

TNPA NEWS

TASMANIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION INC

Newsletter No 11 Spring/Summer 2008

View south to Mt Pelion East and Mt Ossa from the historic Mole Creek Track. Photo: Anne McConnell



THANK YOU

The TNPA Committee would like to thank the following people who have recently volunteered their time to assist the TNPA, or who have helped us in other ways, over the last six months.

NPAC Annual Conference 2008 Tim Bond, Kevin Kiernan, Greg Hogg, Peter Mooney; and Julia Greenhill, Janet Henderson, Bec Johnson, Jon Nevill, and the School of Geography & Environmental Science (University of Tasmania) and the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service.

Public Lecture – Challenges for the Future of Tasmania's and Australia's National Parks Christine Goonrey, Mark Hovenden, Craig Johnson, Anne Reeves, the Henderson family, Chris Bell.

Great Australian Bushwalk in Tasmania 2008 John Canon, Catherine Errey, Pam Fenerty, Rob Hill, Rebecca Johnston, Fred Koolhof, Lesley Nicklason, Robin Roberts

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN:

Anne McConnell (President 2007-08)

It seems appropriate in the closing of 2008, to reflect on the extremely busy year that 2008 was for the TNPA. Indeed, it was a year of unprecedented activity, with the focus during the year being several ongoing park development issues and a number of new proposed developments that the TNPA has been lobbying against. We believe that each will have a significant adverse affect on the conservation values of Tasmania's reserved land.

It has also been a year of change, ranging from a new Federal Government in late 2007, a new Minister for Parks and changes to the department composition at State Government level, to a move in office location for the TNPA to the new Sustainable Living Tasmania and Tasmanian Conservation Trust offices at 191 Liverpool St.

And it has also been a year of consolidation with the TNPA maintaining and slightly building its membership base, and the development of better administrative practices. We ran another Great Australian Bushwalk in Tasmania; we have been regularly represented at Environment Tasmania meetings thanks to our dedicated representatives, and have maintained our semi-regular meetings with the PWS agency head and the Minister. Through our fundraising and generous donations we have been able to consolidate our financial position, and to use these funds to again engage the services of a Project Coordinator on a one day a week basis - a huge boost to our ability to get things done.

We have also done some new things. Through the enthusiasm of the Project Coordinator, the TNPA held a member's 'day out' at Fortescue Bay, and we also hosted the National Parks Australia Council Annual Conference for the first time in Tasmania (see article on page 6).

To identify, protect, conserve, present, and where appropriate, rehabilitate the area and to transmit that heritage to future generations in as good or better condition than at present.

Overall objectives of the World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999

The 'biggest' new thing the TNPA undertook in 2008 was appealing to the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal (RMPAT) against the approval by the Tasman Council of the Remarkable Lodge development near Crescent Bay (see article on page 7). Although the TNPA was not successful with the appeal, this undertaking has been a major learning and growing experience for the TNPA.

Also new and exciting this year is the inclusive, consultative and cooperative approach that has been taken by environmental NGOs on a number of environmental issues, in particular marine conservation and the World Heritage Mission.

Despite efforts, we still haven't secured representation for the TNPA on either the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council or the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Consultative Committee. This may reflect our commitment to challenging the poor practices of government. I look forward to the day the TNPA has a voice on these advisory committees, and government welcomes constructive criticism rather than attempting to marginalise those who offer an alternative, real conversation vision for Tasmanian reserved land.

And what of 2009 and beyond? There are major challenges ahead for the TNPA. Tourism development is being more aggressively promoted

and coordinated. The Bacon-Lennon-Bartlett Government pro-tourism national parks policy continues to be ramped up. The proposed Three Capes Walk is the largest and most inappropriate development yet. Large, expensive and intrusive infrastructure continues to expand on the Overland Track (see article on page 11). At the same time it is hard to get traction on protected area management, as environmental management appears to be 'off the radar' for our Federal and State politicians who are pre-occupied with climate change and water issues (when not pre-occupied with facilitating tourism opportunities in parks), and who, at the State level, prefer to fund roads, football teams and concerts than environmental conservation.

The TNPA has worked extremely hard during 2008 to protect Tasmania's so-called protected areas. It is hard to measure how effective we have been, but it is critical that we do not lose heart, and that we keep speaking up for conservation management, not exploitation, of Tasmania's invaluable and irreplaceable reserved land.

Finally, as retiring President, I would like to sincerely thank the raft of TNPA members and individuals outside the TNPA for their assistance over the last year. This support has been invaluable, enabling the TNPA to grow and meet the challenges to Tasmania's protected areas, and to operate with a high level of professionalism and integrity.

IN BRIEF – THE TNPA IN 2008

CAMPAIGNING & ISSUES

- Three Capes Proposed Track
- Crescent Bay – Remarkable Lodge Development
- Pumphouse Point Development - Mark 3
- World Heritage Mission, March 2008
- Cockle Creek East
- Windy Ridge new hut construction
- Development of policy on marine conservation (in progress)
- Development of policy on fire management (in progress)

SUBMISSIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

The TNPA wrote numerous submissions and representation in 2007-8. Those not already noted above include submissions in relation to –

- Cox Bight proposed tin mining exploration lease at
- Bruny Bioregion Marine Protected Areas RPDC recommendations
- Cynthia Bay, Lake St Clair National Park proposed new developments
- SW Tasmania Karst Management Plan (PWS)
- Tasmanian Planning Review (Dept of Justice)
- Tarkine tourism
- Development Application for the proposed reuse of a helipad for tourism at Strathgordon
- Coles Bay Federal Hotels Resort Development Application
- Greens Alternative Budget
- the framework for managing Tasmanian reserved land (to Federal and State Ministers for Environment/Parks)
- the handover of Crown Land via the CLAC process to PWS and the need for resourcing for PWS
- limited funding for environmental NGOs

EVENTS

- The Buttongrass Ball 2008 (organised by the Folk Federation)
- TreadLightly Envirofest (TNPA display)
- Kevin Doran Slide Night

- Fortescue Bay Day Out
- Great Australian Bushwalk in Tasmania 2008
- NPAC Annual Conference 2008 (hosted by the TNPA)
- Public Lecture - Challenges for Managing Tasmanian and Australian National Parks (in conjunction with the NPAC Annual Conference)

MEETINGS

TNPA met with a number of individuals and organisations over the year to discuss issues related to the management of Tasmanian reserved land. The main meetings in 2007-8 were with –

- Michelle O'Byrne, Minister for Parks
- Will Hodgman, Liberal spokesperson for Environment and Parks
- Peg Putt, Greens spokesperson for Environment and Parks
- Peter Wright, advisor (Parks) to Peter Garrett, Federal Minister for the Environment
- Greg Alomes, Chief Commissioner of RPDC, in relation to reserved land management and planning
- Peter Mooney, Manager, PWS
- the Tasman Council, in relation to the proposed Three Capes Track development

ADMINISTRATION

The following were key actions and achievements in relation to the administration of the TNPA –

- regular TNPA Management Committee Meetings (with 10 meetings being held in 2007-8)
- regular monthly 'Administrative Meetings' to review TNPA administration
- review and improvement of our financial management
- fundraising - it is exciting to be able to say that we have been able to rely on funds from membership, fundraising and from a number of generous donations over the year
- producing TNPA News 10 & 11
- regular electronic monthly TNPA Communique.



Track cutting gang on Arm River Track, 1898 (Photo supplied by P. Brown)

Walking Tracks as Heritage?

Peter Brown

Need I say that Tasmania's national parks are places of great natural beauty? We know the rich natural and cultural heritage that they hold and many of us venture out into our national parks to take in the stunning scenery of mountains, lakes, forests, rivers and plains. The parks can also offer an escape from our busy crowded lives. On our way to our favourite places, deep within the national parks, we follow familiar walking tracks. But what do we think of these tracks, are they little more than a means to an end? For all the hours and days we spend walking along tens of kilometres of track are our only thoughts of them the occasional curse about a grade that is too steep, a surface that is too rough or the encroachment of too much vegetation? But these tracks have their own characters and histories that are worthy of attention.

Let me introduce you to the Mole Creek Track. In the Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park, have you noticed that some sections of the Arm River Track and the Overland Track are very well made? The Arm River Track between Wurragarra Creek and the Pelion Plains and the Overland Track from Pelion Plains and across the face of Mount Pelion West are cut 2 metres wide and gently graded. This is in stark contrast to other sections of these tracks. Guide books and the received knowledge inform us of the Innes Track and fix a time of 1896 to the work of Edward George Innes. Indeed, between October 1896 and May 1897, District Surveyor E. G. Innes 'laid out' the route for a track. He filed a detailed report which was published in the Parliamentary Papers for 1897. It makes interesting reading now and reams of it were printed in the *Launceston Examiner* and the *Hobart Mercury* of the time. This is fascinating, but dig a little deeper into the history, and into the track, and the story becomes even more interesting.

Where does the track go? The Innes Track as it has become known, had a number of official names, the most accurate being the Mole Creek Track. It ran, and still largely does, from Liena, just west of Mole Creek, to Rosebery. It rises quickly onto the plateau between the Mersey and Forth Rivers and runs south across a series of plains until it reaches Wurragarra Creek where it has been incorporated into the Arm River Track. From here it runs northwest to the Pelion Plains, then west across the Pelion Plains and the Forth River Gorge, then turns north until near Lake Windermere. In this section it is now part of the Overland Track. From Lake Windermere it resumes its westerly direction to cross Mount Inglis, Granite Tor and Mount Swallow. Hydro lakes have drowned part of the track, but it passes Tullah and the northern slopes of Mount Black before turning south to reach Rosebery. It has a total length of 120 kilometres – and not one millimetre was made by E.G. Innes.

Why was this track made? In the late 1890s mineral discoveries on the West Coast were beginning to generate great wealth and optimism. The ruggedness of the West Coast meant that there was only one way out for the mineral wealth and one way in for food and general goods for the mining population; and this was Macquarie Harbour and the port of Strahan. Businessmen in Launceston and Hobart wanted direct access to the rich mineral fields and the towns of Zeehan, Queenstown, Dundas and Rosebery. This generated a series of hair-brained schemes for overland railways from Hobart and Launceston. They called them by grand names like "The Great Western Railway", "Tasmanian Central & West Coast Railway" and "The Great Midland & West Coast Railway Company". But much of the country was not well known to the Europeans. Surveys were made and tracks were cut



The Arm River Track (former Mole Creek Track), 2007 (Photo supplied by P. Brown)

to 'open up' the country. E. G. Innes had been sent into the South West, in the winter of 1896, to find one route from the south. And when he recovered, he was sent from the north to find another route, which erroneously bears his name.

Innes surveyed a route for a track, called at the time 'laying out' a track. He, or his party of five, did not make a track. What we see today is the weathered and worn remains of the track made by the Public Works Department in 1898 and 1899. Two teams, or gangs, of day labourers worked from the Rosebery and Liena ends of the track towards its centre. The gangs were of about 20 men, working in the open and sleeping in tents pitched at their camps near to the end of the formed track. Each of these gangs were made up of two groups, a small clearing team a few miles in front of a main construction team, each with their own camp. They were paid for the days they worked and when bad weather stopped work they were not paid at all. But they still had to pay for their rations which were packed by the government from the nearest store, at either Chudleigh or Rosebery.

The Mole Creek Track, from Liena to Mt Swallow, near Tullah, including those sections on the Arm River Track and the Overland Track were built to a standard set by one man, Richard Broomhall, the overseer of the eastern gang. Broomhall ranged across the countryside. He fine-tuned the route of the track laid out by Innes, and so worked in front of the first team. He supervised the men who cleared the route of the track. And he supervised the larger track-making gang which benched the track, made the culverts, and laid the corduroy. Furthermore he travelled back to Mole Creek and Chudleigh to oversee supplies and communicate with his supervisor. Richard Broomhall was an experienced road contractor and applied his skills to the construction of the Mole Creek Track. Despite over 100 years of erosion by weather and walkers, the design of the track is still apparent, and still effective to a surprising degree.

There is little known about the way that these tracks were formed and despite 100 years of decay and wear there is still much to be found. My research into the Mole Creek Track led me to undertake a series of small excavations along the Arm River Track. With permission from the Parks and Wildlife Service and the assistance



The same location in 1898 (Photo supplied by P. Brown)

of an archaeologist, I excavated sections of corduroy, culverts and benching.

The benched track provided the biggest surprise. A short section had been by-passed since the 1960s when the track was re-opened for bushwalkers. When the surface vegetation was cleared off it revealed a flat track surface largely unmarked by the passing of 100 years. The drain on its inner edge was still working as built and was directing water away from the track. The drain was packed with rocks to slow the water flow and reduce erosion. The condition of the track was in marked contrast to the rest of the track where years of less sympathetic maintenance had substantially changed the track.

The Arm River Track also contains a large number of small bridges, called culverts by Broomhall, that cross small streams. Although most were in poor condition, they clearly showed how they were made. They were simply, but effectively, constructed of trees cut nearby. Substantial log footings were cut into each bank to hold the main support beams and then decking logs placed across the main beams. These were held in place by fender logs placed on the outer edge of the culvert. The timber decking was then covered by about a foot of packed earth. None of these culverts survive in good condition. They have either been washed away by winter floods or have rotted in situ. However, there are enough features remaining to show how they were made.

Sections of corduroy near Lake Ayr are still intact, but are hidden by layers of vegetation. They provided relatively dry footings through the swampy ground at the eastern end of the lake until some boards were recently placed over them.

The Mole Creek Track, or if you still want to call it the Innes Track, is still a good track and very well made. It owes its existence to the great boom of mineral exploration on the West Coast in the 1890s and for the next 100 years provided access to the Cradle Mountain area for prospectors, cattle drovers, cattle, snarers, bushwalkers and the occasional historian and archaeologist. The next time you take the Arm River Track or the Overland Track, look down at the track below your feet and consider Richard Broomhall and his gang of Chudleigh farmers. You might even thank them for their hard work.

ENVIRONMENT TASMANIA

– AN INTRODUCTION & RECENT HAPPENINGS

Dr Phill Pullinger, Director, Environment Tasmania

Environment Tasmania was formed in 2004 with the specific role of providing a representative umbrella body for Tasmanian conservation groups, and was publicly launched in December 2006. During Environment Tasmania's set-up phase and for the first 12 months since its public launch it operated as an entirely voluntary based organisation, and has grown rapidly to now have a vibrant office based in Hobart that supports a volunteer Director, three part-time staff members (office manager, policy co-ordinator, marine campaigner) and a number of volunteers. The past year in particular has been a very busy and successful year for Environment Tasmania. Our key priorities over the past year have included building the establishment and setting-up of the representative mechanisms and role of Environment Tasmania, working directly on a range of key conservation and environment priorities, and supporting our member groups [including the TNPA – Ed] where we can in their important conservation and environment work.

Environment Tasmania currently now has 25 member conservation groups from across the island - collectively, this represents more than 5,000 Tasmanians. Environment Tasmania's member groups work on a wide range of conservation issues, including the protection of Tasmania's forests, coasts, marine environment, national parks and wildlife. They also work in on the ground environment projects, private land conservation, sustainable living, tackling global warming and much more. Environment Tasmania has helped to facilitate cooperation and cohesion amongst Tasmanian conservation groups over the past year by holding general meetings in Pyengana, Lady Bay, the Panama Forest, and Hobart, along with regional water and marine workshops. These forums are critically important for working on and debating policy, networking, and building strategy and cohesion amongst environment groups across the state.

In Environment Tasmania's representative role we have represented our member groups over the past year through government submission processes and roundtables, including the Federal Environment Minister's National Environment Roundtable. We have also provided a voice for Tasmanian conservation groups at the Mittagong Forum and at conservation council roundtables, and provided a voice for Tasmanian

conservation groups more broadly to politicians and policy-makers, industry and the broader community.

We have also worked hard in developing a research report into forest conservation; hosted a range of climate change forums across the state; set-up an ET marine conservation campaign; provided administrative support to conservation experts in putting together a conservation paper; set-up an Eco-toxicology research trust; worked with our member groups on water, waste, GMO and other issues; launched a legal challenge in relation to the pulp mill assessment; and set-up a monthly environment groups E-Bulletin and a central website for Tasmanian conservation groups at www.et.org.au.

Tasmania is one of the most beautiful islands on the face of the planet. It is home to a unique marine environment, spectacular wilderness areas, a remarkable coastline, forests & bushland, lagoons, grasslands and other extraordinary landscape features. It is also home to an incredible diversity of wildlife, many of which are threatened and found only in Tasmania. Environment Tasmania aims to ensure that as Tasmanian environment groups with different interests and concerns, we all work together in a supportive, cohesive and cooperative manner to protect all of these unique values.

The support and involvement of our member environment groups in Environment Tasmania is crucially important and greatly appreciated – and we greatly appreciate the involvement of the TNPA in the conservation council's work over the past year. We hope to continue to build upon our representation and policy-development role with member groups such as the TNPA over the coming year – and encourage interested TNPA delegates to come along where you can to upcoming general meetings of the conservation council, which in 2009 will be held on the 14th of March on the Tasman Peninsula, 23rd of May in the Tarkine, 15th of August at Colebrook and 28th of November at Binalong Bay. A big thanks and congratulations to the hard work and dedication of the TNPA and its members in their ongoing steadfast commitment to the long-term protection of Tasmania's outstanding National Parks & Reserves, and we wish you all a great break over Summer!



Lake Pedder Promotion, Hobart Airport, 2008 [Photo: Anne McConnell]

Tasmanian Tourism Advertising a Bit Behind the Times

On a recent trip out to Hobart Airport, TNPA Vice President Anne McConnell noticed something a bit odd in the advertising panel near the Qantas baggage collection carousel. It seems that Tasmanian tourism advertising is a bit behind the times with the panel showing a beautiful colour photo of the now drowned Lake Pedder. We hope visitors to Tasmania are not too confused trying to visit a place in a national park that has been inaccessible (due to inundation) for over 35 years!

Do Tasmania's national parks have so little left of scenic value that tourism advertising has to resort to promoting sites that the government destroyed many years ago, or is the government pretending Lake Pedder was never destroyed? But maybe we should be more positive and see this as early indications from the Tasmanian government that Lake Pedder will be restored soon as a national conservation icon.

THE NATIONAL PARKS AUSTRALIA COUNCIL 2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

– HOSTED BY THE TNPA

Anne McConnell

The National Parks Australia Council's 2008 Annual Conference, hosted by the TNPA, was held in Hobart over the weekend of the 5th-7th September. This was the first time the Annual Conference of Australia-wide national parks associations (NPAs) has met in Tasmania. The 2008 Conference was the first to have all NPAs represented, with nine interstate delegates and four local delegates attending.

The National Parks Australia Council (NPAC) was formed in 1975 to protect, promote and extend national parks systems in Australia. It operates as the Australia-wide umbrella group for the various state national parks associations, of which there are currently six. The National Parks Australia Council provides a forum that coordinates and promotes the collective views and policies of its member groups. These member groups, including the Tasmanian National Parks Association, are non-government organisations which provide a link between the community, park policy makers and other government. Individually, and collectively through the NPAC, the groups work to identify and address issues concerning the ongoing management of Tasmania's reserve system and other areas of high conservation status.

The main business of the Annual Conference was to discuss new issues and common concerns regarding protected area management in Australia. The Conference also operates as an AGM for the Council. As well as NPAC business, briefings were provided by Peter Mooney (Manager, PWS) on reserve management in Tasmania, Tim Bond (Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra) on the National Reserve System, and Kevin Kiernan (University of Tasmania) on geoheritage conservation. Key concerns raised at the Conference included increased tourism

related development (and facilitation by government) in national parks, the inadequacy of the present marine reserve system; and the lack of funds for managing reserved land. These appear from the Conference to be significant Australia-wide issues.

On the Sunday there was a well attended field trip to Recherche Bay with information on the history and management of the area being presented by Greg Hogg, Tom Baxter and myself. The presentation was particularly focussed on the history and values associated with the 1790s French Expeditions and the recent conservation issues – the campaign to prevent the logging on the northeast peninsula, and the proposed Marriner Cockle Creek East Resort on the southern peninsula. The PWS kindly provided free passes to the National Park for the day.

A Public Lecture, *Challenges for Managing Tasmanian and Australian National Parks*, was also held in conjunction with the NPAC Annual Conference. This TNPA-hosted, free public lecture was aimed at publicising key future issues for the management of protected areas in Australia. The lecture featured local experts Craig Johnson and Mark Hovenden, both from the University of Tasmania, and two of our interstate NPAC Conference participants, Anne Reeves and Christine Goonrey. The speakers covered climate change and vegetation management, marine conservation, bushfire management and other big picture issues.

The TNPA is grateful to all those who assisted with the weekend, including the School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, who provided an excellent venue for the meeting, the Parks & Wildlife Service, Sonja Lenz who took the meeting minutes, and Patsy Jones and Janet Henderson who assisted in the overall organising of the weekend.



Photos: Above: Field Day to Recherche Bay on the NPAC Annual Conference weekend. Participants being briefed by Greg Hogg, historian and Lune River resident. [Photo: A. McConnell] Top right: NPAC Conference being briefed on the National Reserve System by Tim Bond (DEWHA, Canberra). [Photo: A. McConnell]. Bottom right: Weary but happy participants at the end of the NPAC Conference field day to Recherche Bay. [Photo: A. McConnell].



Crescent Bay. Photo: Tracey Withers

CRESCENT BAY DEVELOPMENT - TNPA LOSES APPEAL, BUT DEVELOPMENT STILL ON HOLD

Robert Campbell

As detailed in *TNPA News 10*, the TNPA lodged an appeal with the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal 5 May 2008 against the proposal by Miff Pty Ltd to build an eco-tourism lodge on the headland behind Crescent Bay and adjacent to the Tasman National Park. Although the TNPA was initially joined by Birds Tasmania, Friends of Crescent Bay and another local resident, by the time the appeal was heard in early August the TNPA remained the only appellant.

The TNPA's case before the Tribunal was based on seven Grounds of Appeal. As detailed in the last Newsletter, the central tenant of these Grounds was that the proposed development was contrary to the intent of the Coastal Protection Zone to maintain the rural character and high scenic quality of the coastal landscape. The proposed buildings and infrastructure will be visible from within the Tasman National Park and state reserves and from waters within Maingon Bay, hence will detract from the natural values for which the area is recognised and in the TNPA's view is contrary to the provisions of the *Tasman Planning Scheme 1979* and the *State Coastal Policy 1991*. The TNPA's key Grounds of Appeal at the hearing were that:

- The development is contrary to the intent of the Coastal Protection Zone to maintain the rural character and high scenic quality of the coastal landscape;
- The development will not protect the natural environment and landscape character of the area. The development will also compromise the landscape setting of, and heritage values of the entrance to, the heritage listed Port Arthur site;
- The proposed buildings and works do not harmonise with the environment of the area; and

- Inadequate wastewater management will increase nutrient loads in local soils, contribute to the spread of environmental weeds and potentially contaminate groundwater supplies.

The TNPA also argued that the amenity of the area would not be adequately protected by the permit conditions.

The Appeal was heard by the Tribunal over the three days 4-6 August and the TNPA engaged six expert witnesses to support its case. Despite the considerable time and expense devoted to presenting our case, the Tribunal delivered its decision on 4 September in favour of the respondents (Miff Pty Ltd and the Tasman Council). Commenting on the decision, TNPA President Anne McConnell said it was extremely disappointing the visual impact concerns raised were not more fully considered, noting that in her view the decision was a reflection of the inexperience and undeveloped nature of assessment of landscape character and quality, visual impacts and intrusiveness within planning in Tasmania.

Immediately following the Tribunal decision, a number of articles appeared in the Mercury based on comments made by Dick Smith (of Miff Pty Ltd). While stating that the development would now be put on hold given the downturn in the economy, Mr Smith also warned other investors to keep clear of Tasmania until the State changed its planning appeal laws. In reply to these comments (and others), and to assist the discussion on the role of appeals in the planning process within Tasmania, the TNPA would like to clarify some points concerning this appeal:

1. Mr Smith would have been aware of the public opposition to, and the RPDC's decision in 2005 to reject, a previous proposal to

build a tourist development (albeit larger) on the same site.

2. Consistent with this previous decision, the development application (DA) lodged by Miff Pty Ltd was also initially rejected by the Tasman Council in July 2007. Six substantive grounds were cited for this decision. If Mr Smith's wish that planning decisions made by local government bodies should be final had been in place then, his development would have been stopped then. Instead he lodged an appeal.
3. Another DA (identical in most aspects to the first) was lodged by Miff Pty Ltd in March 2008 and, despite its earlier decision, was approved by the Tasman Council in April. The reasons for the reversal of the Council's previous decision were not stated.
4. The Grounds of Appeal lodged by the TNPA were substantive, backed by a range of expert witnesses. Despite the claim made by others (Mercury 6 September), and as outlined above, our Grounds of Appeal did not state that the proposal should be rejected simply because the development could be seen from the adjacent Tasman National Park.
5. The DA states that construction would commence in Spring 2009. This would seem to contradict Mr Smith's claim that works would have been finished by now (Sept 2008) had it not been subject to appeals.

The TNPA obviously remains disappointed that its appeal was unsuccessful. However, any claim that appeals should be circumvented are unwarranted. Public input into the planning process, which given the costs is not taken lightly, is designed to improve outcomes and correct possibly inappropriate decisions

made at the local level. In this regard it is interesting to note the 2007 decision of the Appeal Tribunal in relation to a subdivision proposal at Swanwick, that *"the development application was so deficient that the Council could not have reached any proper decision in relation to the matter."*

The TNPA supports appropriate tourism based projects in Tasmania and supports the regional benefits that flow from such projects. However, we argue (as with the above proposal) that these same benefits can be achieved by placement of such projects outside protected and other sensitive areas. Such areas are a conservation asset of unique significance and a resource for all Tasmanians.

Postscript:

Subsequent to this Appeal, Miff Pty Ltd has lodged an Order for Costs against the TNPA. The TNPA understands that the planning tribunal generally only awards costs against a party if an appeal is seen as trivial or vexatious. The TNPA is strongly of the belief that its appeal was substantive, lodged in good faith and was not trivial or vexatious. A decision on costs is still pending.

The TNPA would like to extend its sincere thanks to the Environment Defenders Office, especially Jessica Feehely and Roland Browne, for their expert advice and dedication in assisting the TNPA with this Appeal. The TNPA would also like to thank those members and other individuals who made donations to support the costs associated with the Appeal. As the Association is still considerably out-of-pocket in relation to covering these costs, any further donations would be greatly appreciated.

TNPA NEWS

TNPA Day Out to Fortescue Bay, Tasman National Park

A new initiative, a social 'Day Out' for TNPA members, was organised by Janet Henderson. The first 'Day Out' was to Fortescue Bay on the Tasman Peninsula on Sunday 27th July. The day involved car pooling from Hobart, a morning walk or paddle depending on personal taste, and a late lunch BBQ. As well as being a social event, it was an opportunity to talk about, and look at, an area to be affected by the proposed Three Capes Walk development.

Around 20 people participated in the Fortescue Bay Day Out. After a wet night and early morning the day turned out fine and sunny, if a bit windy. Most participants chose to take the walk out to a lookout point near Cape Hauy with fine sweeping views of Munro Bight and its dramatic sea cliffs. It also gave us an opportunity to look at part of the route and track conditions on the proposed Three Capes Walk. A few hardy souls took to sea kayaks. All this activity was followed by a BBQ, conversation, coffee and cake!

The Fortescue Bay Day Out was an excellent social day, informative, and a good opportunity to celebrate the wonderful Tasman National Park. The TNPA are hoping to make 'Days Out' a regular event.



TNPA members and friends at Monument Lookout with great views to Cape Pillar [Photo: A. McConnell].



TNPA members and friends relaxing back at Fortescue Bay after walking and paddling [Photo: A. McConnell].

THE 2008 GREAT AUSTRALIAN BUSHWALK IN TASMANIA

Bec Johnson

Well 2008 has seen another successful Great Australian Bushwalk in Tasmania!

We had seven walks with a total of 112 participants (including leaders & kids.) That's a bit less than last year (9 walks with 168 people last year), but compares well to the other States & Territories. NSW had 11 walks, Qld & SA had one each, and the other states did not participate - so Tassie put on 7 of the 20 walks around Australia! And the Tasmanian participants now know a little about the TNPA.

The weather was pretty poor, but all groups coped well. I hear the Cathedral Rock group had hail, and at lunchtime had rain on the summit (890m), but they actually did stick to their route! (I had been betting they would opt for something like the Pipeline Track - but they're a tough bunch!). Likewise we at Chauncy Vale had a thunderstorm and rain just as we stopped for lunch at Flat Rock. And, on the Eastern Shore, Rob Hill's group clocked 70 knot winds! The Blue Tier walk alone had great weather (see below), and apparently 6 people carpooled from Hobart to do the Saturday walk. The Wellington Wanderers walk to Tarn Shelf had only four, and was the only group who had to change their walk due to weather.

Thanks SO MUCH to all walk leaders, the TNPA really appreciates your help. Both the Wellington Wanderers and the Friends of Blue Tier have been staunch supporters of the GAB in Tasmania since the start - you have been invaluable. Thanks to Janet, Anne and Pam for assistance with the media and advertising. And John Cannon, your article in the Sunday Tasmanian draws at least half the participants; thanks again. Last but not least, many thanks to Andrew Smith of Wildcare Inc, for supporting the event.

[And TNPA's huge thanks to Bec for being the coordinator for the 2008 GAB in Tasmania – not to mention the previous couple of years. It is a pile of work getting this event off the ground, this year made more complicated by the late support at the national level – but through Bec's hard work we all got there! Ed].

And from TNPA member **Lesley Nicklason** who led the Blue Tier Walk

Dear fellow Great Australian Bushwalkers!

We had a fantastic day on the slopes of the Blue Tier. Thirty 30 people turned up for what just happened to be the only 5 hours of good weather for the last 2 weeks! Lucky us!

The walk up to Wyniford Weir is through some magnificent tall wet eucalypt forest known as Emu Flat - all earmarked for clearfelling. Our lunch spot was on the gorgeous Wyniford River which is under threat from a dam - one of 7 planned for the fragile rivers of northeast Tassie.

Love to see you all up here again some time for a walk!



Photos from top to bottom: GAB walkers on the beach at Cape Queen Elizabeth, Bruny Island Photo: F. Koolhof. Blue Tier Walk, Wyniford Water Race [Photo: L. Nicklason]. A brief stop at Chauncy Vale Photo: B. Johnson. Catharine Errey & Bruce Wilson's group basking in the sun on top of Cathedral Rock Photo: Catherine Errey.

Tasmania's Wilderness Battles: A History by Greg Buckman

Published by Allen & Unwin, \$29.95 pb, 272 pp, 9781741754643

Patsy Jones

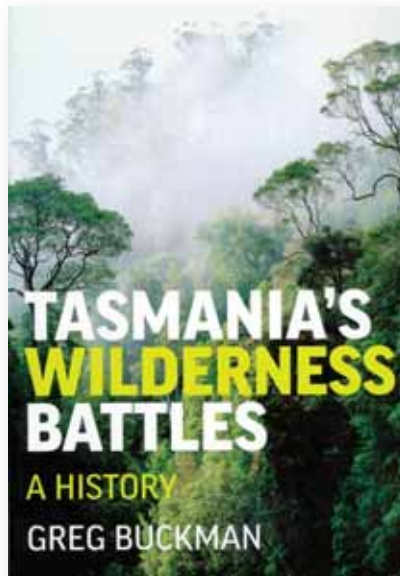
We are all familiar with Greg as the previous Treasurer of TNPA; and some of us may be aware that he was National Treasurer of the Australian Greens for some years. But we may not be aware (I certainly wasn't) that he published several well-received books and papers before embarking on the subject of this review – the fight for Tasmania's Wilderness.

A search of the State Library of Tasmania's catalogue reveals that his publications on Tasmania's national parks, the history and walks of Mt Wellington, global trade and globalization, and some papers for the Tasmanian Institute of Independent Policy Studies are available as a mixture of lending and reference copies. Googling Greg's name indicates that his books on globalization and global trade are available internationally as well.

So we should not be surprised that in *Tasmania's Wilderness Battles* Greg has produced a text which is of interest today, and which will continue to be useful, for many years to come, to those interested in Tasmania's natural resources and the history of community tension surrounding the management of these resources. The book documents a long history of activism to protect Tasmania's wilderness. The foreword by Senator Christine Milne reveals the pride which environmental activists of Tasmania can take in their efforts over the years.

This is a scholarly yet eminently readable text; it is carefully and thoroughly indexed; notes on the references cited will allow serious students to expand their awareness of the various issues canvassed in the text; and the text is supported by illustrations, maps and diagrams. In addition there are three appendices which in themselves will be extremely useful to readers: a list of key dates in Tasmanian's wilderness battles (Appendix 1); a copy of *A New Ethic*, the 1970s manifesto of the United Tasmania Group, the first green political group anywhere in the world to contest an election (Appendix 2); and some excerpts from the 1989 Tasmanian Parliamentary Accord between the Green Independents and the Parliamentary Labor Party (Appendix 3).

Sections in the book deal with, variously, the Hydro-Electric Commission (the battles for Lake Pedder and the Franklin), forestry (Farmhouse Creek



to Gunns and the infamous pulp mill), mining (tin mining at Melaleuca and Cornwall Coal's licence to mine the Douglas Apsley have potential to spark more controversy), and Tasmania's national parks (here the continual tension between the developer/exploiter and the conserver are exemplified and brought to immediacy in the community through tourism).

Lake Pedder is the Tasmanian issue which to me best represents the battles Greg describes. It had it all – national and international participation, political expression at the grassroots level, street rallies in Tasmania and on the mainland, hasty legislative amendments to legalise development, possible sabotage leading to two presumed deaths, and the eventual loss of an icon of our natural and national heritage.

The lessons learned by conservationists over Lake Pedder stood them in good stead with later battles, and the issue politicised a considerable number of idealistic and determined Australians who have worked on wilderness and conservation issues since. Without the Lake Pedder controversy, Tasmania's political and terrestrial landscape would be very different now.

There has always been interest in Tasmania's conservation issues, but this interest appears to be intensifying as the years pass. Just in the last few months *The River Runs Free: Exploring and Defending Tasmania's Wilderness*, about the Franklin battle, was published. So also *Pedder: the Story, the Paintings*, comprising art works and an account of the loss of the lake by Max Angus. And in early October a film and a book, both titled *Whatever Happened to Brenda Hean?*, and sensationally promoted ('She had to save Lake Pedder. They had to stop her.'), were released.

Tasmania's Wilderness Battles provides a framework within which the community of the twenty-first century can situate, understand, and measure material published recently and, no doubt in the future, on the issues Greg describes. As such it deserves a place on every Tasmanian bookshelf.

KEEP THE CAPES WILD

NO THREE CAPES WALK FOR THE TASMAN NATIONAL PARK

Pam Fenerty

TNPA remains firm in its resolve to oppose the imposition on the Tasman National Park of the Three Capes Walk with all its associated paraphernalia. This proposal is a massive and unprecedented national park development by the current Labour government (proposed in early 2007 at a launch by the Premier at the time, Paul Lennon).

Just remember the details - an artificially manufactured 6 day/5 night walk with overnight stays at 5 separate mini-villages (euphemistically called "nodes"); each mini-village complete with 60 bed public lodge, 15 bed commercial lodge, rangers hut, helipad, toilets, and possibly tent camping. Even the government is not going to promote this as a wilderness walk in itself, but will be concentrating on the natural beauty of the sea cliffs and magnificent coastal vistas. This proposal was not accompanied by an environmental impact assessment, which makes TNPA wonder where the priorities for our national parks lie in the eyes of the government - for purposes of tourism or for conservation? The proposed Three Capes Walk suggests the government is focusing on tourism, tourism, and tourism.

The Tasman Coastal Trail is a 2/3 day walk in the area that is already in existence, and anyone can get written information about this walk from a free PWS walk brochure from Service Tasmania. Along with the 30 or so day walks in the region, this is the overnight walk that TNPA is asking the government to promote - instead of the proposed Three Capes Walk. Effective use of these alternatives can be achieved with simple infrastructure upgrades and will be infinitely better for the Tasman National Park. Never before has there been so much camping gear on the market, allowing us all to get out and experience nature at its best and in relative comfort. Yet the government wants us to experience national parks by staying in fancy, huge huts complete with gas stoves, mattresses, and double rooms - to be booked ahead.

In February/March 2008 the TNPA asked supporters to send in objections to the Director of PWS on the new draft Tasman National Park Management Plan, which changes the existing plan to allow for the Three Capes Walk. Some 240-250 representations were received by the PWS. The vast majority were critical of the Three Capes Walk proposal, many detailing why they opposed the proposed Walk. PWS considered these objections and compiled responses which have been forwarded to the RPDC for further review, as is the standard process.

In late 2008 the RPDC was awaiting the go ahead from the Minister, Ms O'Byrne, to place the representations and the PWS response on a



Munro Bight sea cliffs from Monument Lookout, Cape Pillar in the distance. Area of proposed Three Capes Walk [Photo: A. McConnell]

public website, and to prepare its overall response. It is anticipated that the RPDC response, with recommendations, will be completed by the end of January 2009 for consideration by the Minister. The Minister then makes a recommendation on what aspects of the draft management plan will be adopted based on the advice received. Given this is a government initiated development proposal and the implementation process to date, it seems unlikely that the Minister will delay the plan change approval. We can only hope that with the current economic situation, there will not be government funds available for this highly questionable development.

The TNPA understands that in the latter part of 2008, the PWS contracted various environmental impact assessments, and that these are largely completed. The results of the environmental impact assessments do not yet appear to have been publicly released. The PWS also

contracted a Sydney based group, Syneca Consulting, to undertake an economic impact analysis. The consultant's report, *Economic Impact Analysis for Three Capes Track Tasman National Park*, was completed in April 2008 [Note - when the TNPA initially asked the PWS to see this document we were advised it was commercial-in-confidence; we understand however that there has been a change of heart and the document is available on the PWS website. Ed].

The Syneca report basically looks at the economic benefits, for Tasmania as a whole as well as the Tasman Peninsula region, of the 10,000 walkers per year on the fully operational proposed Three Capes Walk (which won't be operational until at least 2012 or beyond). Briefly, the benefits suggested in the report include:

- increased spending in the state of around \$19.7 million per annum and 334.2 new jobs;
- increased spending on Tasman Peninsula of around \$3.1 million per annum with 70.4 new jobs; and
- an increase of 4,532 bed nights per year on the Tasman Peninsula by the Three Capes Walk walkers staying longer (the number of bed nights on the Tasman Peninsula for 06/07 were 113,400 per year)¹.

Although the Syneca report is a well researched and detailed report, the economics depends entirely on the actual numbers of walkers each year. These figures assume similar walker numbers as the Overland

¹ And remember that although there will be an estimated 50,000 bed nights per year from the 10,000 Three Capes Walk walkers staying in the mini villages in the National Park when the Walk is fully subscribed, this does not directly benefit local Tasman Peninsula businesses.

Track and similar visiting and spending behaviour. In the TNPA's view the matter is far from straightforward given that the Three Capes Walk walker numbers may take time to reach the proposed levels considering it is currently a little known walk, while the Overland Track has international and national iconic status. It is also unclear how walker interest will be shared between the two tracks. The Syneca report also did not look at the economic advantages of existing alternative walks (presumably not part of the brief), for example the Tasman Coastal Trail. Although not of great economic benefit now, these alternatives have never been promoted by the slick, widespread advertising anticipated for the Three Capes Walk. The TNPA contends these alternatives could offer comparable advantages if marketed similarly.

The TNPA will continue to work on this issue in 2009. It has formed a working group to provide a strong and measured opposition. We will keep members posted on what will be happening, but current plans include:

- ongoing positive promotion of the alternative Tasman Coastal Trail and 30 walks;

- letting the Tasman Council and local business owners know that there are alternatives that will be economically better for the region as well as for the Tasman National Park;
- lobbying members of parliament;
- modelling the appearance of the mini villages so the public can see disaster looming for the park;
- photo/banner displays of the Tasman National Park;
- production of information brochures; and
- rallies.

If you are interested in being involved in the Three Capes Walk Working Group (3CW WG) or for further information and any assistance to TNPA in form of volunteer assistance, funds, expertise or suggestions contact the Working Group Coordinator Pam Fenerty (62503351) or Janet Henderson, the TNPA Secretariat (0427 854 684).

**Together we will
Keep the Capes Wild**

MARINE PROTECTED AREA NETWORKS IN AUSTRALIA:

TASMANIAN PROGRESS IN THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Jon Nevill

*School of Government, University of Tasmania
(Contact - 0422 926 515)*

In 1999 all Australian jurisdictions signed on to the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (NRSMPA) framework. Thus all States, including Tasmania, signalled a commitment to the creation of Marine Protected Area (MPA) networks which would provide comprehensive, adequate and representative protection for Australia's marine ecosystems. The principles on which the NRSMPA strategy was based, as well as planning and management principles incorporated in *Australia's Oceans Policy 1998*, were sound. Today, 10 years on, there two important questions: (a) have the principles been properly applied so far in the creation of existing MPA networks, and (b) are the networks meeting their objectives in practice?

Australia's eight State/Territory jurisdictions carry very considerable responsibilities for natural resource management. They depend heavily on the Australian (Commonwealth) Government for funds – thus providing the Commonwealth with the leverage needed to encourage States in meeting international obligations. If Tasmania was clearly not meeting its obligations under the NRSMPA framework, would the Commonwealth use this leverage? The answer to all of the above questions seems to be “no”.

In examining progress over the last decade, it is clear that the design principles of the NRSMPA have been followed in some cases; in others they have been abandoned. In considering whether protection has been “comprehensive, adequate and representative” there are two key issues: the use of zoning which provides effective protection, and the extent of habitat representation within the regional network.

Queensland is Australia's best example of the development of effective MPA networks. The substantial Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (developed principally by the Commonwealth Government) includes 33% no-take zones, which provide effective protection for representative habitats. The GBRMP occupies a very substantial portion of the continental shelf adjacent to Queensland. Most habitat types within the Park are protected to the 20% level (or better) by no-take zones. At the State level, the Queensland Government has protected most Moreton Bay habitats at 9% or better, with a total of nearly 16% of the Bay in no-take zones. In Western Australia, the large Ningaloo Marine Park protects about 30% of its area in no-take zones. Victoria also provides an example of effective protection of representative habitat, although at a considerably smaller scale, and with less comprehensive coverage of habitat types. Here about 5% of habitat within State jurisdiction is zoned as no-take. Habitat maps are available for the bulk of Victorian marine waters, with high-resolution mapping within MPAs.

On the other hand, the progress made by the Tasmanian Government, as well as the Commonwealth MPAs in the South East Region around Tasmania, provide examples of ineffective protection. In the absence of comprehensive habitat maps for this region, geomorphic province can be used as a coarse biodiversity surrogate – the continental shelf for example contains important habitats not found elsewhere. Commonwealth MPAs include only 0.75% of the region's shelf in no-take zones. No responsible marine scientist would argue that this was anywhere near “adequate”. Remaining MPAs are IUCN category VI, providing no effective protection from fishing activities – a key threat in the region. At the State level, the Tasmanian Government's Bruny Bioregion MPA network (announced in

October 2008) is entirely category VI, and fishing activities continue within the MPA network essentially unrestricted. This approach provides no protection from one of the most important threats in the bioregion.

In the case of the Commonwealth's South East Region, considering only the area covered by the MPA network creates a misleading impression. MPAs of all zones (in this case almost entirely two categories: IUCN class Ia and VI) cover a substantial proportion of the region: ~5.5%. This seems like a good outcome, until the detail is examined. Coverage of shelf habitats is in fact far from 'comprehensive, adequate and representative'.

Any national assessment must take into account the extent of effective protection, and here no-take MPAs should be used as an indicator. Secondly, the extent of representative habitat protection must be assessed. Future habitat mapping programs will assist greatly in this regard.

Compliance is another critical factor, but compliance cannot be taken for granted. Even in Australia, where fisheries are often perceived to be well-managed, there is ample evidence not only of non-compliance, but of cultures of non-compliance. For example, Poiner et al. (1998:s2) in a study of prawn trawling in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area reported: "there has been a high level of illegal trawling in the Green Zone and evidence that 40 to 50 boats regularly trawl the area. Misreporting of catch has taken place with catches from inside the Green Zone being credited to adjacent open areas." This is not an example of one or two "bad apples" – non-compliance on this scale is the result of a culture amongst commercial fishermen that it is OK to break the law providing you don't get caught. Cultures of non-compliance will arise where absence of enforcement is predictable.

Another issue is the Commonwealth-managed Collaborative Australian Protected Area Database (CAPAD), which fails to provide important basic information on Australia's MPA network. Different States have used different reporting formats within the CAPAD framework. Some States list every MPA, while others list only MPAs grouped into State categories (eg: 'marine nature reserve') which are terms which have no national meaning. Some States list the IUCN categories of each MPA (which is useful) while others do

not. In terrestrial protected area reporting, some States list the bioregions and subregions within protected areas (which is at least a start in reporting surrogates for representation) however no State reports this information for MPAs. The database is not updated regularly: the most recent marine data in mid-2008 was for 2004. CAPAD is in urgent need of major improvement.

At the end of October 2008 Tasmania had 18 marine nature reserves and research areas carrying some (often minor) fishing restrictions (Government of Tasmania 2008). I wrote to David Llewellyn, the Minister for Primary Industries and Water in October, asking:

- the size of Tasmania's marine and estuarine jurisdiction;
- within this jurisdiction, the areas of each major marine habitat type, and the areas of each type protected by no-take reserves; and
- the classification of Tasmania's marine protected areas under the internationally-recognised IUCN categories.

The Minister replied on 17 November 2008, in essence stating that he could advise the names and locations of all marine nature reserves and research areas, but past that the Tasmanian Government held no further information on my questions other than that supplied by the RPDC website. While the RPDC has published limited habitat maps through its marine bioregion reports and its State of the Environment Report 2003 (the latest), it appears that none of these three basic and important questions can be answered by our State government. Marine conservation planning in Tasmania is a sham – at both State and Commonwealth levels.

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TNPA UPDATE

TASMANIAN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Jon Nevill

The Tasmanian Government recently announced their decision on the RPDC's final Bruny Bioregion Report. The Government will create a small number of areas which they are calling "marine protected areas" - in spite of offering these areas essentially no protection. Fishing will continue in these areas much as it has in the past. In making this decision, the Government is breaking the commitment it made in 1999 when it agreed to contribute to the development of a national representative system of marine protected areas. These new "parks" are not marine protected areas, and they are not based on good scientific advice.

Australia's marine ecosystems are under threat from a variety of factors, including climate change, pollution, habitat damage and alien species. However the most powerful threat is fishing - including both commercial and recreational fishing activities.

The Bruny Bioregion contains important and in some cases unique marine life. We could have established world-class no-take marine

sanctuaries, which could in time have become important tourist attractions, in line with Tasmania's "clean green" tourism promotion theme.

The Tasmanian Government's decision is a decision grounded on cowardice and ignorance. Our politicians, and presumably their advisors, do not understand the value of protecting biodiversity, in spite of the obvious economic benefits of popular marine sanctuaries around the world. Unfortunately, the State opposition has no better attitude to these matters, and the Commonwealth, in spite of its international commitments, appears unwilling to intervene through budgetary programs.

The TNPA is in the process of developing a policy position statement on marine protected areas. Members are invited to become involved (if you would like to have input into this area of policy development please contact Anne McConnell – annemc@aaa.net.au).



The new Pelion Hut from the plains near the helipad [Photo: A. McConnell]

TNPA Pays a Visit to Pelion Hut

With the large scale accommodation infrastructure being built on the Overland Track (at Pelion and at Windy Ridge) and with the village-like accommodation 'nodes' proposed for the Three Capes Walk being promoted by the State government, the TNPA Management Committee felt it was time to go and check out one of these new national park elephants. In late October, Committee members Anne McConnell and Liz Thomas shouldered their packs (including a tent which we used!) and headed off to walk into Pelion Hut via the Arm River Track. We thought we'd give you a brief report on what we found.

Well what we found was one very large hut! And not only one very large hut, but actually a bit of a village with two-storey toilet block with decking and additional bins and a helipad, all connected by boardwalk. To the rear we found a 'group campsite' – a large area of decking with a large central table, more decking (presumably for tents), another toilet (disused), and to the rear of this a PWS ranger's hut and yet another helipad. All this is connected by either the Overland Track or offshoot paths. This all covers an area of about 150m x 70m on the southern edge of the Pelion Plains (refer Figure 1). Also in the general Pelion area there is a Cradle Huts commercial lodge and the old (early 1900s) Pelion Hut (not shown in Figure 1).

This level of infrastructure development is of extreme concern to the TNPA. Not only is the amount of infrastructure excessive in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, it would appear that defunct structures such as toilets and helipads are not being removed when they are no longer being used, which is poor management, and the siting leaves something to be desired.

We would also question the scale of the infrastructure. Given that the maximum number of walkers per day in peak periods is 60 under the permit system (34 independent walkers, 13 group walkers and 13 Cradle Huts walkers), it is unclear why there is a hut that accommodates 48 people, a commercial hut that accommodates 12 (plus guides), a group camping area that looks to accommodate around 16-20 people plus additional tent sites? While some people walk in via the Arm River Track, these walkers usually are self sufficient, independent walkers who carry tents (at least in summer). Are the PWS positioning themselves to increase the permitted number of walkers on the Overland Track, justifying it by saying there is plenty of accommodation?

The hut itself is extremely large (c.25m x 13m) – the size of a standard suburban single storey house, but with a high roof line. It is in fact not a hut but lodge. It has been designed to accommodate 48 people comfortably in six spacious 8 bunk rooms and a large eating area with benches that can be divided into two. Hardly a wilderness experience when more than half full. There are several water tanks and a collection of gas bottles out the back, and we noted miscellaneous building materials and offcuts underneath the building, all open to view. Also of real concern is the siting of the hut and toilet on the woodlands- plains edge and the location of the new helipad on the plains proper. All are highly visible from the plains and the hut is clearly visible from the Old Pelion Hut almost 1 km to the west. Although we did not walk up Mt Oakleigh, the hut must be highly visible from this vantage point as well. The hut and toilet are also visible from the Overland Track. We also question how long it will be until the half submerged timber helipad will need to be replaced. Congratulations to the PWS on its less than sensitive siting of the new hut.



View east from Old Pelion Hut to the new Pelion Hut which is highly visible on the edge of the Pelion Plains [Photo: A. McConnell]



The new toilet for the new Pelion Hut, also on the edge of the Pelion Plains [Photo: A. McConnell]

In the TNPA's view, walker accommodation developments like that at Pelion are totally inappropriate for national parks, particularly away from road heads and particularly in a designated World Heritage Area with wilderness values. The PWS should be ashamed of its lack of sensitivity to the values of the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park in allowing this highly visible rambling accommodation 'node' to develop (or is that 'overdevelop'). And it seems Windy Ridge is another similarly overdeveloped and intrusive accommodation location on the Overland Track with its recent new walker's hut and new ranger's hut. If Pelion is what is on offer for the proposed Three Capes Walk (ie, for each of the 5 nodes), then the TNPA is right to criticise the proposal as highly inappropriate.

The PWS should instead be looking at sensitive siting of accommodation and providing minimal infrastructure with a minimum footprint in our national parks. This would both save the environment and save tax payers dollars. This is not difficult to do. Huts should be seen as emergency accommodation (after all Overland Track walkers are required to carry a tent). Instead of building large accommodation huts, smaller huts with multipurpose 2-tier sleeping platforms (as in older New Zealand and Australian huts) could be used to keep the size down. Improved strategic planning would help provide the right balance of hut versus tent based accommodation, and might avoid building new ranger's huts in places where we understand they get very limited use (eg, Windy Ridge).

Postscript:

Given the TNPA's concerns about the increasing development of the Overland Track, we will be looking at the PWS plans for the Overland Track in early 2009 and making comment. If anyone is interested in being involved in this issue, please contact Robert Campbell via the TNPA Secretariat (see contact details rear page).

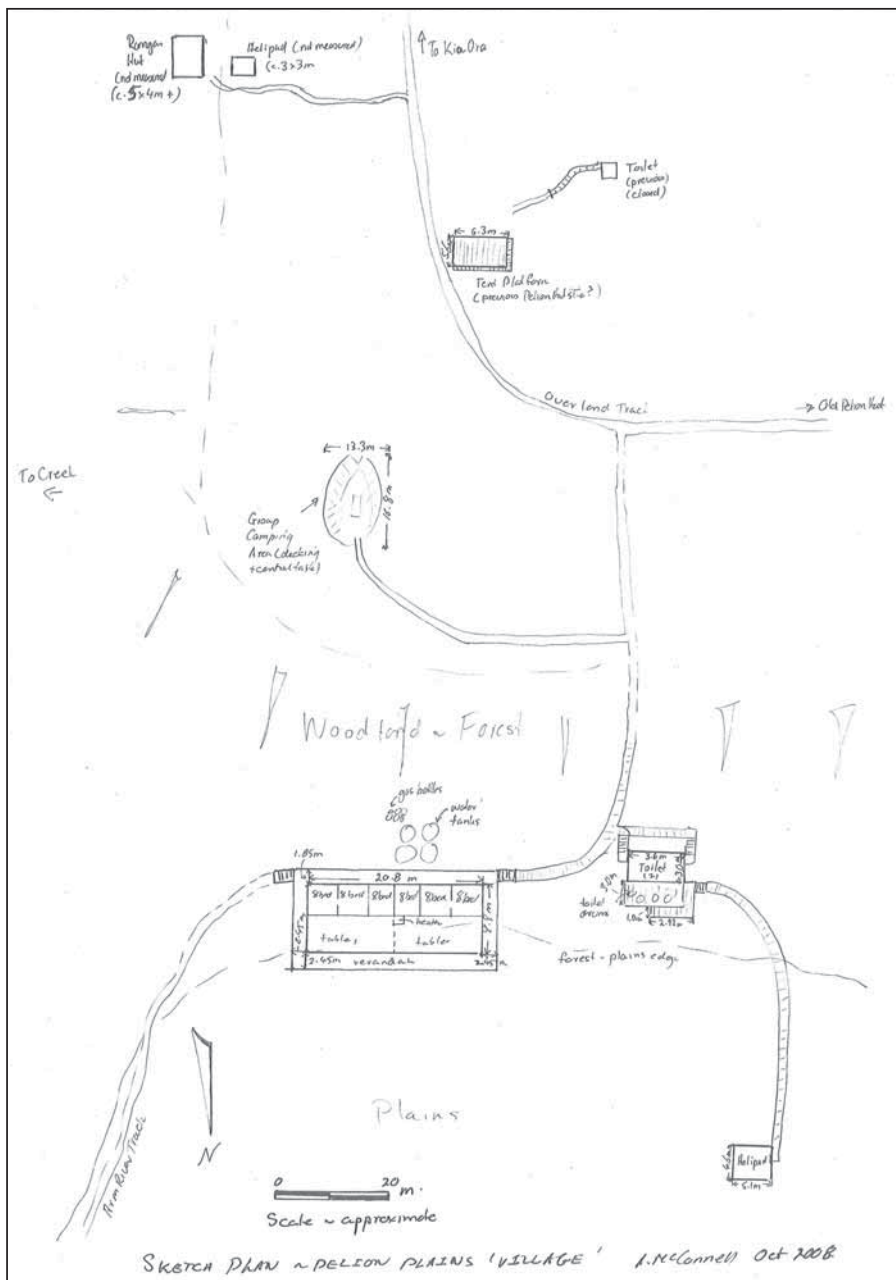


Figure 1 Main accommodation area at Pelion (the new infrastructure is at the bottom (N end) of the plan). Note the size of the new hut (bottom LHS) compared to the previous hut (decking upper centre).. Sketch plan based on October 2008 TNPA visit.

TNPA NEWS

TNPA TreadLightly Envirofest Display

The TNPA participated in the new TreadLightly Envirofest, held at the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens in Hobart on the 8th June. The aim of the *TreadLightly Envirofest* is to raise awareness of how to live a healthy, active, socially and ecologically responsible and sustainable lifestyle by:

- minimising impact on our unique environment;
- creating a welcoming sustainable community for our children;
- supporting sustainable local industry and products; and
- reminding us how lucky we are to have such a beautiful environment to live in.

The TNPA had an informative and attractive display on Tasmanian national park management issues. The display was designed and put together by Janet Henderson. The Envirofest had a good attendance and there was considerable public interest in the TNPA display.

Many thanks to Janet and to the other TNPA members who staffed the display. Thanks also to the rest of the Henderson family who helped with developing the display, and to those who contributed photographs.



The TNPA display at the TreadLightly Envirofest 2008 – early in the day [Photo: A. McConnell].



The TNPA display at the TreadLightly Envirofest 2008 – later that day [Photo: A. McConnell].



The Henderson family - who single-handedly mounted the TNPA display at the TreadLightly Envirofest 2008 [Photo: A. McConnell]

Tasmanian National Parks Association Inc

Patron: Peter Cundall

TNPA Management Committee (from October 2008)

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Vice President 2: Robert Campbell

Treasurer: Patsy Jones

Secretary: Pam Fenerty

Public Officer: Greg Wood

Other committee members: Jean Elder & Liz Thomas

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Meetings

Management Committee meetings are held one Monday each month at 6:30 pm at Sustainable Living Tasmania (2nd floor, 191 Liverpool St, Hobart). Members and supporters are welcome. Meeting dates will be advertised in each TNPA Communique or please check with the Secretary.

Have your say...

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TNPA News

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Editor TNPA News 11 - Anne McConnell

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