

**Tuesday 21 February, 2018**

## **GOVERNMENT UNDER FIRE FOR PULLING A SWIFTIE WITH CRADLE MOUNTAIN REDEVELOPMENT**

### **Prime views privatised as Visitors Centre is shunted aside for unspecified ‘new tourism experience’ run by private sector**

The Hodgman Government has come under fire for seeking to privatise the prime viewing position in the revamped gateway to Tasmania’s world-famous Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park.

Veteran conservationist Bob Brown today slammed the government for pulling a swiftie and substituting an unspecified ‘new tourism experience’ built and run by the private sector for what had previously been presented as a Visitor Centre in the prime position at the revamped gateway.

“This is another case of the Hodgman Government governing for private developers rather than the public. The proposed Visitors Centre and the public have been elbowed aside by a government hell-bent on handing public assets to the private sector,” Dr Brown said.

‘The Visitors Centre was in prime position in a plan approved by the Kentish Council until the Government altered the proposal at the last minute at the behest of tourism profiteers.’

In February 2016, the so-called ‘master plan’ for the Cradle Mountain precinct was released with much fanfare. Glossy PR materials spruiked the virtues of a ‘new Visitor Centre, Parks Facilities and Interpretation Spaces’ in the prime viewing position in a revamped tourist gateway at Cradle Valley, about 10 km north of Cradle Mountain (see attachment).

In June 2017, the government submitted a Development Application to the Kentish Council which provided for a major Visitors Centre in the prime position (see attachment). The application was advertised on 24 June and approved in July 2017, again, with great fanfare. The Government also promoted the plan to stakeholders right up to mid-November 2017.

Then, on 4 December 2017, in briefings to a session of the joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, the government changed course and said that the prime position would now be part of a ‘public-private partnership’ subject to an ‘expressions of interest’ process. The Visitors Centre was shunted off to a much smaller building without the view.

On 4 December 2017, the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment, Dr John Whittington, told the Committee:

*The proposal we are putting forward now, which is to construct buildings 1 and 2 and walkway 7, plus the civil works and all the landscaping and car parking, provides a visitor centre that meets the needs today of Parks, visitors and the businesses, while*

*maintaining building 4 [the one in prime position] as a significant opportunity for a public-private partnership. That is very much based on the advice of the tourism industry and Office of the Coordinator-General through the steering committee.*

<http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Joint/Transcripts/Public%20Works%204%20December%202017%20-%20Cradle%20Mountain%20Gateway%20Precinct.pdf>

He later told the Committee that ‘building 4 will be privately funded’.

Parks Minister, Elise Archer, subsequently issued a media release saying:

*“Importantly, we will also invest \$5 million and within 100 days of winning majority Government we will open an Expressions of Interest process inviting private investors and tourism operators to co- invest in a sensitive and appropriate iconic new tourism experience on the parcel of Crown Land at the southern end of the Gateway Precinct” [building 04, in prime position, previously the Visitors Centre – see attachment].*

<http://www.elisearcher.com/news/media/cradle-mountain-experience->

Dr Brown said that the Government had hoodwinked the public and key stakeholders into the believing that the Cradle Valley redevelopment would showcase the mountain through a Visitors Centre, but had changed the proposal in order to give the private sector a captive audience.

**For more information please contact Bob Brown: 0448 243200**

(03) 6294 0620

CONTACT@BOBBROWN.ORG.AU

LEVEL 4, 116 BATHURST ST  
HOBART TAS 7000

