

Proposal: Transformer (previously referred to as Green Lens*)

Proponents

Mr Leigh Carmichael DarkLab

Location

328 Lune River Rd, Lune River (on Lot 1, Plan number 238040 Ida Bay State Reserve)

Description of proposal

DarkLab proposes to introduce a permanent 'destination' public artwork by a major international artist supported by new visitor centre at Ida Bay State Reserve.

The artwork, referred to as *Transformer*, can be described as a geometric, mirrored pavilion that visitors can walk into and around. The artwork is to be accessed via a walkway leading from a visitor centre and carpark on the site.

The artist behind *Transformer* is Doug Aitkin who has designed the work in response to the bushfires that have caused devastation to the region but present the opportunity to make powerful, positive, artwork. The pavilion proposes to reflect the landscape, capturing the constant change as nature rebuilds and restores the previously burnt earth with new vegetation.

Transformer forms part of *Project X* which is the overarching initiative by DarkLab to reactivate the Huon Valley by delivering immersive art experiences. *Project X* has been established through the support of combined Tasmanian and Australian Government funding to reinvigorate visitation to the Huon Valley region after the impact of the 2019 summer bushfires.

DarkLab proposes to deliver and operate the immersive art experience and has a track record of delivering successful cultural projects. Examples include; MONA, Australia's largest privately funded art museum, Dark Mofo (winter festival), Mona Foma (summer festival), and other large, interactive, and contemporary events and functions that support tourism and Tasmania's brand.

The proposal aims to attract about 30 000 visitors each year to the region.

Estimated jobs created

The proponent has advised that the proposal will create 28 full-time equivalent jobs during the construction phase and 4.5 full-time equivalent jobs once operational.

The total value of private investment is \$3.5 million.

Social, cultural and environmental impact

DarkLab is the producer of some of Tasmania's most widely regarded arts festivals.

The *Transformer* project has been developed by DarkLab to reinvigorate the Huon Valley region, about 90 minutes' drive from Hobart, following the impact of the recent bushfires. The proposal follows an immersive sound-work project example at 2019's Dark Mofo, *Hrafn: Conversations with Odin*, which was a comparable distance from Hobart, and operated successfully.

With the recent re opening of Tahune Airwalk, in combination with Hastings Caves the project has the potential to be the tipping-point to encourage overnight stays in the region.

This site-specific artwork will be designed to be innovative and allow for a crossover of contemporary art, architecture and ecology. The intent is for the artwork to be recognised internationally; for it to be experiential and immersive but continuously changing from day to night and through the seasons.

The intent for the existing building on site is to follow a process of adaptive reuse, in consultation with Heritage Tasmania and relevant authorities.

All proposals are required to obtain all other necessary statutory approvals through the Tasmanian and Australian Government and State planning approval processes, with any associated costs to be borne by the proponent.

*Note that the artwork component has since evolved as was originally proposed as Green Lens, a dome-like structure, planted with dense native foliage that visitors can walk into and around.

The Transformer art component is of a similar scale and other project elements, such as a walkway leading from a visitors' centre, and carpark on the site, remain unchanged as part of the proposal.