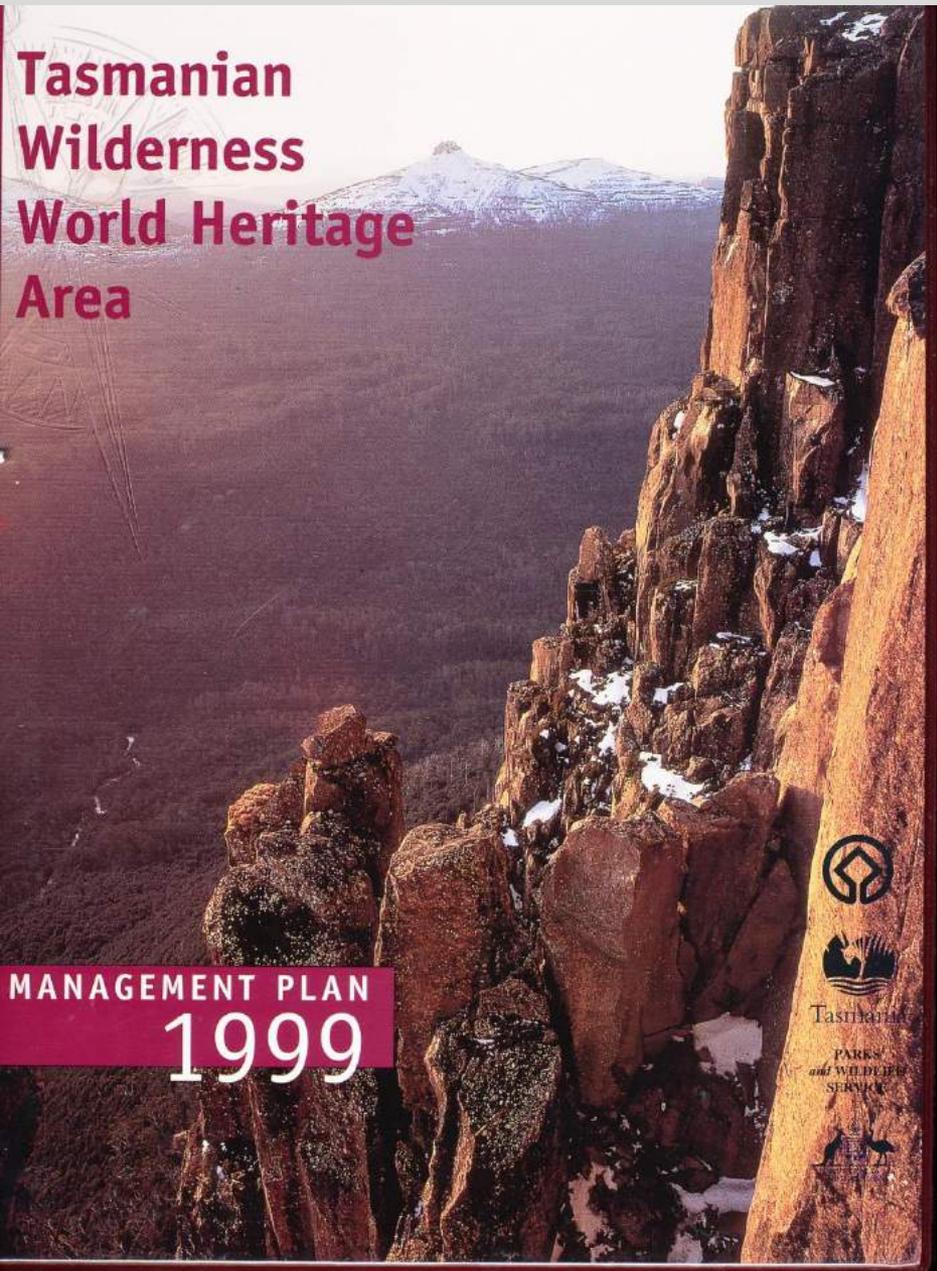


DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT IN THE TASMANIAN WILDERNESS WORLD HERITAGE AREA (TWWHA)

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Tasmanian
Wilderness
World Heritage
Area

MANAGEMENT PLAN
1999



Tasmanian
PARKS
and WILDLIFE
SERVICE



- **Worked well**
 - Appropriate compromise between protection and presentation
 - Major extensions in 2013
 - Needed updating

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Decision: 39 COM 7B.35

5. Also urges the State Party to review the proposed new management plan for the property to ensure that it provides adequate protection for its OUV, including:
- a) Recognition of wilderness character of the property as one of its key values and as being fundamental for its management,
 - b) Recognition of the cultural attributes of OUV, as also fundamental for its management,
 - c) Establishment of **strict criteria for new tourism development** within the property which would be in line with the primary goal of **protecting the property's OUV, including its wilderness character and cultural attributes;**

Development Assessment

1. Prescriptions to protect values
2. Process to implement these prescriptions
 - Open and transparent
 - Statutory (defined in legislation)
 - Public comment
 - Appeal rights

Essential background – Australia

- National parks are **NOT** “national”.
- The “State Party” (the Australian Government) is **NOT** the manager of the world heritage property (the TWWHA).
- State governments are responsible for land management.
 - So “National Park” is a conservation land tenure under Tasmanian legislation
 - Tasmanian Government is the manager of the world heritage property
- Australian (Federal/Commonwealth) government is responsible for external affairs.
 - e.g. World Heritage Convention

Consequences

- World Heritage gives the Australian government a role in land management that would otherwise be a state government responsibility.
- World Heritage listing is considerably more controversial and “political” than in most other countries.
- Australian government is responsible only for conservation of world heritage values (requirement of *EPBC Act*).
- Conservation of all other values is responsibility of Tasmanian Government – implemented according to Tasmanian legislation.

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- Conservation of **all other values** is responsibility of **Tasmanian Government** – implemented according to Tasmanian legislation.

Tasmanian Legislation

- Does not include statutory definition of an assessment process
- Requirements of a statutory management plan are statutory – hence *New Proposals and Impact Assessment Process* in 1999
TWWHAMP was statutory
- PWS Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) does include wilderness but is not statutory

What about Wilderness?

- Not OUV despite:
 - Recommendations in nomination and evaluation documents: *Recognition of wilderness ... as being fundamental for its management*
 - Academic papers advocating greater recognition of wilderness as world heritage value

Commonwealth may have no legal justification

Tasmania chooses to ignore wilderness

No guarantee of any assessment of impacts on wilderness character **unless wilderness is recognised in TWWHA Management Plan**

Tourism developments more likely to impact wilderness than OUV

History



- Controversy
- Hydro-electricity
- Forestry
- Mining
- Tourism



Tasmanian
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MANAGEMENT PLAN
1999

[The plan is] *sensible ... containing reasonable attempts to balance the needs of all who have an interest in Tasmania's wilderness.*

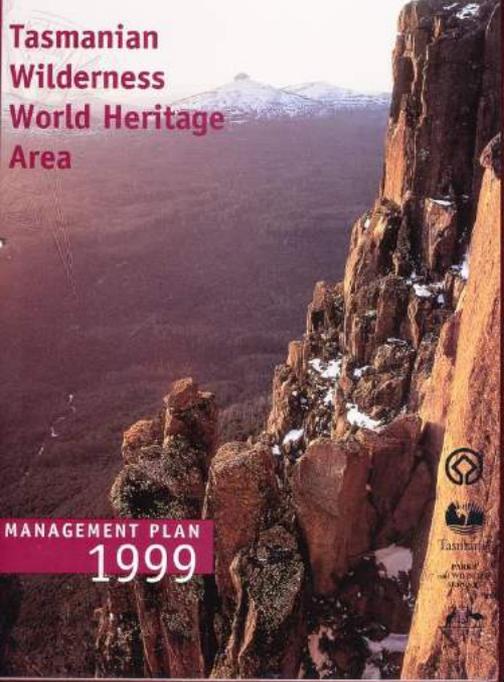
Mercury editorial

16 April 1999 (when
final plan released)

Since 1999 ...

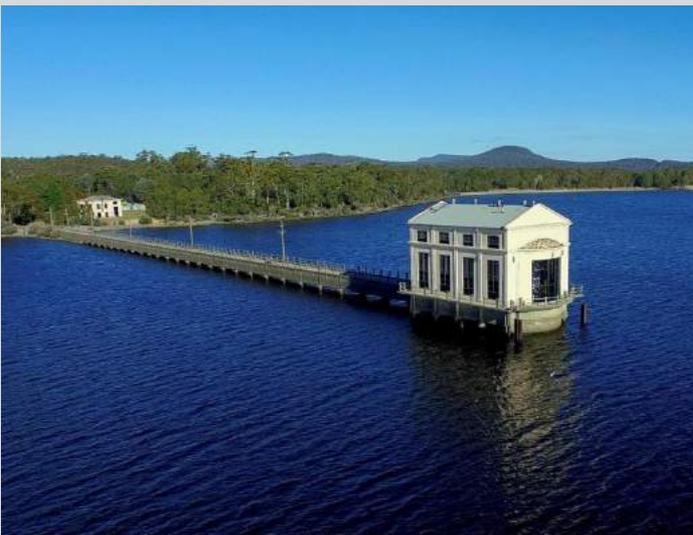
- Increasing pressure from elements of the tourism industry for greater access to Tasmanian Wilderness and increasing criticism of the development assessment process

“impossible to get anything approved”



Major projects assessed

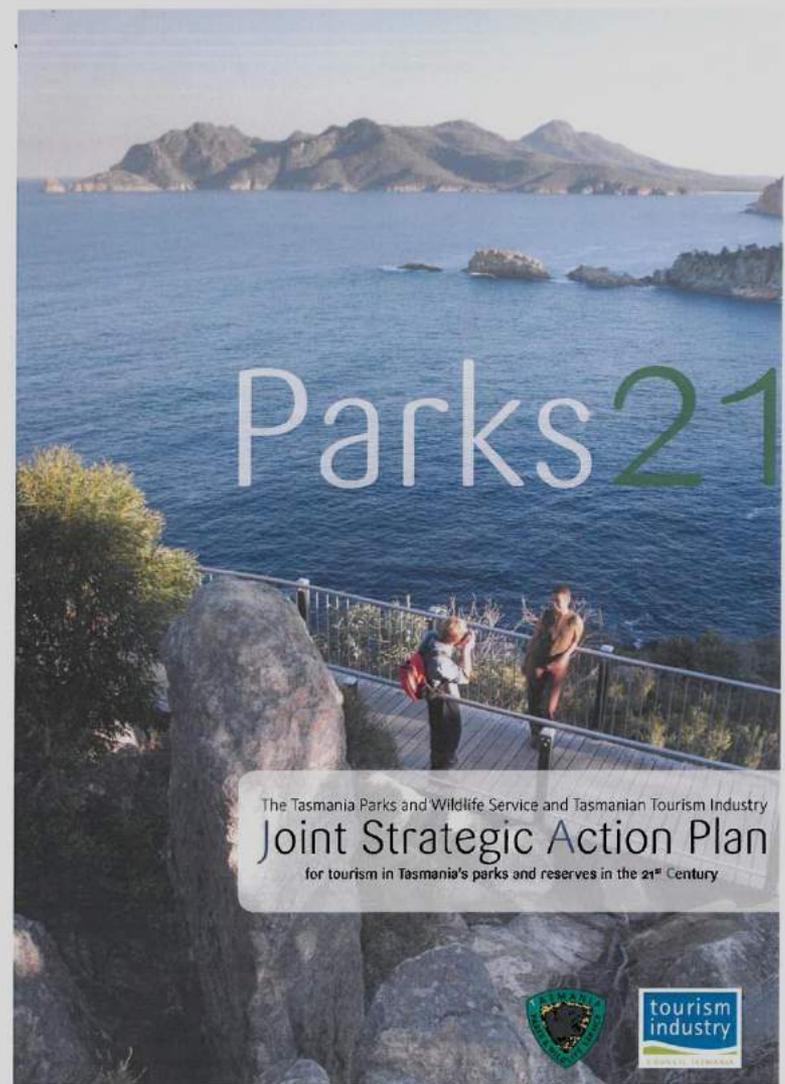
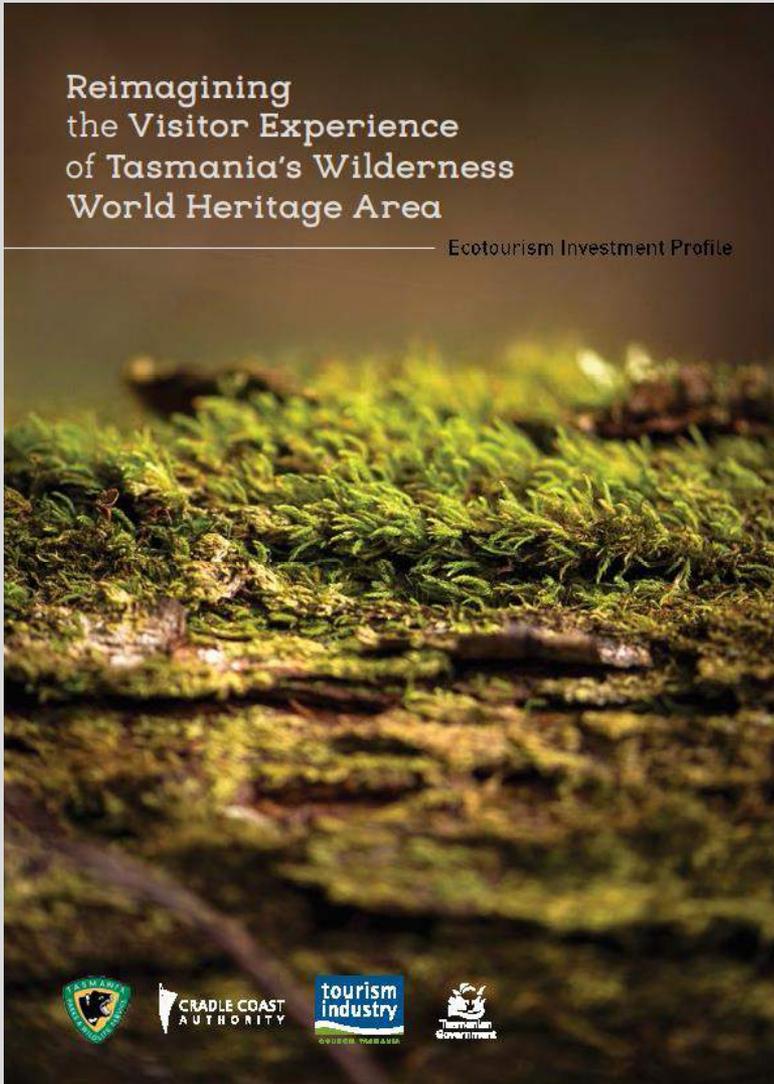
- Cockle Creek Lodge – required plan change
 - approved but never proceeded
- Additional aircraft landing sites
 - rejected
- Lake St Clair Cabins
 - approved and constructed
- Pumphouse Point
 - Reuse of obsolete 1940s Hydro pump house – not undeveloped site
 - Claim – “18 years to get planning approval”
 - 18 years includes two previous proposals
 - Both controversial – substantial additional construction
 - Both approved – neither proceeded
 - Final proposal uncontroversial – approved quickly – construction delayed by Global Financial Crisis
- Process in 1999 TWWHAMP satisfactory
- 3 major accommodation proposals approved but never constructed

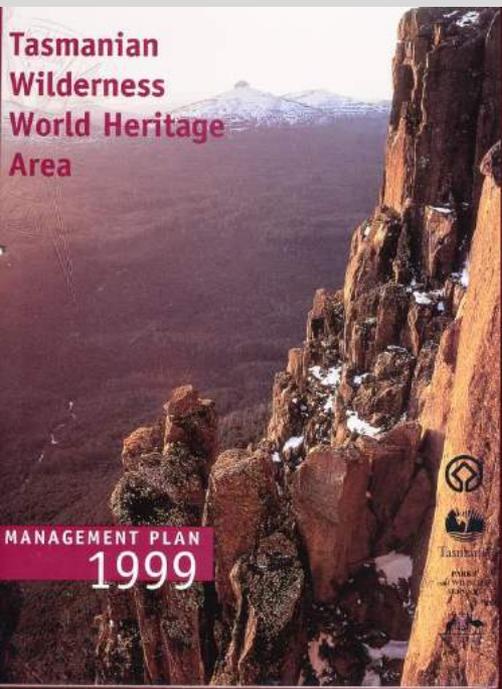


2013-14

- Public “consultation” on plan review – late 2013
- March 2014 – new Liberal government elected in Tasmania
 - **policy to “unlock our World Heritage Areas and national parks”**
- Call for Expressions of Interest in tourism developments in reserves, regardless of constraints in current management plan

2014 ...



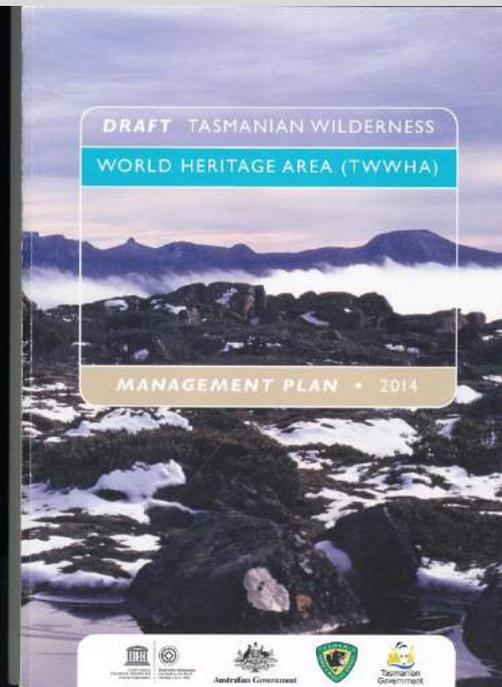


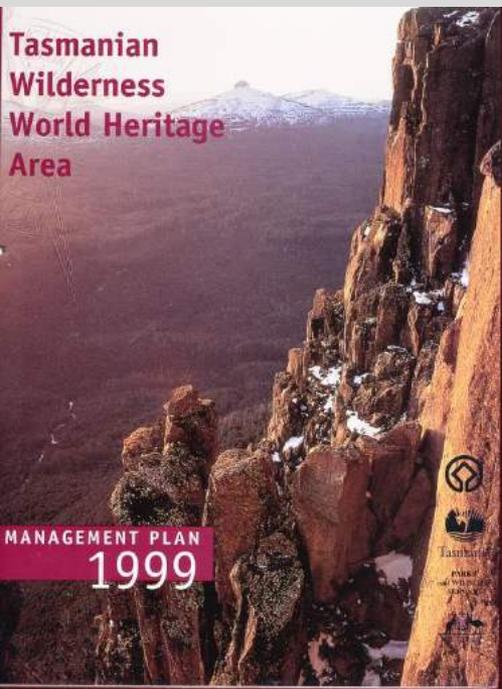
1999

- Produced within PWS planning section over several years
- Two stages public consultation with feedback prior to statutory public comment
- 180 individual letters in a total of 390
- Won several national planning awards

2014

- Produced by the policy section of overall department with little input from PWS in one year
- Minimal public consultation prior to statutory public comment
- Over 7600 submissions including “hundreds of substantive and considered submissions”



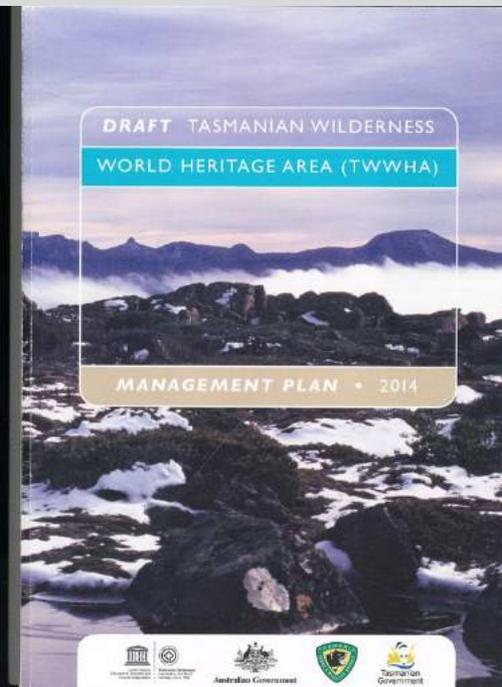


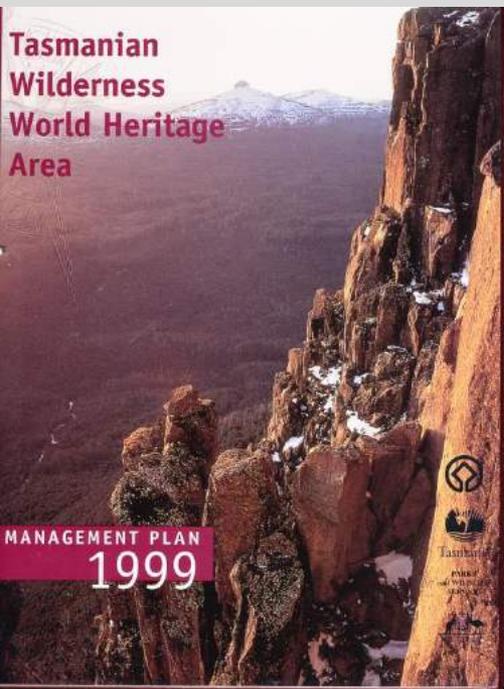
1999 [Tourism] Objectives

- To manage tourism and recreational use of the WHA in a sustainable manner so as not to compromise the World Heritage and other natural and cultural values of the WHA or the quality of visitor experience (page 176)

2014 [Tourism] Objectives

- Provide a diversity of visitor experiences in a manner that is consistent with the conservation of natural and cultural values (page 113)
- Consistent with the protection of natural and cultural values, total and proportional rates of visitation increase in the TWWHA (KDO 6.2, page 115)



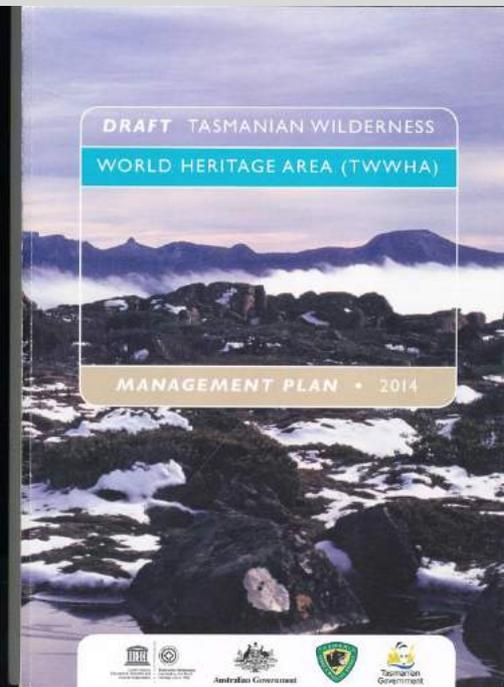


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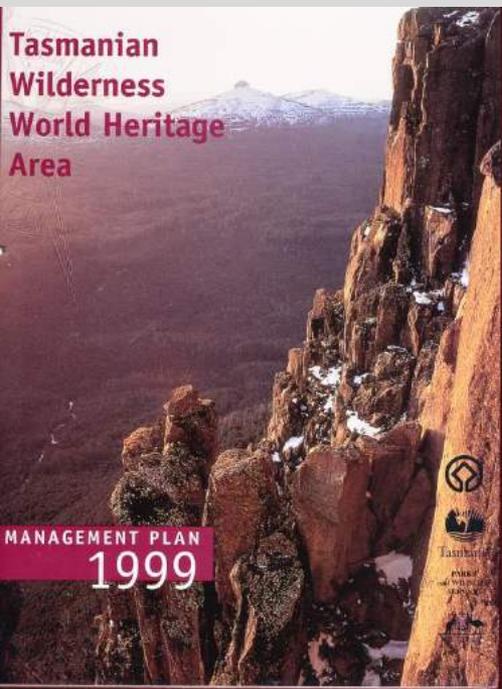
1999 Zoning

- Explicit prescriptions to concentrate use in Visitor Services Sites & Zones
- Strong protection for wilderness



2014 Zoning

- Superficially similar to 1999 plan but many activities permitted across all zones
- No protection for wilderness

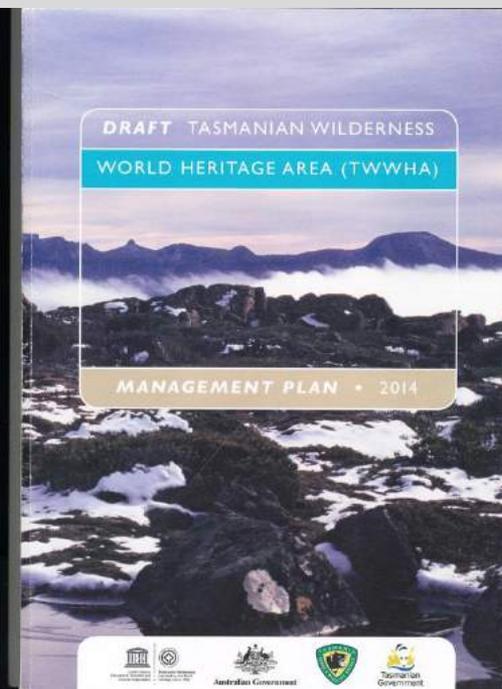


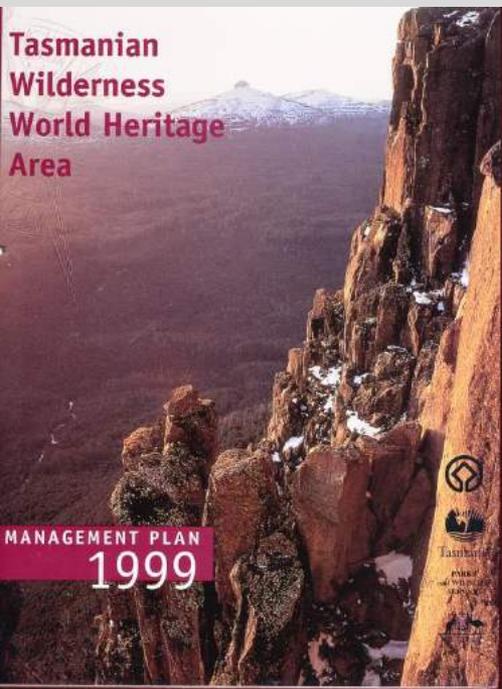
Commercial Accommodation/Huts 1999

- Accommodation/huts will be considered in VSS, VSZ or recreation zone, not in Southwest National Park
- Encourage the provision of accommodation in nearby townships and areas adjacent to the WHA

2014

- Will be considered anywhere.





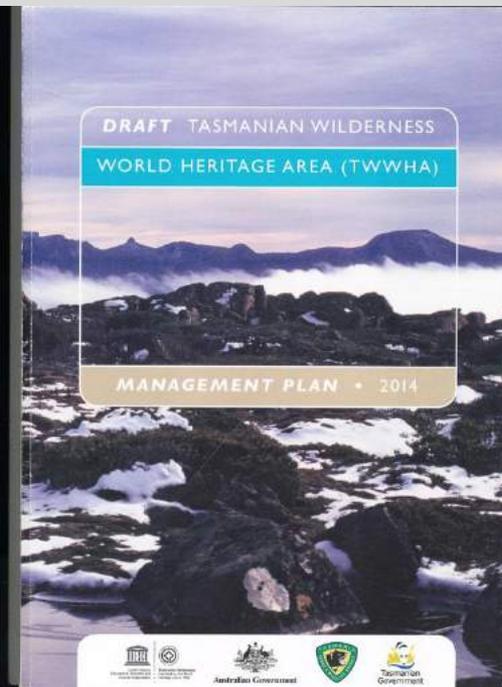
Aircraft landings

1999

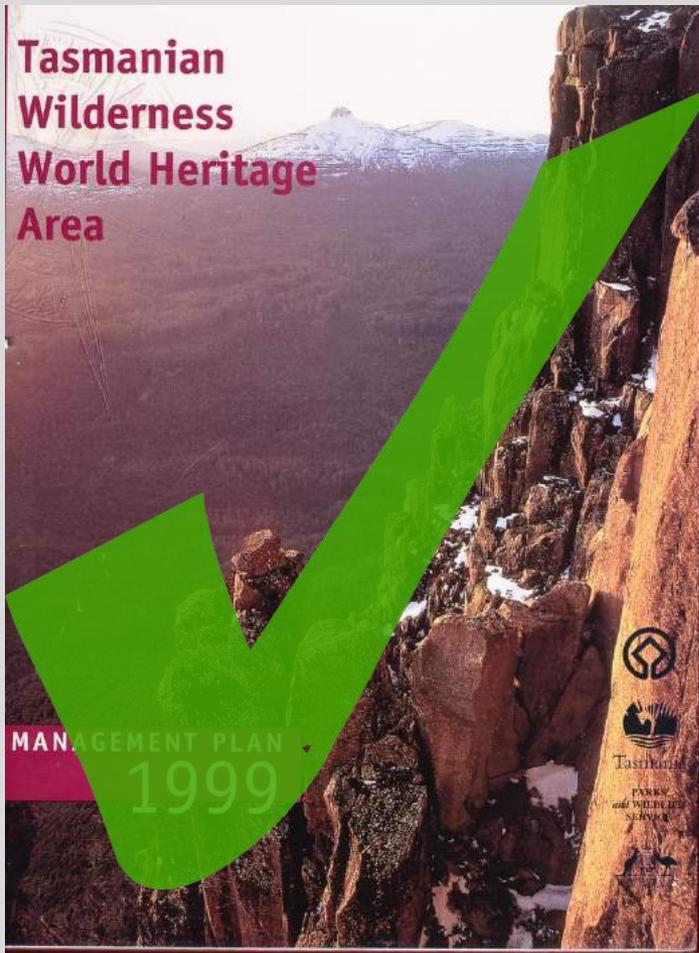
- Existing sites + investigate three additional landing sites outside wilderness zone

2014

- Permitted at designated sites in any zone. Designated sites listed on page 122 include a number of remote locations with high wilderness character



Development Assessment



- contains a clearly defined assessment process (page 67)
 - statutory (because it was defined within a statutory management plan)
 - public comment

Development Assessment



- Does not define an assessment process
- PWS Reserve Activity Assessment
 - non-statutory
 - only requires public comment on major developments

Expressions of Interest

- The purpose is to stimulate ... private investment in **sensitive and appropriate** tourism experiences
2014 draft TWWHAMP
- Proposed Developments should be compatible with and sensitive to the cultural and natural values, character and setting of the reserve and should aim to enhance broader visitor enjoyment of the State's reserve estate.
Guiding principle, EoI Guidelines
- The Tasmanian Government is committed to being **open and transparent** about the EOI process ...

Coordinator-General's website

Expressions of Interest

- Very little detail available on most proposals.
- Process:
 - Assessment against objectives of reserve class and purposes of reservation
 - Minister may decide to enter contractual negotiations
 - **“any applicable State and Commonwealth approvals”**
- Environmental and social impact assessment?
- Compliance with management plan requirements?
- Verbal advice that RAA required – but negotiations on lease or licence arrangements (including all necessary conditions) already commenced

Development Assessment



- Details of proposal not public
- Assessment criteria unclear
- Assessment process unclear
- May include RAA which may include public comment

Public Trust

- High when 1999 plan released
- Three Capes Track
 - Substantive issues raised in public comment [during assessment] not addressed – ignored
- Public comment sometimes avoided. e.g. upgrading of “standing camp” at Forest Lag
- Reimagining, Parks21, Eol process
- Absence of meaningful public consultation prior to release of 2014 draft TWWHAMP
- *The draft plan may not necessarily be amended if a representation ... conflicts with government policy* (Tasmanian Government TWWHAMP website)

How to restore credibility and protect all the values of the Tasmanian Wilderness

- Consult – be open and transparent
- Return to the principle which underlies the 1999 TWWHAMP
 - Facilities on the periphery cater for the needs of most visitors
 - Remainder of the Tasmanian Wilderness can be left largely undeveloped and undisturbed. i.e. **wilderness**
 - protects integrity of natural and cultural values
 - genuine wilderness experience for those visitors who seek one
 - maintains the authenticity of Tasmania's wilderness image
- Revert to many of the objectives and management prescriptions of the 1999 TWWHAMP, except ...

Wilderness

Improve on 1999 TWWHA Management Plan

- Maintenance of wilderness values must be based on wilderness character mapping – not the less relevant:
 - Wilderness Zone (1999 TWWHAMP)
 - Remote Recreation Zone (2014 draft TWWHAMP)

Development assessment principles

- All values of the Tasmanian Wilderness (not just world heritage values)
 - Wilderness character
 - Natural & cultural values of national or regional significance
 - Social and recreational values (visitor experience)
- Cumulative impacts
- Contribute to presentation of the values of the Tasmanian Wilderness
- Open and transparent
- Clear decision points (provide certainty within a reasonable timeframe)
- Public comment on all but the most trivial and uncontroversial proposals
- Statutory (legally enforceable and cannot be changed without parliamentary approval)
- Third party appeal rights

Development assessment process

PWS Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA)
provides a good basis

Enhancements:

- Public comment on all but the most trivial and uncontroversial proposals
- Assessment of impact on wilderness character

Statutory process

- Could be achieved by incorporating the enhanced RAA process into TWWHAMP; or
- Legislation – amendments to *NPRMA* – integrate it into the Resource Management and Planning System
 - Define the relationship between planning for reserved land and all other Tasmanian land use planning
 - Provide both **public comment and appeal rights** through **existing processes**

Conclusion

If the 2014 draft TWWHAMP is approved without substantial changes, there will be **few restrictions on tourism development** anywhere in the Tasmanian Wilderness and **no guarantee of an open and transparent assessment** of any development proposal.

World Heritage Committee Decision

... urges the State Party to review the proposed new management plan ... including ... strict criteria for new tourism development ... with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, including its wilderness character and cultural attributes

Recommendation

- The new TWWHA Management Plan reverts to many of the objectives and prescriptions of the 1999 TWWHAMP including its recognition (page 23) that *it is this wilderness quality which underpins the Tasmanian Wilderness WHA's success in meeting the criteria as a natural property and which is the foundation for the maintenance of the integrity of both the natural and cultural values of the area.*
- Development assessment process
 - Statutory
 - Public comment
 - Appeal rights