

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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New hotels target the fur and feather sector

Architecture and interior design students at the University of Tasmania have developed a chain of hotels for potential guests ranging from the furry to the feathered.

The 'Species Hotels' project saw first year students design and build structures that could accommodate land-dwelling and flying animals, from Tasmanian devils and quolls to micro bats and pardalotes.

The hotels will be featured in an exhibition opening tonight (**Thursday, 20 October 2016**) at the Tasmanian Academy Gallery in Inveresk. Early next year, the structures – complete with self-stocking room service facilities – will be installed on the banks of the Macquarie River at Ross.

The project is a collaboration between Greening Australia and the University's School of Architecture and Design, Tasmanian College of the Arts, the School of Land and Food, and the ARC Centre for Forest Value, with funding from the Ian Potter Foundation.

Greening Australia is spearheading 'Island Ark', a major environmental restoration program in the midlands, which sees scientists, conservationists, landowners and farmers working together to regenerate native vegetation connections in the area. Now architects, interior designers and artists have joined the effort.

Architecture and Design lecturer Louise Wallis said the work explored how public art could contribute to habitat restoration.

"The design and making process incorporated over 100 people over an intensive six week period including the input of artists, scientists and school children," Ms Wallis said.

"While these hotels may be more sculptural than actual habitat, they communicate the intent of the Island Ark Project to the community and visitors to the area.

"These hotels represent what native wildlife need in order to live and thrive in what should be a rich and diverse area – they provide shelter, and access to food. Indeed,

the hotels are designed in a way to encourage insects to nest, acting as a form of room service.”

Greening Australia’s Director of Conservation Sebastian Burgess said in its initial stage, the Island Ark project had revegetated and restored over 1000 hectares of native vegetation along waterways and in degraded grassy woodlands.

“This work is creating native vegetation corridors and stepping stones to make it easier for wildlife to move between sources of food and shelter in what is a nationally recognised biodiversity hotspot,” Mr Burgess said.

“The species hotels, whilst providing pockets of interim habitat for native species while our restoration work establishes, will raise the profile of native animal habitat needs in an agricultural landscape.”

The work in Ross has seen more than 280,000 native plants replanted to date, but it will take some time for the rejuvenated corridor to grow.

Greening Australia is working on the Island Ark project with partners including the University of Tasmania, Australian Government, Ian Potter Foundation, Tasmanian Land Conservancy, Bush Heritage Australia, John Roberts Charitable Foundation and the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.

Academy Gallery Director Dr Malcom Bywaters commented that the *Species Hotel* exhibition was a wonderful example of the gallery as display vehicle for Object Based Teaching and Learning.

“I am delighted that the University Academy Gallery has been able to partner with Greening Australia in presenting this significant research project,” Dr Bywaters said.

Greening Australia’s Sebastian Burgess will officially open the *Species Hotel* exhibition at 5.30pm this evening (**Thursday, 20 October 2016**) in the Tasmanian College of the Arts, Inveresk.



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