbing the spectacular twin peaks of Bishop and Clerk or the more relaxed walking circuits of the Fossil Cliffs and Painted Cliffs.

Guests could join the experience in Hobart or at Triabunna where they would catch the ferry.

The proponent, Ian Johnstone, has received multiple awards for his environmentally sensitive Maria Island Walk.

Estimated jobs created

This new aspect of the Maria Island Walk will contribute to the company’s overall employee numbers – with up to 22 seasonal guides and bus drivers and 3 full time office staff.

Social, cultural and environmental impact

Ian Johnstone is an experienced environmental tourism operator, currently operating guided walks on Maria Island which has a strong track record of providing high quality, low impact experiences.

‘Adkins House’ was built in 1923 during the Bernacchi Cement Works era and was an integral part of the Darlington landscape until it burnt down in 2001. The rebuilding of ‘Adkins House’ would allow for its ongoing use and the possible adaptive reuse of the remaining infrastructure. The reconstruction will complement the multi layered history of the World Heritage precinct and maintain the style and feel of the former ‘Adkins House’ that existed on the site for 80 years.

The project would liaise with the Tasmanian Aboriginal representative groups with regard to respecting their traditions and culture and incorporate suggestions and values into the interpretation and overall experience.

In addition to a Reserve Activity Assessment through the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, the proposal is required to obtain any necessary statutory approvals through the Australian and State Government planning approval processes.