

# Interpretation & the Tourist Experience



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"We use interpretation to increase our reputation and therefore our business success."

"Interpretation improves the experience of customers and helps ensure return business."



Interpretation Research Project  
Tidemark Design 2002 for ETTEP

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"The point of interpretation is to engender awareness of environment and provide fantastic experiences for tourists so they come back as well as spreading the word."

"Selling! The farm is theatre, the staff are the cast and characters – the aim is to sell our product and create a lasting impression."



Interpretation Research Project  
Tidemark Design 2002 for ETTEP

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"Their eyes nearly light up when they talk about the animals ... even though they see the same things day after day, they have the quality and passion of a small child on Christmas morning, anxiously awaiting what they will find. They certainly made my trip the most memorable I'll ever take. No, that's not true – I'm coming back here one day!"

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## Myth #1.

*Interpretation is just for tour guides.*

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### *1. Face-to-face interpretation*

- *Guided walks, drives and tours*
- *Talks, plays, other presentations*
- *One-on-one interpretation*

### *2. Static, on-line and non-personal interpretation*

- *Self-guided trails and drives*
- *Signs, exhibits, models, displays*
- *Museums, visitor centres*
- *Interactive media, websites*

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## Myth #2.

*Interpretation starts when the visitor arrives on-site.*

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## Myth #3.

*Interpretation is a luxury.*

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## Myth #4.

*Interpretation is just information.*

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"I want to feel the aura of the period, gain a sense of connectedness with the way people lived."

"I want to feel the experience of the people of that time, what they were thinking, what their reality was."

"I want to use my mind to really experience it, not just the externals."



Cameron and Gatewood 2000:  
"What people want from visits to historic sites." 11

"No longer is interpretation in Tasmania seen as simply entertaining fact-giving. Rather, it is seen as the heart and soul of the tourist experience – as the moulder and shaper of the bonding that takes place between tourists and place."

Sam Ham, p.6  
The Tasmanian Experience Strategy



## Principle #1

*Great interpretation is passionate.*

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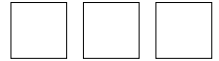
***Principle #2***

***Great interpretation is purposeful.***

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“Port Arthur Historic Site is an outstanding convict place, an important foundation for Australia’s sense of identity, a place of national significance in Australian history.”

**Port Arthur Historic Site  
Interpretive Plan 2002**



“All of the guides are excellent. Their knowledge of this place is incredible! We were very glad that our children could also meet good role models: educated, having goals, caring about the environment. They have a concern for the greater good of the world, not just themselves.”



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***Principle #3***

***Great interpretation requires professionalism.***

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Interpretation  
that is ...

*Passionate*  
+  
*Purposeful*  
+  
*Professional*  
=  
*Profitability*