# MEDIA RELEASE

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# Council approves DarkLab's Transformer project for Ida Bay

The Huon Valley Council has approved the Development Application (DA) for a major art installation in the region's far south.

The 'Transformer' project is the brainchild of MONA off-shoot DarkLab and has been described as a never-ending kaleidoscope, capturing the changing light and weather of the spectacular Wilderness World Heritage Area.

The permanent work by artist Doug Aitken is expected to draw an additional 30,000 visitors to the Huon Valley each year.

The approved DA includes a visitor centre, café and carpark.

Transformer will be located at Ida Bay on the same Lune River Road property that is home to the Ida Bay Railway.

Constructive consultation between the project's heritage consultants and local stakeholders established that the development will not impede the vision of the Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society to have an operating railway again in the future.

The visitor centre and car park will enable visitors to engage with the heritage of the site, as well as provide historical context to the site.

The DA had been subjected to an environmental impact assessment, including safeguarding the habitat of the Swift Parrot.

The approval by Council is also conditional on DarkLab altering its operating hours to protect wildlife from road traffic, and preserving the site's heritage.

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Mayor Sally Doyle said Transformer could be a game-changer for the Huon Valley.

"We have waited for this for a long time, and I'd like to see work started as soon as possible," Mayor Doyle said.

"Just to have a project like this associated with MONA will attract so many people to the area and we are sure it can be something we can all be proud of."

Last week's meeting was the second occasion Transformer went to the Council vote, after its rejection in 2021.

Funding for the project was secured in 2019 to help with economic recovery in the wake of that year's summer bushfires.

**For more information: Mayor Sally Doyle (03) 6264 0300**

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