

Tasmanian Climate Change Office  
GPO Box 123  
HOBART TAS 7001



25 March 2016

**SUBMISSION – DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2016-2021**

On 13 January 2016 a series of dry lightning strikes ignited bushfires which burned a substantial area within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). These fires had the potential to obliterate much, if not most, of the unique Gondwanan alpine vegetation that is a major contributor to the outstanding universal value of the TWWHA (i.e. one of the main reasons why it is a World Heritage Area). We were extremely fortunate that their outbreak was followed by a spell of unusually benign weather which saved us from the “worst case scenario” and facilitated efforts to control them; the fires were minor compared to what they could have been.

The fires provide confirmation of the obvious, namely that climate change in conjunction with a severe El Niño event has fundamentally changed the risk of wildfire in Tasmania, but they also remind us that this poses very real risk to one of the most important values of the TWWHA.

The fire planning outlined in the Draft Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2021 focuses on “the effective management of Tasmania’s emergency response to prevent loss of life, protect critical infrastructure and keep communities safe”. The emergency response also needs to prioritise the protection of Tasmania’s natural values including, particularly, the most important locations within the TWWHA.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Errey', is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely,'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Catharine Errey  
President  
Tasmanian National Parks Association