

[11.07 a.m.]

**Mrs TAYLOR** ( **Elwick** ) - Madam President, I thought it important to note the opening of MONA, the Museum of Old and New Art, for the greater Hobart area and Tasmania. The museum opened on 21 January this year with the biggest party including people from everywhere: international visitors, national visitors and locals, including all the workers who had worked on the project.

**Ms Rattray** - I don't think that there would have been any more there than there were in the little street behind the Customs House last night.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I do not know how to compare it to the Customs House party last night, but I can tell you it was the most lavish party that I have ever attended in terms of both food and wine and entertainment and so forth.

I thought that it was great that there were curators from international museums as well as people who had built the museum, the workers on the ground, and that everybody was invited.

The museum is on the shore of the Derwent River at Berriedale on **Elwick** Bay and it is open every day from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m., and it is free entry. This museum is built into the rock face. It looks from the outside a fairly unimposing concrete and steel structure; it has roof gardens and a stunning walkway down to the jetty and many visitors are coming by ferry rather than by road transport.

The project is a private philanthropic investment in Tasmania by David Walsh and the architect Fender Katsalidis, a stunning investment in this State. It cost \$100 million or thereabouts to build and the collection itself is worth another \$100 million. There are more than 2 000 pieces in the collection.

The fact that this is a private philanthropic development means that it has cost the State Government absolutely nothing, but has meant an enormous investment just in terms of it being a \$100 million building project as well as the ongoing visitor and tourism potential of this site.

By 4 April they had more the 122 000 visitors, an extraordinary number of which 75 to 80 per cent are calculated to be Tasmanians. Many people from the local community are visiting and are doing multiple visits. But it also has received worldwide recognition in every arts magazine and in every news story about art around the world. I think that there is more publicity in New York and London about MONA than there has been in Tasmania. The museum is accessible by road and by ferry, and hopefully one day by train because the northern suburbs light rail project would go directly past the museum as well.

There are 6 000 square metres of gallery space and it is quite unlike any other museum or art gallery that I have ever been to. Normally you would walk into big square rooms and see displays around the walls and in the centre of the rooms, but MONA is actually on three storeys with a series of small spaces. The only large space there is the one that has the Sidney Nolan work in it; it is the first time that the Sidney Nolan work, Snake, has ever been properly displayed because it is

made up of 700 individual Sidney Nolan paintings. It is a stunning piece of work. The room at MONA in which this stands has been purposely built to display just this one work of art so it is really worth going to see.

Of course, there is a variety of displays. The collection includes such things as an ancient coin collection, which many of you may have seen when Moorilla had it in its boutique museum, but world class collections of that ilk as well as a whole lot of modern art which is a particular favourite at the moment of David Walsh.

Its value to the locals: first of all to the local community of the City of Glenorchy. There are people who now have an excellent place to go and have a coffee or sit on the lawns or have a wine tasting or go to the museum. I have a comment from the locals as to why they say they go; lots of young families and teenagers, young people, are coming to visit the museum and art gallery which, again, is a bit of a change as normally, except on school trips, generally I guess teenagers are not people who frequent galleries and art museums.

There are all sorts of people coming and many of them are saying that they had never been to a museum before, so that is really stunning. When they are asked why they come the locals say, firstly, because it is on their doorstep. That is great for the City of Glenorchy, particularly when you consider our demographic. There are people who have multiple visits because it is there, because it offers free entry and because of the fact that they feel MONA is more inclusive in its treatment of visitors. So when you go to MONA and look at the exhibitions there are no labels on anything but you do get a similar thing to an iPhone and a headset when you walk in and it is absolutely the latest technology. When you press the button that says 'Where am I now?', it will tell you where you are and what the artworks around you are -

**Ms Forrest** - You should have gone to the Denison Debate the other night, Monday night - 'What does MONA mean?'

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Well, you can add to this. I could not because there was a council meeting on Monday night; that is why I was not there. It was a good reason that I was not there.

There are other anecdotal comments that interstate people are saying they have been meaning to come to Tasmania either for the first time or a return visit and MONA has been the factor that has pushed them over the edge to come now. So there are all kinds of people coming.

It provides work, of course, for the local community as well, both catering and museum staff because of the nature of the museum. There is a large workforce that has to keep an eye on visitors and on the exhibits. The whole ambience of the waterfront area in Berriedale has changed as a result of MONA being there and I can only congratulate David Walsh on his philanthropic foresight in building it there and in making this available to the Tasmanian people.