

A place that once shunned its convict heritage, now the home to stories of our unfree men, women, and children. A hall of remembrance where visitors leave their mark on the past.



VISION

Tasmania's distinctive past is a rich resource for ensuring its vibrant future. A place which once shunned its convict heritage is now fascinated by stories of the unfree men, women, and children whose nineteenth-century struggles and endurance have in the twenty-first century become a matter of pride for both their descendants and a wider community built on convict foundations. This proposal will create a digital convict memorial that will connect that past to a global audience. Uniquely, this will include a Hall of Remembrance where visitors can leave their mark on the past, providing a particular incentive to travel to Tasmania. This is an innovative opportunity to turn our existing world class digital archive into a resource that will reenergise cultural heritage tourism.

A VIRTUAL MEMORIAL

The descendants of the 75,000 convicts transported to Tasmania now number over 5 million. Many other potential visitors have points of connection with our convict past. They might share a name, have been born in the same place or have a connection to a business or site where a convict once worked or lived. As a result of a remarkable community effort, Tasmania's convict records have been digitised. They form one of the most detailed archival datasets available worldwide. With a little ingenuity, this resource could be turned into a new kind of tourism experience — one that is anchored in Hobart but also has global reach. We can create a virtual memorial that will allow anyone, anywhere, to explore the sites where convicts served. But our memorial will also do more than this.

A HALL OF REMEMBRANCE

There should be one building where this virtual resource touches down — physically connecting with the brick and mortar of our convict past. In this special place visitors will be able to pay their respects. Here they can leave a message that will become part of a globally accessible digital memorial. All those who access our past online will be able to read the messages left by those who came to pay their respects. Nowhere else has such a memorial.

SMART ADAPTIVE REUSE

We think there is an ideal place to locate such a place of remembrance — Court Room No 2 in the Penitentiary Chapel Historic Site, a National Trust Tasmania building located on the corner of Campbell and Brisbane Streets in Hobart CBD. This is thematically fitting. The Hobart Penitentiary was the place from which all other convict sites were administered. Tasmania's convict records were once housed there, and the building served as the principal depot for all newly arrived male convicts. It was also home to two chain gangs and the Hobart Town treadwheel.

Our proposal is an example of smart adaptive reuse. Court Room No. 2, has no other current use, but does have its own separate access to the street. The space would also function as an interpretation

point for convict Tasmania — directing visitation to other important sites including Port Arthur, the Cascade Female Factory, Brickendon and Woolmers. This use would synergise with Pandemonium, a major Tasmanian Community Fund project installed in the same building complex as well as the existing museum and interpretation displays located elsewhere in the building.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Thanks to a remarkable pre-existing community effort, the crucial building blocks of a virtual memorial are already in place. The next important step is to secure the funding to ensure that this unique and highly innovative digital tourism initiative can become a reality.

WHO ARE WE?

- National Trust Tasmania is the owner and operator of the site. It is in full support of this proposal.
- **Hunter Developments** is an architectural practice that has received national and international acclaim for its innovative approaches to adaptive reuse.
- **Digital History Tasmania** is a not-for-profit organisation that has imaged, cleaned, coded and linked 1.6 million Tasmanian historical records.
- **Roar Film** is an award-winning multi-media company with more than two decades of experience in delivering innovative interpretation outcomes.

We have briefed the state archivist and the chair of the board of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority. Both are supportive.

