

Proposal: Recherche Bay Eco Resort

Proponent / s

Prof Robert Morris-Nunn and Mr Michael Lynch

Circa Morris-Nunn, representing Hunter Developments

Location

Recherche Bay

Description of proposal

The development of a truly unique superior standard tourist eco-resort that floats, with no direct access to the land other than by boat or seaplane. The proposal is a series of seven moored pontoons, each with a two-storey structure above it.

Traditional Tasmanian Aboriginal canoes that were seen and recorded in illustrations by the French explorers will be used as the starting point to create the visual forms of the development. They are eminently appropriate, being as they are Tasmania's only pre-European boat types. The canoes were very seaworthy craft, and were used for travel in open water out to offshore islands looking for wild food sources.

The proposed heart of the new resort is the living / dining areas, where all guests will congregate; finding themselves in a cathedral shape, formed from the ribs of the hulls of the French Expeditioner's ships.

Separate, but integral with the floating buildings, would be a land-based series of buildings to be located on reserve land near the main road heading south to Cockle Creek. The buildings will comprise the following:

- an interpretative visitor centre, with a cafe, located near the road and next to the water, with its own jetty to allow direct communication across the bay with the main facility
- the new market garden, set up specifically to grow all the old French produce. The market garden would be set up as an interpretative experience both for both resort guests and all other travellers.

A backpackers level accommodation lodge (for people walking the Great South Track and budget level tourists) sleeping 12 people, is still being considered but will be progressed after the main development.

Estimated jobs created

There will be significant employment opportunities for the local Southport / Dover / Lune River community in assisting the running of the resort, either directly as staff, or indirectly through the provision of services, e.g. clean linen. It is proposed to hire a wide variety of people as guides, and international tourists are known to appreciate 'colourful' local characters. Local people of Tasmanian Aboriginal descent will be particularly welcome as staff, so that relating the stories of the first encounters between the French and the Aboriginal tribes can be true to their own culture and history.

Social, cultural and environmental impact

This proposal is based on the practical expertise gained in the design and construction of the Brooke St Pier. Floating buildings are completely self-sufficient in so far as they carry on board all the services and systems it needs to provide a habitable environment. The resort is completely autonomous as far as energy generation is concerned, and obviously independent of all public services. It will be accessed only by water, and like a boat, all waste, not recycled on board, will be removed by barge and disposed of in an approved manner. Water-based floating structures have a huge advantage in so far as they leave the wilderness landmass completely intact, with the only disturbance on any adjacent land being casual human activity. They can even be towed away if there is ever there was no longer the need for them to be there.

In relation to major natural disasters associated with the Tasmanian wilderness, floating structures are inherently safe. In response to any flooding, the whole development just floats higher, as it rises and falls continuously with the tides. Floating villages are currently being developed in Holland for this very reason; flooding as a result of dyke failure could be truly catastrophic for any structure built on land, but not for a floating structure. As well, floating structures built out away from land are, by their very nature, a natural place of refuge in a bush fire on the neighbouring foreshore. The only need will be to protect the floating structure from ember attack.

As part of the overall development, there be a small visitor centre and backpacker accommodation building located on shore, which will also have a jetty, and sited separately, a staff lodge and stores area. It is proposed these will be located on part of the coastal reserve near the existing Cockle Creek Road.

For guests at Recherche Bay, in addition to enjoying just being in the remote wilderness, there is a real opportunity to consider the fickle fortunes of fate, and all that it has come to mean as it has been handed down to become our own collective cultural identity... and the alternatives that might have been.

It is intended to develop direct links with the French Government who are already very interested in the many cultural dimensions of the development. The proponents believe his project could define Tasmanian tourism in a completely new way internationally, and they foresee it playing a very important role in shaping the image of Tasmania as a truly unique place.



Figure 1: Artists impression of development