

FACT SHEET



Port Arthur Visitor Centre redevelopment

A major redevelopment of the Port Arthur Visitor Centre will be undertaken to facilitate the increase in visitor numbers and provide an enhanced visitor experience and improved working environs for staff. The redevelopment will commence January 2017 with a completion date set for December 2017. The construction will be phased to ensure adequate facilities to service visitors and staff during this period.

Background

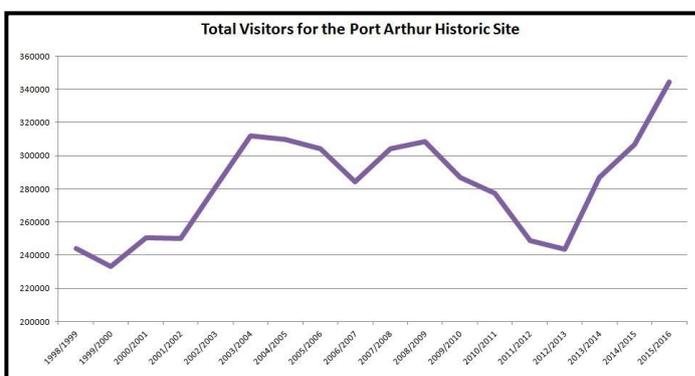
The facility today houses various tourism operation functions ranging from ticketing and retail to food and refreshment for the more than 300,000 tourists who visit annually.

There has been little change or development in the tourism building facilities at the Port Arthur Historic Site since the construction of the visitor information centre in 1998. In the 17 year period since the facility opened in March 1999, with the exception of Global Financial Crises (2009-2012) and their impact on both domestic and international travel, visitation to the site has grown exponentially.

While the current Visitor Centre has served us admirably, the infrastructure is stretched and the staff facilities outgrown. Perhaps most importantly the visitor experience during the peak period is diminished; primarily due to a building that no-longer meets its key functions as the site's arrival, entry and exit points, retail facility and food service outlet.

A period of broad consultation has highlighted the following:

- the Visitor Centre plays a critical role in management of visitors and commercial operations;
- there is significant dysfunction, congestion, and confusion for visitors at the site entry point due to the building's capacity limit;
- staff requirements have outgrown the capacity of the building;
- that redevelopment will be responsive and sensitive to the site's conservation principles while addressing the needs of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority's (PAHSMA) tourism objectives.



Above: This graph shows the rise in visitor numbers since 1998 with the 2015/16 numbers reaching a record high of over 340,000 visitors.

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The Project

In 2015 Grant funding was received from the Australian Government to support a master-planning exercise. This engagement was awarded to [HPA Projects](#) and Hobart based architects [Rosevear Stephenson](#).

In April 2016 the PAHSMA Board adopted a preferred design for a redevelopment of the existing Visitor Centre. The design, intended to address a lifecycle of 15-20 years (based on current visitation statistics) sees an extension of the existing facility together with large scale remodelling of the interior and exterior of the existing facility.

In order to do this large scale redevelopment within a World Heritage Listed site, considerable modelling as well as a detailed Heritage Impact Assessment (carried out by [Mackay Strategic](#)) has been completed to address all of the local and national heritage legislation requirements.

Once the planning is complete, construction is anticipated to commence in January 2017 for completion prior to the 2017 summer. The project is to be programmed to constrain the major period of disruption to the winter months. The site will remain open throughout the duration of the construction period, with disrupted services being accommodated through alternate means.



Above & Below: These images have formed part of the design modelling to date, showing how the proposed building extension will appear in the landscape.



The project will see a new look dining experience for both cafeteria and bistro offerings and updated interpretation and gallery space to better present the amazing stories that lie beyond the doors of the Visitor Centre building.

For more information:

Ask a staff member if you have any questions or contact us at:

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