





This year marks a significant step forward in the future of our tourism experiences in our island state.

During the past 12 months we have made a large investment in the Cradle Mountain Wilderness Gallery, along with a new direction in our food and beverage offering at Cradle Mountain Hotel with the introduction of Altitude Restaurant + Lounge Bar.

This is in addition to our ongoing refurbishment program across all of our RACT Destinations properties.

In 2017, we have embarked on a bold and ambitious development program designed to make us leaders in our field.

We have commenced the build for a new vessel to replace the existing Gordon River Cruises boat *Lady Jane Franklin II*. This vessel will be state-of-the-art in both design and environmental sustainability. It will deliver an unrivalled experience in our magnificent World Heritage wilderness area.

We are also well underway with plans to develop new accommodation at Freycinet Lodge, which will be unlike anything else we have found in the world. This will provide sustainable, environmentally conscious development within Freycinet National Park.

We are acutely aware of our responsibilities to the environment and the community, and continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure these are developments for all of our futures.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The proposed design for the Waterfront Pods at Freycinet Lodge; hot rock dining at Altitude Restaurant + Lounge Bar; an artist's impression of the new Gordon River Cruises vessel; a piece from Barry Smith's exhibition *Twin Flames of Perfection* at Cradle Mountain Wilderness Gallery.





The proposed design for the Waterfront Pods.

While the RACT's proposed redevelopment of Freycinet Lodge is still in the final stages of official approvals, we continue to move forward in our planning. In this issue of *Journeys* magazine, AMANDA VAN ELK takes you deeper into the minds of the architecture and design teams behind this ambitious project.

Plans are well underway to transform Freycinet Lodge with an environmentally friendly, architecturally innovative, luxury accommodation offering.

The proposed rejuvenation of the much-loved nature tourism destination is designed to propel the stunning location into the 21st century with a series of contemporary upgrades that are carefully sensitive to environmental sustainability, Aboriginal history and the protection of native flora and fauna.

Three unique luxury accommodation designs, consisting of 16 individual lodgings, have been incorporated into the overall plan. The vision for the final product is a truly inclusive and collaborative effort between project director Brett Torossi, Liminal Architecture, a talented team of professional consultants,

the RACT and the exquisite landscape of the Freycinet Peninsula.

'It's a beautiful location, and there will be different accommodation types for different personalities on the site, so we've treated each one with quite a unique character and personality,' Liminal Architecture co-founding director Peta Heffernan says.

'We also acknowledge the privilege of being able to 'inhabit' this beautiful part of the world and our approach has been ensuring the new buildings enhance and actually improve the current conditions of the site.

'Given that this part of Freycinet has had extensive development since the 1990s, our attitude was that we wanted to ensure that any new development would be used to make improvements to the site and lift the ecological sustainability benchmark.' ➤



From the project's inception, a sympathetic understanding of the Freycinet coastline's natural colour palette, curving rock formations and landscape have been reflected in the contemporary architectural designs. This organic inspiration was paired with a clear focus on creating an extraordinary guest experience.

'Intimately understanding the nature of the site was critical,' Brett explains. 'We looked at how our guests experience their connection to the natural beauty of Freycinet and imagined what they wanted to see and how they wanted to feel within that space.'

'For example, how would they feel while sitting on the couch reading, glancing out at the waterfront views? How would it feel to recline in the outdoor bath looking up at the stars?'

The nine Waterfront Pods, which will replace six existing waterfront cabins, evolved from a series of sketches that were initially hand-drawn on-site by Brett and developed in a collaborative process with the team at Liminal Architecture.

'The Waterfront Pods nestle in quite cosily on the site and the inspiration for these has been very much about the direct context that they're within,' Peta explains.

'The forms are quite rounded and fluid and that really

picks up on the rock formations that you're looking out on. I think this area has got quite a feminine feel about it so these pods are responding to that.'



Freycinet Lodge looks set to be revitalised in a way that will continue to inspire awe in generations of guests to come

In contrast, the six Hazards View Pavilions will be hidden behind the tiered landscape, on the current site of the tennis courts.

'The Hazards View Pavilions are more rectilinear because they're responding to a different part of the site. They address the Hazards [Mountains] in their orientation, framing the view, contrasting the organic shape of the pods,' Peta explains.

The Hazards View Pavilions will be built to two specifications: four single-bedroom pavilions and two double-bedroom family pavilions. Each pavilion will feature its own private deck along with a large, vertical volume of glass at one end, designed to best capture the iconic Hazards views.

Perhaps one of the most refreshing elements of the proposal is that the most luxurious room also happens to be the universally accessible suite – the only room on the site that will enjoy both Hazards and water views. It's a move that has the potential to completely change the perceptions of what luxury accessibility suites can offer.



'It's a high-end suite for people who have mobility challenges, but the outcome of our approach will mean everyone will want to stay in this suite as well,' Peta says.

The approach counters typical expectations of the level of luxury accessibility suites can offer. As a result of the team's innovative and creative approach, this universally accessible suite will likely prove to be the most coveted room at the new Freycinet Lodge.

'This room will allow guests to luxuriate in this wonderful setting and it also just happens to be the accessible suite,' Peta says.

Critical to planning the redevelopment was also gaining a thorough understanding of the micro-environment that makes the Freycinet Lodge site so special to so many visitors. For the team, this meant curating specialist experts in addition to the usual collaborators they might work with on any smaller-scale project. It involved walking the site with an ecologist, archaeologist, members of the Aboriginal community, engineers, bushfire experts, landscape architects, and carrying out surveys to deeply understand the cultural, environmental and physical character of the site.

Ecologically sustainable development and environmental sensitivity are core drivers for the project team, and a range of environmentally sustainable approaches were carefully considered and administered during the redesign.

'We have some really tight timeframes challenged by the

MAIN IMAGE: Freycinet Lodge is positioned on the majestic Freycinet Peninsula, East Coast, Tasmania. TOP LEFT: Freycinet geological artwork by Brigitte de Villiers and Bill Cromer. BOTTOM LEFT: Site inspiration. SKETCHES: Liminal Architecture's design sketches inspired by the hand-drawn concepts by Brett Torossi on-site.

complexity and sensibility of the site. The collaborative aspect has been key,' Peta says.

The process has been just as intuitive for Brett. 'The people involved in this project have been really stimulated and excited about this extraordinary place. They all understand what we are trying to achieve and that results in inspired collaboration,' she says.

'And as architects,' Peta reiterates, 'we've got a vision of what the project needs to look like and we invite everyone on the team to be involved in how that's achieved.'

'In order to preserve the vision, collaboration with all team members is vital.

'This is critical because the process can be long and you need everyone to maintain their enthusiasm and drive for a sustained time.

'There will be challenges along the way, but when you've got a good team it helps get through those harder circumstances without ever compromising on the end result.'

Freycinet Lodge looks set to be revitalised in a way that will continue to inspire awe in generations of guests to come with a unique and sustainable offering.

Profiles by Amanda Van Elk

Brett Torossi, Tasmanian developer and businesswoman, is project director of the Freycinet Lodge Renewal Project. If you ask Brett what is her purpose in life she will say 'to create beautiful places for transformative experiences' – and that is exactly what she desires for Freycinet Lodge. It is about helping people connect to themselves, each other and place, something many people don't get to do in the crazy busyness of everyday life.

As well as developing sustainable, commercially successful, award-winning property projects, Brett manages a diverse range of passions and maintains a range of board positions across the business, arts, culture, heritage and tourism sectors. As project director for Freycinet, Brett is responsible for delivering the project end-to-end, from creating the overall concept design through planning and

compliance approvals and construction, to the point where she hands over the keys. One of the things Brett has loved most about her role with the Freycinet project has been undertaking research into guest expectations around the Freycinet Lodge deluxe experience. She has had the opportunity to get to the heart of what guests really desire, and ask the question 'What is it our guests want to feel from the moment they step out of their busy lives and into such a unique natural accommodation experience?'

'It has been a joy working in this industry for many years and learning to really understand what provides for a meaningful stay for our guests and what helps them feel better, so that at the end of their stay they're inspired, relaxed and feeling more peaceful about themselves, each other and the world around them,'



Brett says, 'This project is all about helping our guests get what they need out of their precious time away spent in the glorious setting that is Freycinet.'

A generous spirit of collaboration is one of Brett's calling cards when it comes to project management and it's also a key driver in her workplace ethos.

'To work in collaboration with our team, our RACT team and especially Peta, Elvio and Belen at Liminal is a joy. Working with generous and creative souls who can also hold all the competing and complex issues of a place and create beauty, this is the most fulfilling aspect of the project.'

Peta Heffernan is an architect and co-founding director of Liminal Studio with more than 20 years of local, national and international experience. Peta's passion for interdisciplinary convergence and love for a broad range of art forms influence her approach to architectural collaboration and design. This perspective keeps her creative approach fresh and energised, endowing her with the advantage of seeing opportunities where perhaps others wouldn't.

Peta's approach to design centres on collaborative processes that are tailored to produce harmonious outcomes. Key to this is creating partnerships that allow for the generation of ideas and creative

problem-solving. Peta is skilled in creating stimulating environments that foster interdisciplinary engagement and deliver unexpected and innovative outcomes.

Her creativity and breadth of experience have transformed highly complex and constraining kit-of-parts projects into uplifting architecture that is strongly connected to place. Peta believes that to create new design frontiers, collaboration across broader disciplines drives new thinking and empowers communities. Her influence has led to the creation of award-winning architecture and interiors that do just that.

Peta has held curatorial and participatory roles in exhibitions and has contributed to



festivals and acclaimed collaborations in contemporary performances, as well as undertaking roles influencing the framing of Tasmanian cultural policy.

ON THE COVER

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

The proposed design for the Waterfront Pods at Freycinet Lodge; hot rock dining at Altitude Restaurant + Lounge Bar; an artist's impression of the new Gordon River Cruises vessel; a piece from Barry Smith's exhibition *Twin Flames of Perfection* at Cradle Mountain Wilderness Gallery.



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