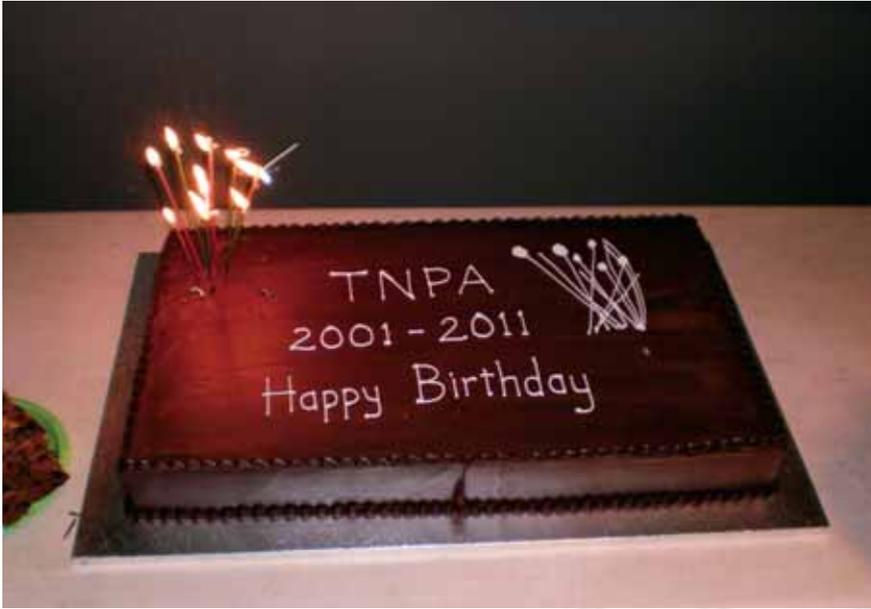


# TNPA NEWS

TASMANIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION INC

Newsletter No 15 Winter 2012



## THANK YOU

## TNPA Celebrates 10th Anniversary

A celebratory cutting of a birthday cake was held during the TNPA fundraiser at the Stanley Burbury theatre in September 2011 to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association.

For those who may not know the origins of the TNPA, it lies with another organisation called the Friends of the Quiet Lands. Formed in the year 2000, it led the public response against a proposal to provide helicopter landing sites in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The success of their efforts can be gained from the fact that of 651 public submissions received, only 12 supported the proposal to allow helicopter landing sites in the TWWHA, and 3 of these were from the project proponents.

Having successfully fought this proposal, members felt that there was a need for an ongoing organisation, like those which existed in other States, which would act as the public voice on issues impacting reserved lands within Tasmania.

The application to register the TNPA as an incorporated body was signed 27 August 2001 and the first public meeting to launch the new organisation was held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2001. About 50-60 people attended that meeting which was held at Cow in Murray St.

And since this small beginning the TNPA has indeed positioned itself as the public voice on issues impacting on conservation reserves in Tasmania and we thank all our members and supporters who have joined us on this journey during this time.

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

### **The TNPA Autumn Walks 2011 & 2012**

Bec Johnson, Rosemary Bruce, Todd Dudley, Rob Hill, Lesley Nicklason, Sally Salier, Janet Stone, Bruce Wilson for leading walks; and Bec Johnson and Simone Yemm, our 'Autumn Walks' coordinators for 2011 and 2012 respectively.

### **TNPA Fundraiser 'My Lake Pedder - with Olegas Truchanas'**

Melva Truchanas, Simon Olding, Adam Beeson, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy and Fullers Bookshop.

### **The 2011 Buttongrass Ball**

The Verandah Coots & Hornetts Nest, David Wanless, Plants of Tasmania, and the Folk Federation of Tasmania.

### **The TNPA Salamance Stalls**

Jean Elder, Rob & Toni Hill and Debbie Quarmbly.

### **Keep the Capes Wild Website**

John Sampson, Simone Yemm  
Ted Mead and Chris Bell for photos

### **TNPA Website** Simone Yemm

### **TNPA News Production (this edition)**

Ricoh Business Centre Hobart, Bec Kurczok, Kevin Kiernan, Amy Lin and Paul Smith.

### **Secretarial Assistance to the TNPA** Simone Yemm.

### **Other Support & Assistance**

Chris Bell, Greg Buckman, Jenny Burnett, Pam Fenerty, Heather Galloway, Paul Smith, Environment Tasmania, EDO Tasmania and the National Parks Australia Council.

**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

## EDITORIAL

This is the 10th anniversary edition of TNPA News and so we have included a number of articles that look to the future of our protected areas, how they might look down the track and how we could better manage them. Thanks to those who have contributed so much of their thought and time to these articles.

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN:

# Tourism is not just about building things – it is about being smarter

According to an article in the Mercury (24 March 2012) Tasmanian tourism operators say they have a world-class product to sell but given reports that visitors to the State have recently declined by five percent argue that a lack of money for marketing is choking the industry.

However, is it just about spending more to promote the State? Or, as the Premier Lara Giddings was quoted as saying, is it about spending existing budgets in a smarter way?

If the Premier is right, why then is the government heavily promoting its proposal to build the Three Capes Track within the Tasman National Park at a cost of \$33million instead of promoting the diverse and world-class tourism opportunities which already exist on the Tasman Peninsula?

Extravagant claims that 10,000 people will walk the Three Capes Track per year must be questioned given that the world-famous Overland Track still only attracts around 8,000 walkers per year. The lure of the Three Capes Track will also be eroded given that camping, one of the great joys for many of being outdoors, will not be an option.

Given the competition from existing walking tracks within Tasmania, together with its high cost and impact on the conservation values of the Tasman National Park, the Tasmanian National Parks Association believes that there is a better alternative which is more appropriate for the management of the Tasman National Park and which will provide greater economic benefits.

This alternative is based on the concept behind the Great Ocean Walk in Victoria. This walk along the coast from Apollo Bay to within sight of the magnificent 12 Apostles is presently attracting around 45,000 visitors per annum but seems to have been ignored by the backers of the Three Capes Track.

The website dedicated to this walk explains its popularity. Based on a partnership between tourism operators and Parks Victoria, it offers the freedom of choice for the tourist in options such the number of days, type of accommodation, walks and price, together with wide choice of extra hospitality services such as gourmet meals, massages and interpretative wildlife and cultural tours.

In particular, by offering transport to and from accommodations, ranging from basic camp-sites to modern eco-lodges, the walk provides a key source of product diversification and innovation to the market and is instrumental in personalising the experience for many visitors.

For example, whilst commentating during the last Winter Olympics, Katarina Witt, dual ice-figure skating gold medalist, talked ecstatically about her diverse experiences whilst doing the Great Ocean Walk—a promoters dream!

The type of walking model adopted for the Great Ocean Walk would clearly suit situations such as that found on the Tasman Peninsula where a diverse range of visitor options already exist.

This would build on the distinct advantages that the region has as a tourism destination. These include Port Arthur - one of Australia's great cultural icons, some of Australia's most magnificent coastal scenery, which is already accessible via more than 30 day and multi-day walks (including the Tasman Coastal Trail - one of five existing Great Bushwalks in Tasmania), and a diverse range of other tourist opportunities provided via a host of existing tourism operators.

While there is already a large number of visitors to Port Arthur, the question that needs to be asked is why these visitors are not extending their stay and making use of the other experiences presently on offer in the region? And why

will building another walking track change this when a diverse range of walking experiences already exist?

We believe that what is presently missing is not another track but an integrated tourism strategy for the Tasman Peninsula based on upgrading the existing day and multi-day walks and combining them with the cultural, outdoor adventure and 'hospitality' experiences offered by the region.

Consider, for example, the following illustrative itinerary for interstate visitors:

#### **Saturday**

Arrive Hobart, drive to and explore Eaglehawk Neck and surrounds including the Tessellated Pavement, Tasman Arch, Devil's Kitchen, Blowhole and Doo Town. B&B accommodation and local dining. Evening walk along Egg Beach with moonlit views across Pirates Bay.

#### **Sunday**

Day walk to Cape Raoul with magnificent views over Australia's highest coastal cliffs and the mountainous surf of Shipstern Bluff. B&B accommodation, intimate dinner and spa.

#### **Monday**

Walk through Remarkable Cave, along Crescent Bay and visit the World Heritage-listed Port Arthur. B&B check in and dine before investigating the paranormal on a Port Arthur Ghost Tour.

#### **Tuesday**

Start Tasman Coastal Trail – Magnificent coastal cliff scenery from Tasman Arch to Fortesque Bay via Tatnells Hill with extensive views. End day swimming and either camp under the stars or stay in local accommodation using courtesy transport.

#### **Wednesday**

Continue Tasman Coastal Trail – Take in the views to the Totem Pole, Candlestick and the Lanterns from Cape Hauy before proceeding over Mount Fortesque with panoramic views of Cape Pillar. Camp at Retakunna Creek.

#### **Thursday**

Continue Tasman Coastal Trail – Walk via Perdition Ponds to The Blade, Chasm Lookout and Cape Pillar, with soaring views across to Tasman Island. Camp at Bare Knoll.

#### **Friday**

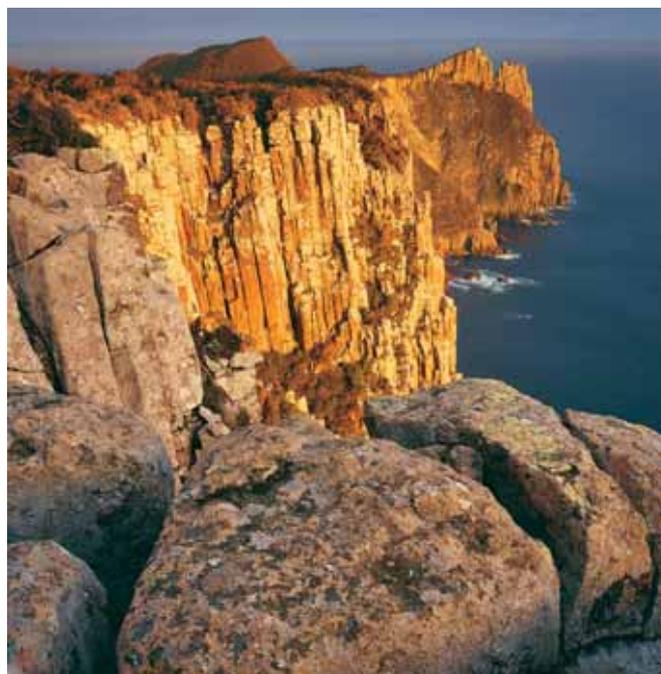
Walk out through coastal forest to Fortesque Bay for well-deserved swim. B&B accommodation, massage and celebratory dinner.

#### **Saturday**

Relax and swim while exploring Lime Bay Reserve and Roaring Beach or visit the convict past at the probation stations at Nubeena, Koonya and Premaydena. Or get friendly with a local Tasmanian devil. B&B accommodation and last chance for savouring the local produce.

#### **Sunday**

Spectacular coastal boat cruise (ideally back to Hobart). Flight home, head buzzing with exquisite memories!



Cape Pillar by Chris Bell

Whilst this option includes some camping, transport arrangements like those on the Great Ocean Walk could provide off-park accommodation for those seeking a more up-market option. Indeed, the ability to offer flexible transport arrangements appears to be central to the success of this tourism experience. And of course endless variations on this theme exist, mixing the diverse walks and experiences found in the region within the time available.

Properly marketed under a banner such as the Great Tasman Coastal Experience, using a dedicated website, promotional advertisements, social media and a TV documentary using well known personalities, we believe such a diversified product would attract a greater number and range of tourists to the region, enticing them to extend their stay beyond a visit to Port Arthur, and bring greater economic benefits.

Alternatively, having people spending all their time on a single walk and staying in huts within the park, as presently proposed, offers a limited product limiting both the range of visitors and the benefits to a few.

Indeed, a unique advantage of the Tasman Peninsula is that there is a community living in juxtaposition with the Tasman National Park and ideally a mutually beneficial relationship between tourism operators should be nurtured rather than a competitive one.

Tourism is a very competitive market. We therefore need to be innovative and creative in designing and marketing our products and offer experiences that people seek, not just build more things at great expense and hope that visitors will come.

The Premier is right in believing that we need to be smarter, but wrong in believing that the Three Capes Track will solve Tasmania's tourism problems.

**For further information, please visit**  
[www.keepthecapeswild.or.au](http://www.keepthecapeswild.or.au)

*Robert Campbell, President*

By Kevin Kiernan



# Starlight and Birthright

Image: A star-forming region in the Large Magellanic Cloud. NASA/ESA.

*Starless, moonless night; black cat on a coal-shed door;  
Licorice on a lightless floor; just what the hell's this painting meant to be?*

—“Vincent” (Martin Pearson, 19XX)

Australian satirist Martin Pearson’s rewriting of the classic Don McLean song about Vincent van Gogh was triggered by Pearson’s distress at visiting the National Gallery to see the old masters, only to find them replaced by modern works, including simple black panels. But if Vincent were alive today he himself may actually have been reduced to painting, not the *Starry Night*’s for which he is famed, but featureless monotonic canvases similar to those of which Pearson complains, albeit of a dirty grey colour rather than black, because there is a good chance he would be among the 99% of the residents of the EU who live under over-lit and polluted skies, 50% of whom can’t see our own Milky Way galaxy. Imagine the arts, literature and music without the stars. What magic would we find in a Picasso mundanely entitled “Faun and Neon Light”? Neither St. Exupery’s *Little Prince*, nor even *Dr Who*, would have been able to visit us; worse still, without the moon, “spoon” might instead have been rhymed with “prune”. And as a descriptor of human aspiration, “reaching for the light globes” somehow lacks the panache of “reaching for the stars”. The more serious message in all this is that the night skies beneath which we humans have evolved are woven through our very being, and they are important to us. Moreover, we equate stars with quality, and the more stars the better, whether to describe the quality of hotels, restaurants or actors in movies. Why then are we so blasé as, one by one, the real stars are being snuffed out?

When asked in a newspaper interview some years ago

what he considered to be the key elements of Australia’s heritage, Australian historian Manning Clark answered “The Great Barrier Reef, the Australian Aboriginal culture, and an unparalleled view of the Milky Way”. I found the scope of his vision thought provoking. I remembered it especially when my children were at school and we occasionally provided a temporary home for exchange students from Japan. Upon arriving back home of an evening they would sometimes halt transfixed in the cold darkness as they alighted from the car, or stand for hours out on the back deck shivering, as they gazed in wonder at the stars which their home skies obscured, and hence which they had never previously known to have existed in such clarity and profusion. It was a timely message for one such as I, who had grown up so used to the skies above the wilderness where much of my time was spent as to take them for granted. Until then I had given no thought to the way in which profligate misuse of artificial light, combined with other forms of atmospheric pollution, had robbed so many children of the right to learn their place in existence as their ancestors had learned it for millennia, sitting at the feet of their parents and grandparents as they traced on the blackboard of the firmament the story of how it all came to be, and were taught the cues which the stars provided for journeying, harvesting, cropping and safe passage through the world. There was no need for background noise when humanity could still hear the beauty in silence, and no need to defend the stars until society decided to switch off the night.

So I was delighted and intrigued on visiting New Zealand a couple of years ago to learn of a proposal to formally defend the night skies around the south island town of Tekapo, and indeed that this process had actually been underway since 1981 when the McKenzie District Council established its first ordinance aimed at controlling pollution of the night skies by excessive light. Part of the impetus was the presence on the outskirts of the town of the Mt John Observatory, opened in 1965 and the most readily accessible major astronomical observatory in the world, underscoring for the locals not only the significance of their sky views but also their potential as a tourist drawcard in a world that is progressively turning off the stars. Canterbury University and Nagoya University (Japan) have since established a joint partnership with a private company to use one of the observatories for tourism.

Earth's atmosphere imposes limits on what is possible in terms of optical astronomy, and as we fill it with artificial light, gases and particulate pollutants, we create increasing difficulties for professional astronomers. Even for the world's largest collection of telescopes sitting atop Mauna Kea on Hawaii local lights are posing difficulties, and those of distant Honolulu are an increasing problem. Hence, astronomers were probably the first to notice the diminishing of night-time sky clarity, and to make effective representations that it should be addressed. As early as 1989 they had launched a campaign for Dark Skies in the UK.

Propagated light that reaches the Earth's atmospheric envelope from space may be reflected, refracted, absorbed or diffracted by its various gases and particles. It is the dispersal of light by air molecules that makes stars appear to twinkle, and especially so when they are close to horizon where the viewer observes them through a greater thickness of atmosphere than when looking directly upwards. The same is true of artificial light that is directed upwards or sideways into the atmosphere instead of downwards where it is needed by people. The very commonly used mercury vapour lamps (MVLs) are particularly problematic, because they produce strong emissions, especially ultra-violet (UV), making them the worst light type when it comes to diffusing light into the atmosphere, and are they close to the wave length of light from nebulae and thus mask it. Blue wave lengths are shorter and more easily scattered than longer red wave lengths; white light causes most harm and yellow light is intermediate. Gas emissions and suspended particles released by human activity compound the issues.

The concept of a "park in the sky" at Tekapo arose following a public meeting run by the local McKenzie District Council in about 2002, involving planners, experts and locals, which initiated a blueprint policy document, the *Tekapo Vision*, a key element of which was "That we protect the dark sky". The proposal to establish a Lake Tekapo/ Aoraki Mt Cook Starlight Reserve, and to seek World Heritage status for it, has since been strongly supported by the New Zealand

Government, the McKenzie District Council, the McKenzie Tourism and Development Board, the national Committee for UNESCO NZ, ICOMOS NZ, the Royal Society of NZ, and numerous other organisations.

The people of the district are proud of their night skies. Tekapo has a permanent population of ~400 but about 3000 people pass through the town each day – part of the 1.4 million people who now visit the Tekapo/Aoraki Mt Cook area annually. Tekapo is also an important ski resort destination, and must cater both for the entertainment and other night-time requirements of that clientele, and a popular holiday destination in summer. Moreover, as the site of major hydro-electric developments, electricity runs through the veins of local culture. Hence, the fact that the town is able to accommodate these requirements alongside effective measures to safeguard night-time darkness highlights just how practical it is to eliminate light pollution anywhere if only people choose to do so.

In order to protect the night sky, McKenzie District Council Ordinance 1981, Section 11, required the installation of specialised street lighting on new subdivisions, under the umbrella of the Town and Country Planning Act. More recently updated, the Lighting Ordinance in the 2004 McKenzie District Plan is now included in the National Resource Management Act 1991. Among its provisions are requirements that all street lights be of sodium type, that all must be shielded, and all must face downwards. The zone of restricted outdoor lighting now extends from near Burkes Pass in the east to near Lake Benmore and the former hydro-electric construction town of Twizel in the south, and for 30 km westwards, including all of lakes Tekapo and Pukaki, to the boundary of the World Heritage Area of the Southern Alps.

But as enthusiastic as I am about the Tekapo initiative, it seems to me that it is not enough to simply save the stars in a few special places. I for one do not want vistas of the stars available only if we travel to "star sanctuaries". And as significant as star-scapes may be for the tourism industry – indeed a potentially huge economic asset given that world tourism has become the driver of the largest ever peacetime movement of people - nor do I wish to see the stars become mere commodities accessible only upon paying the required fees to tourism entrepreneurs. The stars are the birthright of us all. The first and most obvious question is, why shine light upwards? What good does it do? Who is it that is walking around on the clouds who needs such light to guide their way? And generous though the gesture may be, it is also a very expensive waste – of energy; of the environment despoiled to produce and transmit that energy; and of the money that pays for the time the switch is unnecessarily on.

The Thematic Initiative "Astronomy and World Heritage" recognises the possible World Heritage significance of 910 properties which by their concept and/or the environmental situation have significance in relation to celestial objects or events; (2) representations of the sky and/or celestial ob-

jects or events; (3) observations and instruments; and (4) properties with an important link to the history of astronomy. But let's look at it another way. We live in a very privileged position, for if our own little solar system had more stars than just the Sun, then day and night would not exist as we know them, nor our view of the stars; and the pace of our Earth's rotation allows us to see them regularly, in addition to providing liveable temperatures denied our slower turning planetary neighbours with their long glacial nights. And if we lay not near the outer edge of the Milky Way galaxy but instead in an area of more closely clustered stars, such starlight as we know would also be denied us. Thus, this tiny planet that each of us visits for just a cosmic blink of an eye is a very special grandstand to the stars, and our view of them is not merely a World Heritage, but a Galactic Heritage. Do we accord this extraordinary privilege the value it deserves? The light the stars shine towards us travels at about 300,000 km/second, and in one year traverses 9, 460, 800, 000, 000 km of emptiness. Our local neighbourhood star, the Sun, is a mere ~149.6 million kms from Earth, its light taking about 8.2 minutes to reach us. The furthest starlight visible to the naked human eye on Earth takes about 4,075 years to reach

us. But then comes Earth's atmosphere, of which 99% lies within just 31 km of the Earth's surface, and here, a mere 102.3 millionths of a second before it reaching its destination, we thwart the arrival of this ancient starlight by the light and air pollution we generate, and we turn our back on this Galactic Heritage, turning off the night and turning on the television instead.

Moreover, what about that the impacts of artificial light upon the human experience of otherwise natural places, such as that relentless sweeping of Freycinet National Park by the un-masked Cape Toureville Lighthouse, penetrating unnecessarily far inland beyond the last hope for any severely grounded mariner who might have benefited; or the prospect of night-time views from Mt Rufus being intruded upon by lights from the proposed Pumphouse Point resort? Such intrusive lights in our protected areas, and the increasing domes of light above adjacent cities and towns, are also likely to have implications for some of the biota in our protected areas. Such considerations deserve greater attention in reserve management planning, so I will explore some of them in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

By Anne McConnell

## Putting the 'Values' into Conservation Estate Planning

How good is the management planning for our national parks and conservation reserves at present? Could it be made better? And if so, what would it take?

The following brief exploration of terrestrial protected area management planning in Tasmania looks at a critical issue—that of the ongoing, questionable application of 'use and development based' management zoning; and makes some suggestions for how this could be addressed, so that management planning would really provide for the conservation of values and give clarity to the basis for this.

### Management Planning Today

If you look at national park management plans to day, plans that are considered to represent the peak of management planning for our parks and other conservation reserves, you will find that they have a reasonably similar format. They tell us what the land area is that is being managed, its conservation status, the relevant legislation that applies, and perhaps a little about the history of reservation.

They then summarise the values that are being conserved one by one, and this summary is usually accompanied by the policy and objectives for managing that value, and also a list of actions (recommendations) for how this should be achieved. At least half of each plan is generally dedicated to describing and providing for uses and potential uses, and then for dealing with consequences of direct and indirect human uses (eg, fire, weed, feral animals).

One of the other things you will note is that the objectives and recommendations for the conservation of the various values and for the various uses are rarely, if ever, integrated; and information about how these aspects are to be balanced or prioritised is rarely made explicit in the plans. Admittedly this is difficult to do, but not doing this means that the decision rests with individual reserve managers, putting them in a very difficult position, which not unsurprisingly leads to very re-active management.

The main mechanism used in management plans to integrate different management requirements and to provide

balance is *management zoning*. Most management plans include a map showing management zones for the plan area. These management zones indicate the priorities for management (see Figures 1 and 2), and generally include the following types of zones - visitor services zones, recreational zones and conservation zones.

Although now a well-established and widespread approach in Australia for park management plans, the approach as it is used currently appears to be derived from local government planning rather than being designed for the protection of the natural and cultural values protected areas are established to safeguard. A key indicator of this is that both types of zoning are 'use and development' based. Traditionally, and the core intent of local government planning zoning is the recognition of different land uses and potential uses, with the zones strongly reflecting this. The zones, for example, include commercial use, residential use, public utilities, industrial use, rural/agricultural use, and recreational use. There is also generally some type of 'environmental management' zone, which traditionally is used for national parks and other conservation reserves.

While this use based zoning may be appropriate for local government planning, is it appropriate for protected areas that are established for conservation rather than development?

### What do We Management Protected Areas For?

A review of why protected areas are set aside, at least in Tasmania, suggests very strongly that a 'use and development' based planning approach for protected areas is not appropriate. This is because, not surprisingly, protected areas are essentially about natural and cultural values protection. In Tasmania, the legislated purpose of a national park is for—

*The protection and maintenance of the natural and cultural values of the area of land while providing for ecologically sustainable recreation consistent with conserving those values.<sup>1</sup>*

Similarly, State Reserves are for the protection and maintenance of natural and cultural values, and also sites, places and uses of significance to Aboriginal people, and again '*ecologically sustainable recreation consistent with conserving those values*,' and Nature Recreation Areas have a similar purpose. Interestingly Nature Reserves appear to be solely for the conservation of biological and geological values, with 'use' not being mentioned at all as a purpose for this type of protected area in the legislation.

It can be seen therefore that the primary purpose of land declared as conservation estate in Tasmania is for the conservation of the natural and cultural values. In some, but not all reserves, recreation is the only other purpose, and even then, the legislation requires that recreation must not compromise the natural and cultural values of the reserved land.

<sup>1</sup> Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002, schedule 1.

### Values Based Management

The ongoing, entrenched use of 'use based' zoning for protected areas, including the highest level protected areas, our national parks, therefore fails to meet the legislated requirements for conservation. Although one might assume that the current management zoning in reserve management plans is based on the protection of the conservation values, sadly this is not the case. In most cases the management zone maps in the various plans are arrived at by simply drawing lines around current areas of use (eg, walking tracks and visitor centres), and in some cases areas that someone wants to see recreation within. All residual areas then become conservation zones, generally termed 'natural' zones. The planners tend to jiggle boundaries of the human use zones to avoid impacts to known, highly sensitive values, but in reality the conservation zones are the 'waste' zones which are left after human use ('recreation' in all its many guises) has been provided for.

Basically then, reserve management zoning, as it is currently practiced, has nothing to do with values management, and as such is completely unsuited to ensuring that natural and cultural values are conserved, or to guiding where and how sustainable recreation might occur. This is an untenable situation if we are serious about managing the conservation estate for conservation purposes.

What is required instead is 'values based' management, and management zoning, not 'use based' management and zoning. This is because 'use based' management says 'okay, we have this area of land, what are we going to do with it, how will we use it?', while 'values based' management says 'okay we have this area of land which has these natural and/or cultural values that we need to conserve, how are we going to do this?'. It may not sound like a big shift in thinking or management, but the difference that is made by moving from one mind set to the other is profound.

It is interesting as well as disappointing that protected area planning has failed to make this transition, because Australia, as a nation, is in some respects at the forefront of '*values based management*,' having been using this approach in relation to cultural heritage management since the late 1980s. From the 1980s, Australia's lead has encouraged many other nations to move from 'use based' management and to develop and implement their own 'values based' management approaches, and Australia is globally recognised for this. Today, the 'values based' management approach is well established in Australia in both natural and cultural values management, although it would seem that in relation to the natural reserve system, this may be restricted to the policy level only.

### The Basis for Values Based Management

In Australia the basis for 'values based' management is established in the both the *Australian Natural Heritage Charter* (AIUCN 1996) and the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of*



Figure 1 Management zoning in the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan* (1999)

*Cultural Significance (Burra Charter)* (AICOMOS 1999). Both documents are widely used in Australia and endorsed by most state governments and land management agencies.

These charters include principles for the management of natural and cultural heritage. The key principles that establish 'values based management' are that – *values of significance should be conserved and that the aim of conservation is to retain significance.*<sup>2</sup> In other words, conservation management is about retaining significant values of a place.

Both charters also set out a process for conservation management. This process has the following key steps –

- 1 Understand** (the conservation values of) the place
- 2 Assess** the significance (of the conservation values) of the place
- 3 Development** a conservation policy (to protect the conservation values) (based on obligations arising from significance and other factors affecting the place)
- 4 Prepare** a conservation (management) plan (based on the conservation policy)
- 5 Manage** the place in accordance with the plan (including monitoring and review)

Clearly, this approach requires management to be based on a knowledge of the values, with the priority for management being the protection of these values. This is made explicit in *The Australian Natural Heritage Charter* (1996) in

<sup>2</sup> Paraphrased from Aust. ICOMOS (1999, Article 2).

Article 7 which states – *a statement of natural significance is central to the conservation policy and conservation strategy for a place.*

If we look again at the management planning and zoning for protected areas in Tasmania, we see that this is where the problem lies. The management plans rarely contain 'a statement of significance' (they mostly have a number of separate values statements), and management is not based on the significance of the place. It is also the case that in Tasmania there is rarely good values information for our protected areas.

### A New Approach to Management Zoning

It is suggested that the management zoning for protected areas is the first place

to start in addressing this problem. What needs to happen is to do away with the current use zoning that is being employed and to instead introduce values based zoning.

The first step that is needed is to compile maps of the different values showing where they occur. Today, with GIS, it is a relatively simple exercise to translate such values data as we currently possess into layers of spatial data for the different values. This can form a central basis for the zoning and also a framework for upgrading the values knowledge for our protected areas.

One issue, and a very real issue that is most likely a reason that use-based zoning has persisted, is that our knowledge of the significant natural and cultural values in our protected areas is far from complete, and in many cases, very patchy with poorly known distributions. This should be rectified, but it should not be used as an excuse not to proceed. A mapping approach like this was undertaken for State forests in Tasmania in the 1990s in spite of similar data issues, producing the *Forestry Tasmania Management Decision Classification* (MDC).<sup>3</sup> It is also an ideal mechanism for identifying gaps in values knowledge and prioritising values research.

The second step is to overlay these different spatial values layers and to look at which values are where, determine which areas are the most sensitive are for the management of the values, and ultimately to develop conservation policy for the values and for the protected area in question. This is the step that can generate true 'values management' zoning.

While values management zoning makes the most sense for achieving values based management in protected areas, the overlaying of the spatial values layers could be used to derive use based zoning. In this case however, these zones would be informed by values occurrence and conservation requirements, which is not currently the case. The preferred alternative to retaining the use based management zoning

<sup>3</sup> Management Decision Classification for Zoning in State Forest Management Areas - Users Manual (2011).

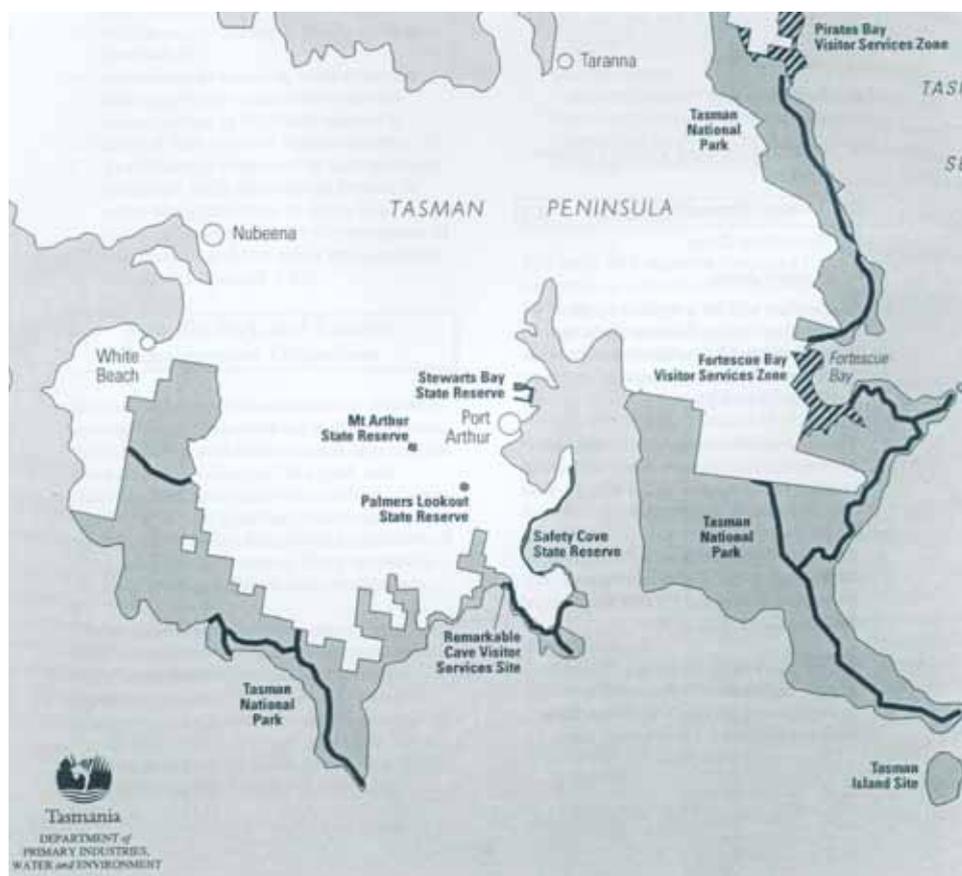


Figure 2 Management zoning in the *Tasman National Park Management Plan* (2001).

as the primary zoning is however to create the use zones as a 'use overlay' to primary values based zoning.

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service has long been aware of issues with the current use based zoning, and has in recent years started to develop 'overlays' of values to help understand the potential impacts of allowed uses on the values. Although this is a start in the right direction, it is still putting the cart before the horse in planning terms. The current use based primary zoning for protected areas perpetuates the myth that we can do what we want in protected areas without any impacts on their conservation values. It is this zoning that also provides governments with the excuse to re-zone conservation reserves to accommodate new uses and development whenever they want – because the values to be conserved are nowhere to be seen. The proposed Three Capes Track development in the Tasman National Park is a good example. If the management zoning shows you can have tracks running around part of the coastline to scenic spots, why can't we have more? The management zoning (see Figure 2) certainly does not give any indication as to why this may not be appropriate. Instead, it almost looks logical to join up the bits!

But, by having 'values based' rather than 'use based' zoning that is underpinned by values knowledge and spatial mapping of the various natural and cultural values, we could have a robust zoning that provides for values conservation in the best way we can. Not only this, but such an approach is an explicit and transparent decision making process. As such, it not only guides day to day management

via a management plan, but allows for sound decisions to be made about what is genuinely sustainable future recreational and other appropriate use. The greater transparency in decision making is likely to engender better understanding and public support for protected area land management at all levels, and because the approach allows the land manager to easily justify their management intentions in any area, the approach also land managers to better identify and cost management needs and to apply for funding for them.

This approach could provide other advantages such as allowing more opportunity to utilise use opportunity spectrum analysis to inform the use layer (and consider use in a less ambiguous way than 'recreation' and 'visitor').

We see the key advantage however as being that.

If government wished, the current use based approach to management planning could be abandoned immediately in favour of values based planning, with values based management zoning as a primary mechanism. This is the first step. The second step is to start building the values layers, and the Forestry Tasmania experience indicates that within government there is already sufficient information to start this process. It is time that the government made the change, showed it can live up to what is required under the current conservation legislation, and showed itself to be serious about conservation land management and to be competent in advancing it.

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## TNPA EVENTS

# The 'My Pedder - with Olegas Truchanas' TNPA Fundraising Evening

Thanks to Melva Truchanas' wonderful generosity and passion, the TNPA was able to hold a very special fundraising evening in September 2011. Billed as a historically and politically significant event, the centrepiece of the evening was the showing of a remastered digital version of Olegas Truchanas' famous Lake Pedder audio-visual.

The audio visual show was created by Olegas Truchanas and Ralph Hope-Johnstone in 1971 as part of the campaign to save Lake Pedder, and it was shown extensively in Tasmania, and also shown in venues around Australia. The slide show is a hypnotising sequence of Olegas' stunning images of Lake Pedder, themed to reflect the different moods and seasons of the lake, and different visits by those who appreciated the uniqueness and beauty of Lake Pedder and campaigned relentlessly to stop the area from being flooded. Using what was advanced technology at the time, Ralph Hope-Johnstone linked the slides using two projectors to provide a slide show with timed dissolving slide changes synchronised to inspiring classical music.

After much work in the last 10 years or so, this historic audio-visual presentation has been remastered into a digital version, and after only one other showing in Tasmania, Melva offered the TNPA the use of the audio-visual to help hold a fund raising night.<sup>1</sup>

The full evening comprised a short movie on the success the Tasmanian Land Conservancy has had in purchasing and managing the Vale of Belvoir, a high altitude grassland, in the north west of Tasmania. This was followed by a short presentation on the current major TNPA Keep the Capes Wild campaign, aimed at stopping the government from building a new high impact and economically dubious long distance track in the Tasman National Park and, instead, getting the government to consider the TNPA's alternative proposal for a much lower impact and more appropriate walking experience.

These two presentations were followed by a supper break where, with a magnificent large cake, the TNPA celebrated its 10th birthday! (see elsewhere). Four foundation members of the TNPA - Robert Campbell (current President), Chris Bell, Helen Gee and Heather Kirkpatrick - were on hand to cut the cake.

The second half of the evening was the My Pedder audio visual, which was introduced by Adam Beeson, Secretary of



the Pedder 2000 Committee. Adam's introduction put the My Pedder audio-visual into its historical and present day context. Melva Truchanas introduced Adam and the audio-visual, with some reflective and inspiring words. And for the rest of the night we sat spellbound by Olegas' fabulous images of a natural jewel, now sadly lost below the waters of the Huon-Serpentine Empoundment - but maybe not lost forever.

The evening's presentations were carefully chosen by Melva Truchanas to show that environmental campaigns have both losses and successes, but that it is critical that those of us who care about the world's natural environment work hard to ensure it can be preserved, and that we must never give in!

The TNPA would like to extend their thanks to all those who helped make the evening such a success. Foremost, we would like to thank Melva Truchanas for allowing us to use the My Pedder audio-visual and for her major part in organising the evening. Our thanks also to Simon Olding who handled all the technological aspects of making the audio-visual work on the night, to Adam Beeson for introducing the audio-visual, and to the Tasmanian Land Conservancy for allowing us to use their Vale of Belvoir film on the evening. Thanks are also due to Heather Galloway who made the birthday cake, and to those TNPA members who contributed to the making and serving of the supper.

And of course, there is the audience who came and shared the evening and helped make the fundraiser the success it was. It was especially wonderful to see a number of people in the audience who were active in the now historic campaign to save Lake Pedder, and we particularly thank you for your contribution to conservation back in the 1960s and 1970s, and for continuing to carry the flame of conservation and to keep it burning.

<sup>1</sup>The new digitised *My Pedder* audio visual was also shown in October 2010 for six weeks at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art's Exhibition *In The Balance*.

By Paul E. Smith

# Wilderness, remoteness and 'high conservation value forests'

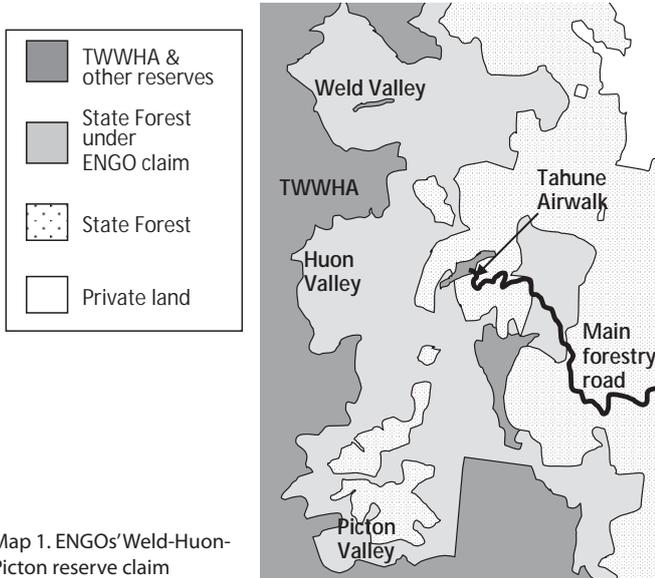
On 31 October 2011, TNPA wrote to Professor Jonathan West to point out that the environmentalists (ENGOS) involved in the Forest Principles Process (which led to the 2011 Inter-Governmental Agreement, or IGA) appear to have overlooked a crucial conservation value in their description of 'high conservation value forests' (HCVF). The conservation value (CV) at issue here is the potential of an area to contribute remoteness to adjacent areas. This potential is a CV because the wild character of land is a CV and an area of natural land does not really have this character unless it is significantly remote. In their efforts to convince the general public that nature should be protected, environmentalists avoid this somewhat abstract concept in order to focus on the things that anyone can easily be impressed with - those things that, with little effort, they can see or hear. So the emphasis is on saving rare and endangered plants and animals, spectacularly old or big trees and forests, and beautiful natural scenery, including rivers. The strong public status of science is invoked to support this approach, by environmentalists noting the significance of certain natural things for biology, pharmacology, geology, geomorphology, archaeology and the like. However, the wild character (otherwise called wildness or wilderness quality) of land has arguably been the main characteristic that has motivated many environmentalists in Tasmania. For example, the word 'wilderness' was deliberately inserted into the name of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area to emphasize the major value it was intended to protect.

So what is wildness, wild character and wilderness? In contrast to the evocative and rather rambling description of wilderness in the Wilderness Act of 1964 that was passed by the US Congress, it is succinctly defined by the Australian National Wilderness Inventory (NWI) as land that has two features: naturalness and remoteness. The main criterion for the remoteness of a piece of land is the time it takes to walk from it to the nearest point of mechanized access, such as a road. The NWI notes that the "wilderness quality" of a piece of land can be anywhere on a continuum from zero to extremely high, depending on how natural and how remote it is. This means that an area an experienced bushwalker would not consider to be wilderness, such as the eastern face of Mount Wellington, can have "wilderness quality", albeit of a low grade. To avoid such confusing uses of the word 'wilderness', we might use 'wild character' instead of 'wilderness quality'. Thus land with a low degree of wild character

is not 'wilderness' but something else, such as 'natural' land (not very remote) or 'remote' land (quite remote but not very natural). Only land that is both highly remote and highly natural would have a strong enough wild character to be called 'wilderness'.

Because wild character is widely regarded as an important conservation value, especially when it is strong enough to produce wilderness, then land that can be managed to maintain or enhance the wild character of adjoining land can be said to have 'conservation value'. As noted above, this value is usually referred to as wilderness quality. If managing an area for wild character ('wilderness quality') takes the form of preventing road construction (or blocking and revegetating existing roads) it may maintain (or restore) remoteness, in both that area and land adjacent to it. An area that is managed in such ways to maintain (or produce) remoteness in adjacent areas has been called a "remoting zone" (Hawes and Heatley 1985 Wilderness Assessment and Management The Wilderness Society Hobart). Areas in positions that give them the potential to be managed as remoting zones therefore have conservation value (CV) and if such remoting functions are of high value for conservation purposes, then these areas have 'high conservation value' (HCV). This particular type of CV is generated solely by the position of these areas and not by their condition - which is a matter of what is on and under its surface, such as its biology, geology, geomorphology and archaeology. In addition to a potential to function as a remoting zone, an area may have two other types of positional CV. These are that if it is protectively managed it may provide ecological interconnectivity between adjacent areas of HCV and/or it may be able to provide a more effective reserve boundary for adjacent areas of HCV that are to be protected within a reserve.

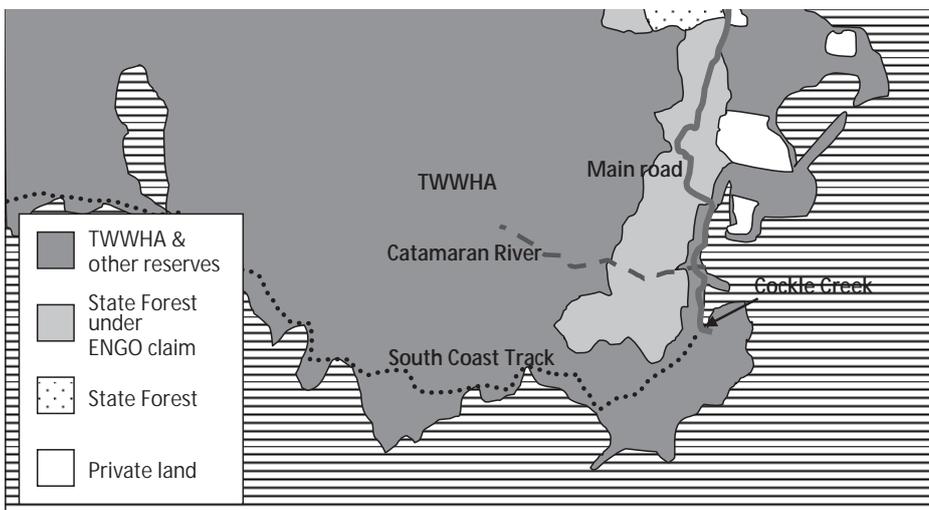
TNPA's letter to Professor West drew attention to an apparent neglect of this remoting zone function in the ENGOS' claim that 572,000 ha should be reserved because this area has HCV. Although the ENGOS' claim is based on both conditional and positional HCV, it appears to be restricted to only two of the latter - the positional HCVs of interconnectivity and reserve boundaries. One example of this omission is that the ENGOS' claim does not try to enhance the remoteness and therefore the wild character of the TW-WHA near the Picton River (to its west, south and east). They could have attempted to do this by proposing that all of the roaded, logged and regenerated/planted area in this valley



Map 1. ENGOs' Weld-Huon-Picton reserve claim



Logging coupes threatening the remoteness of the South Coast Track near South Cape Bay (Photo: Google Maps, accessed 19 June 2012)



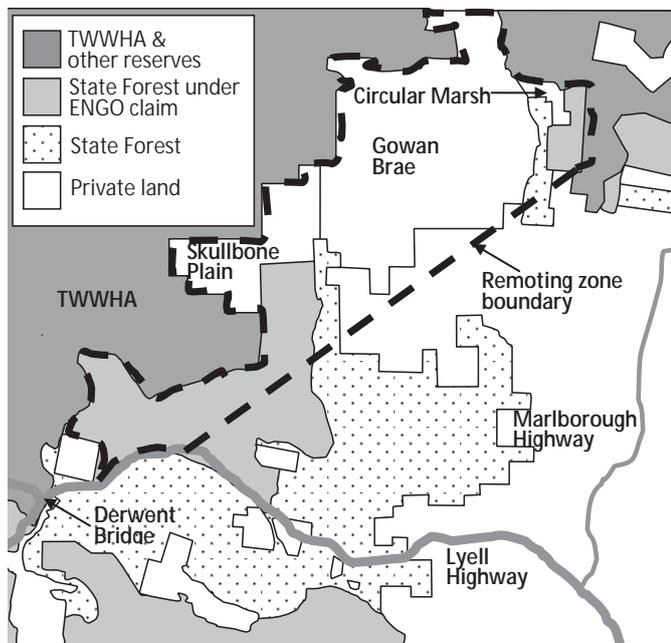
Map 2. ENGOs' Lune River - Cockle Creek reserve claim

people who generally support the protection of wild character but in this case have strong interests in road access for fairly short walks (such as on the Picton Range and around Lake Sydney) and for rafting the Picton River. However, such avoidance of considering the potential for restoring wild character betrays the concerns of many of those who initiated, led and participated in conservation campaigns in Tasmania in the 60's, 70s and

80s. For too long, environmentalists have avoided stressing the conservation value of remoteness, perhaps from fear of being anthropocentric, or of being seen to advocate elitist pursuits such as adventurous river rafting and multi-day bushwalking. But if humanity is to maintain an environment where all types of people are free to develop their capabilities, then the most physically and mentally capable must have physical and mental challenges that they find stimulating and testing. If they have the opportunity to engage with these, their exploits may encourage others to extend themselves as well. In addition to this part of an area's positional CV as a remoting zone, another part of that value is that it provides for important passive forms of recreation, such as observing wild country from aircraft and peripheral vantage points; by reading about it; by viewing it on film and video; and simply from the romantic satisfaction of knowing that it is out there. Through both these active and passive forms of recreation, remoteness may evoke perceptions of magnificence and emotions of awe and inspiration. We should not undervalue these, nor shy away from trying to protect their sources.

Perhaps the remoting zone CV of the Picton valley was neglected by the ENGOs because it seemed to claim too much, not only against forestry interests but also against

Another important remoting zone issue in Tasmania emerged on the 19th of January this year, when LJ Hooker



Map 3. Remoting zone proposal for the Central Plateau section of the TWWHA

advertised the sale of the Tasmanian estate of the late Martin Polin. This issue is only partially dependent on the results of the IGA process because it primarily depends on the management of freehold land. The opportunity presented here is to enhance the wild character of the Central Plateau section of the TWWHA, by means of a remoting zone stretching from Derwent Bridge to Lake Fergus, as shown on Map 3. A crucial 1600ha of this zone has been purchased from Gunns and placed under the protective management of the Tasmanian Land Conservancy. This is Skullbone Plains; which has logging roads approaching to within three kilometres of Lake Ina in the TWWHA and also an off-road vehicle track that accesses the lake in contravention of the 1999 TWWHA Management Plan. Most of the rest of this proposed remoting zone encompasses the Polin properties of Gowan Brae and Circular Marsh (6,752ha). The remainder of the remoting zone is three areas of State Forest: one stretching from Travellers Rest River to the Clarence River; another adjoining the southern boundary of Skullbone Plains; and the third running from the Pine River to Fergus Bluff. The ENGOs' IGA reservation claim covers all of the Travellers Rest River/ Clarence River section, but only some of the sections south of Skullbone Plains and between Pine River and Fergus Bluff. Another issue with Polin's estate is that it includes Gordonvale, an 80 hectare block that is 3 kilometres inside the WHA in the Rasselas Valley.

This could be the site of a future stoush with TNPA and other ENGOs if a private interest buys it, for example to build and run a commercial lodge with helicopter access.

As this is written, the sale of the Polin estate is still under negotiation and we do not know who will be the next owners of Gowan Brae, Circular Marsh and Gordonvale. Hopefully, they will value the potential of these areas for keeping and restoring remoteness to adjacent TWWHA and, in the case of Gowan Brae and Circular Marsh, close existing roads



Top: Glacial erratic in the middle of Gowan Brae (Note the person on the right for scale) (Photo: Bob Brown)



Right: Chimney of old Gowan Brae homestead near the Nive River at the southern edge of the property (Photo: Amy Lin)

and vehicular tracks to realize this potential.

Conventional definitions of wilderness traditionally mention uninterrupted, impressive size or vast extent as being necessary for a natural area to be considered a wilderness. However, the approach mentioned above as being used by the Australian National Wilderness Inventory is fundamentally different. It starts its analysis by looking at small pieces of land, perhaps a hectare or a square kilometre at a time, assessing whether each piece has characteristics that would qualify it as wilderness. As noted above, the diagnostic characteristics used in this method are the naturalness and remoteness of each piece. This analytical method allows wilderness quality (or wild character) to be systematically mapped across a region of any size, producing 'contour maps' with lines of equally wild character ('isowilds?') that indicate where things are really wild and where they are not so wild. Such maps can systematically show where more remoteness or naturalness would be most effective in increasing wild character (and thus wilderness quality) right across the region.

It is now of concern to note that this analytical approach was not used by Professor West's Independent Verification Group (IVG). Its conservation experts' assessment of the ENGOs' claim (for 563,000ha of State Forest to be protected from logging) thus appears to have disregarded TNPA's request of 31/10/11 that any potential for remoting zone function should be counted as a conservation value. Perhaps

this omission was encouraged by the ENGOs always talking about the need to protect "HCV forests", so that when the IVG conservation experts looked at clear felled and burnt areas such as those of the Picton and south of the Catamaran River, they saw no forests (and if they saw young regrowth or plantation, they saw no forest that could have HCV) so there appeared to be nothing there to protect. In retrospect it seems that the ENGOs should have referred to 'HCV areas', not 'HCV forests', despite the fact that the issue was stopping and restoring environmental damage by wood production forestry.

*Paul E. Smith*

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## TNPA EVENTS

### Autumn Walks Report 2011

The TNPA's Autumn Walks included nine walks over the month of May. We had a total of 88 people, all of whom have now heard about the TNPA and received a flyer. The spread was a bit wider than last year, with one at Mt Field, one at Scamander, one at Lake Skinner (South West World Heritage Area), one at Bluff River Gorge near Buckland, and our regular Blue Tier walk. Walks closer to home were Handsome Caves at Mt Dromedary, the new Cascade track, the new Alum Cliffs track, and our other regular Chauncy Vale walk.



The nine wonderful walk leaders were Bruce Wilson, Catharine Errey, Sally Salier, Todd Dudley, Lesley Nicklason, Rob Hill, Rosemary Bruce, Heather Chauncy and Janet Stone. John Cannon's help was invaluable, with his column in the Sunday Tasmanian. Simone Yemm also provided great assistance in promoting and publicising the walks!

### Autumn Walks Report 2012

We had a smaller number of walks on offer, compared to previous years. Weather was not on our side so some of the walks did not go ahead. Bruce Wilson had somewhat more favourable conditions for his walk to Lake Belcher, in Mt Field National Park.

Thanks to the following walks leaders: Rob Hill, Liz Thomas, Anne McConnell, Lesley Nicklason, Bruce Wilson and Catharine Errey.

Also thanks to Simone Yemm for flyers, posters and publicity and to John Cannon for his Saturday Mercury article promoting the walks.

We are hoping to run the walks earlier next year as days are too short in May.

# The Significant Weakening of Australian Environmental Protection Legislation

## – Current Proposed Reforms to the Federal EPBC Act

At the most recent COAG meeting (ie, meeting of heads of Federal and State government in Australia) an agreement was put in place for 'reforms' of the *Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act*. These so called reforms are not reforms for conservation, but are reforms which will make it easier to have developments made easier in areas with conservation values. The so-called reforms are designed to achieve what industry interestingly calls 'cutting green tape'.

The proposed changes would appear to be the result of a concerted effort by industry (mainly mining) to reduce the requirements for environmental protection and responsibility on their part, and to allow for more development in environmentally sensitive areas with less onerous environmental protection conditions. This is to be achieved primarily by devolving most of the responsibility for environmental assessment and approval for developments to state governments.

The reality however is that the EPBC Act is essential for providing checks and balances in the system to ensure significant environmental values are protected, because state governments tend to have a significantly lower level of

concern for environmental protection in the quest to bring revenue into their state through development. It is also the case that Tasmania, for example, has been 'streamlining' development approvals for some years now.

Although the application of the EPBC Act has not always achieved a good conservation outcome, it has played an important role in this. The Federal government's refusal of approval for the Tarkine Road to protect healthy Tasmanian devils is an example of how important an independent Federal level of approval is.

Conservationists across Australia are extremely concerned about these new proposed changes to the EPBC Act. The National Parks Australia Council has already met with the Federal Environment Minister, Tony Burke, in April, to express the concerns of the various national parks associations, and a number of environmental groups came together at a national summit in May to discuss how to fight the proposed changes, planned to be put in place by early 2013. The summit has issued a Communique stating the position of environmental organisations throughout Australia. Because this is such an important matter, the Communique is reproduced below in full.

## Changes to EPBC Act:

### Environment Groups National Summit on the Threats to Environmental Laws

Canberra 17th May 2012

Environment groups from across Australia met today in Canberra to challenge recent attacks on Federal and State environmental protection measures.

We are alarmed at this attack on our environment protection laws. These laws protect our way of life, they protect the environment which gives us clean air, clean water, protect

threatened species and the environmental values that are important to all Australians.

None of us are untouched by these threats to our land water communities and wild places and none of us is willing to allow to be taken from us that which makes our lives meaningful, beautiful and important. We represent a sub-

stantial cross-section of Australian society and will inform and mobilise our communities.

We support measures that can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental regulation, and reject the concept of “green tape” as an industry-based construct, a Trojan horse that is designed to achieve the winding back of almost 40 years of hard fought environmental protection measures for short-term economic gain. It is a matter of grave disappointment that our political leaders, sitting in COAG, have blindly accepted this rhetoric and acceded meekly to the demands of business and industry.

Environmental policies and laws must protect our special places and should result in their protection, not loss. This protection must be underpinned by science and evidence based measures. Decisions around the protection of these species should not be fast-tracked or streamlined but given adequate time and funding to allow full consideration of all available evidence and scientific data.

### *Reject the Attack on Environmental Laws*

Our organisations specifically urge the strengthening of our national environmental law, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act). The Hawke Review of the Act proposed a reform package to streamline development balanced by better environmental provisions and increased transparency, oversight and public participation. The Government has rejected most of these “balancing” reforms, thereby ignoring the relevant checks involved and placing the environment at greater risk than it is under the present Act.

### *Abandonment of the Commonwealth’s Environmental Approval Powers*

We express our steadfast opposition to the proposal by COAG to fast-track arrangements for the accreditation by the Commonwealth of State approval processes by March 2013, which would result in the “turning off” of our most important Federal environmental law, the EPBC Act. We reject the underlying assumption on the part of COAG that the exercise by the Commonwealth of its approval powers in relation to projects that involve matters of national environmental significance constitutes “duplicative and cumbersome environmental regulation”.

We urge the Commonwealth to retain this most important approval role as a means of checking the unbridled pursuit of development at the State and Territory level, whilst also maintaining its extensive international treaty obligations with respect to the Australian environment. Our national environment values must be held in trust at a national level, and not devolved to State and Territory Governments

to make decisions on matters for which they cannot have a national view. The Federal Government must not walk away from its crucial role in protecting our environment.

We also hold deep reservations about proposals recently advanced by the Commonwealth government outside COAG, in its response to the Hawke Review of the EPBC Act, to shift the focus of its efforts under this Act to strategic assessment and regional plans, insofar as this is intended to result in a substantial withdrawal by the Commonwealth from project-level assessment and approval. Whilst we support robust strategic and regional planning to address cumulative impacts, these processes cannot substitute for project-level assessment and approval and believe the Commonwealth should reconsider its proposed approach.

### *“Streamlining” of State Assessment and Approval Processes/ Environmental Standards*

We have deep concerns about COAG’s proposals for States and Territories to propose reform of their State assessment and approval processes for major projects for consideration at the next COAG Business Advisory Forum later in 2012. In particular, we fear that the so called “streamlining” of such processes will amount in practice to a further weakening of already inadequate assessment and approval processes within most States and Territories.

Similarly, we are sceptical of proposals advanced by COAG under its “deregulation” initiative for the “improvement” of assessment processes for “low risk, low impact developments”, which we believe is essentially code for the further dismantling of State and Territory planning laws in order to meet the incessant demands of the property industry.

We also question the motives for, and the means by which, State and Territory governments will pursue the COAG agreement for them to develop “environmental risk and outcome based standards” by 2012. Insofar as this might involve the substantial reform of existing environmental standards of a different nature developed over many years, we believe that any such process should be undertaken in an open and fully consultative manner. A 6-month timeframe is not feasible for a proper process of review and reform of existing environmental standards.

### *Dismantling of Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency Schemes*

We have grave concerns about proposals by COAG to “fast-track and rationalise policies and programs that are not complementary to a carbon price”, particularly if such rationalisation is based on a set of so called principles that were developed without public consultation, and tenuous assumptions about the capacity of the carbon price mecha-

nism to deliver adequate carbon emissions reductions by itself by 2020. We call on the Taskforce established by COAG to consult publicly on its proposals before any revised principles are submitted to COAG.

A carbon pricing mechanism with weak targets should not be used to stifle or diminish other efficient policies and programs that reduce emissions and which would make it easier for Australia's National target and scheme caps to be tightened faster than the carbon price acting alone. The carbon price should be used to enhance climate action, rather than constrain and crowd out these efforts.

### *A Voice for the Environment and the Community*

COAG has provided an exclusive avenue for consultation by governments on high level policy agendas with one, privileged sector of the community, to the exclusion of the rest of Australia's civil society, through the establishment of the COAG Business Advisory Forum. Given the secretive nature of COAG processes, this is an unprecedented and inappropriate form of privileged access for the business sector. It can only result in the type of distorted and inappropriate policy initiatives that are manifestly evident in the COAG response to the first meeting of its Business Advisory Forum.

We call on the Prime Minister, as the Chair of COAG, to rectify this inequity immediately by establishing a parallel COAG forum for key representatives of civil society.

We note that business leaders have not approached us to discuss their concerns and we would welcome an opportunity to do so.

We give notice that we will not stand by as vested interests seek to do secret deals with the Federal and State Governments to gut environmental protection measures at a time when our environment needs more protection. If, as a consequence of the reforms proposed by COAG, there is a dismantling of these measures, and we return to the situation that existed in Australia several decades ago, we believe there will be an inevitable return to the trench warfare style of environmental activism that was also widely practiced at that time. When governments move to abandon the "rule of law" with respect to environmental protection, such responses from within the community are inevitable.

### **About us**

This communique is supported by the following organisations:

- ACT Conservation Council
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Australian Marine Conservation Society
- Bird Life Australia
- Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
- Conservation Council of SA
- EDO Victoria

- Environment Tasmania
- Environment Victoria
- Greenpeace Australia
- Humane Society International
- International Fund for Animal Welfare
- Invasive Species Council
- National Parks Association of NSW
- National Parks Australia Council
- Nature Conservation Council of NSW
- Queensland Conservation Council
- Total Environment Centre
- Tasmanian National Parks Association
- Victorian National Parks Association

### **APPENDIX:**

#### **The Losing Battle for Australia's Environment**

Every year we see further decline in the quality of Australia's environment. We see forests cleared and swathes of bush destroyed. We have seen vast grasslands and bush sacrificed to urban expansion, mines and coal seam gas wells that poison our water and air. Water is treated as though it wasn't a precious and life giving resource. We are witnessing the greatest extinction rate of mammals of any country in the world. We are losing species that exist nowhere else on earth.

Every 5 years the Federal Government produces a national State of the Environment Report. Every report says we are going backwards. Information, evidence and data are all regularly ignored. The few successes and few changes we see are overwhelmed by our failures and our indifference. Just this week, a report by WWF ranked Australia as the 7th worst polluter on Earth (behind Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, Denmark, the United States and Belgium - one spot worse than in the last report in 2010).

We reject the notion that the problem we face is duplication and red/green tape. The problem we face is the highest mammal extinction rate in the world, the worst per capita rate of carbon emissions in the world, contaminated rivers and water, clearing of forests and bush, declining soils, overfishing and a host of bad decisions made every day all over Australia that benefit the few. Our environmental laws need strengthening and increased funding to combat these threats, not gut them.



## TNPA UPDATES

# Keep the Capes Wild Campaign



In late November 2011, the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service (PWS) released their *Development Proposal and Environmental Management Plan* (DPEMP) for the proposed Three Capes Track development. Up to this point the TNPA had been working consistently to try and highlight the issues with this proposed recreational development in the Tasman National Park, and to encourage the government to look at less environmentally harmful and better economic options, including the TNPA's proposed alternative.

A significant TNPA action was the development of a dedicated *Keep the Capes Wild* campaign website, which was proposed and developed by John Sampson who volunteered his time for this. At the same time the TNPA also updated their website to make it more dynamic, up-to-date and linked to other relevant websites. The new website was created by Simone Yemm.

The new *Keep the Capes Wild* website features a new brochure that promotes the *Great Tasman Coastal Experience*, the TNPA's alternative proposal for overnight walking on the Tasman Peninsula. This alternative is based on current overnight walker desires and patterns as demonstrated by the Great Ocean Walk in Victoria, on the existing track network, and on integrating such a walk with other recreational and scenic activities on the Tasman Peninsula, something that was recommended, but ignored by government, in the scoping study that led to the government's proposed Three Capes Track. (See the President's Pen article, this issue, for an idea of how the *Great Tasman Coastal Experience* would work).

The new brochure has been widely distributed, including to Tasmanian politicians. It, and the *Keep the Capes Wild* postcards, have also been available through the regular Salamanca Stalls that TNPA held in 2011. Some 747 postcards and an additional 270 online petitions (with some, but not significant, overlap) have been signed by Tasmanians, a significant number of interstate visitors, and international visitors opposing the current proposed Three Capes Track development. In the six months in the lead up to the release of the DPEMP, the TNPA sent the postcards to the Minister for Parks, Brian Wightman, on a regular basis, including for two months on a daily basis, to remind the government that not everyone is happy with the proposed development, and that there are alternatives.

The TNPA also put in a detailed submission to the PWS

2011 Draft Three Capes Track DPEMP in late December 2011, and also put in a submission to the Federal Government in early December in relation to whether the development should be a controlled action under the EPBC Act. In spite of the identified impacts and lack of data in relation to some values, the Federal government has ultimately decided that the development does not need to be a controlled action, but has taken the rather unusual step of stipulating a raft of conditions for environmental protection that need to be met. While this may sound a responsible action, the TNPA understands that there is no provision in the EPBC Act for compliance to be monitored, so it would seem that the Federal government's approach in this case is little more than window dressing.

The TNPA had a number of specific and substantial concerns about the 2011 Draft Three Capes Track DPEMP, including that 1. some details of the proposal were not presented; 2. some assessments had not been done or fully done; and 3. that there were identified impacts, some of which could not be managed and others of which had very complicated, and in our view unrealistic, management prescriptions. In summary, the TNPA Committee still believes the project is fundamentally flawed, will have significant impacts, and is the wrong 'walk opportunity' for the region. The full TNPA submission on the draft DPEMP can be found on the TNPA website.

The TNPA is also fundamentally concerned about the 'process pretense' that the proposed Three Capes Track development is going through – with no opportunity for public comment on the 2007 Feasibility Study; an apparent total ignoring of the opposition to the proposed changes to the 2008 draft revised Tasman National Park Management Plan to enable the development; and now a complete silence and refusals to release the details of comment on the draft 2012 DPEMP. There has also been no response to the postcards and petition.

How has this happened? It can only happen because the PWS is the proponent, judge and jury in relation to the approvals process for the development. The development is being proposed by the PWS service, assessed by the PWS, approved by the PWS, and will be managed, monitored and regulated by the PWS. And the Minister, Brian Wightman calls this a 'rigorous assessment process'? The TNPA would hate to see a sloppy assessment process!



Photo: Ted Mead

A core issue in the TNPA's view is that PWS remains an active proponent of the development, thereby compromising its ability to objectively assess the proposal or to regulate its implementation if it was to be approved. As noted above, this is evident in the process to date, including the internal approval of the development by the PWS in late April/early May 2012 through its RAA approvals process, with no public advertisement of the fact and a refusal to provide any approvals related information or documentation to the public. The TNPA cannot even find out what actual development proposal has been approved or how public comment on the draft DPEMP was incorporated into the approved DPEMP, if indeed it was.<sup>1</sup> We believe that it is entirely inappropriate for a project of this scale and impact, involving a considerable investment of public funds, to not be subject to rigorous, independent assessment.

The TNPA is not the only concerned organisation, and in late 2011, the Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) and TNPA joined forces to campaign against the proposed development. This has included a number of meetings with politicians to highlight the issues with the proposal and to promote the need to consider less costly and high impact options.

Because of the probity issues that surround the current

<sup>1</sup> A request directly to the Manger of the PWS by the TNPA President in May 2012 was denied.

internal assessment process, the TCT and TNPA in February 2012 called on the Premier, Lara Giddings, to have the development declared a 'Project of State Significance' under the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*. In our view this is appropriate - the project is a significant development and is regarded as having regional and state wide importance in terms of tourism promotion and revenue – and is needed to ensure that the development will have greater integrated and more independent scrutiny. The TCT and TNPA are meeting with the Premier in late June to follow up this request.

Meanwhile, a potential second Three Capes Walk, the West Wellington Walk, has just had \$200,000 of taxpayers' money allocated to undertaking a feasibility study (the same amount allocated for the Three Capes Walk feasibility study). Sadly, it looks like there will be plenty of dubious development proposals for Tasmania's protected areas to keep the TNPA going strong until at least its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and probably well beyond.

*Key TNPA letters and submissions regarding the proposed Three Capes Track development and the Keep the Capes Wild campaign can be found on the TNPA website at [www.tnpa.asn.au](http://www.tnpa.asn.au) and at [www.keepthecapewild.org.au](http://www.keepthecapewild.org.au).*

*Anne McConnell*

## TNPA UPDATES

# Arthur – Pieman Conservation Area & Vehicle Impacts

The *Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Sustainable Recreational Vehicle Access Report 2012* has been recently released. This report provides new management prescriptions for the use of recreational vehicles in the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area (APCA), and is a response to the need for better management of the area to avoid ongoing impacts to its natural and cultural values.

The TNPA is aware that the PWS undertook detailed Aboriginal heritage and flora assessments as part of the research undertaken for the preparation of the 2012 report. The PWS is to be congratulated for its strong science supported approach to making management decisions in this case. A draft report was also released for public comment in mid-2010, on which TNPA made a submission.

Given the impacts of recreational vehicles, primarily 4WDs and 4W bikes (quad bikes), the *Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Sustainable Recreational Vehicle Access Report 2012* recommends that of the 65 tracks that were in use at the time the review started (note – there are 94 tracks in all in the APCA), 15 will be closed, leaving 50 tracks still accessible for recreational use, including for access to shacks on the coast. As the 2012 report notes, the decisions reflect the fact that while recreational vehicle use is a popular activity in the reserve, it is also one of the most significant threats to the reserve's cultural and natural values.

The impacts to the natural values from recreational vehicle use south of Sandy Cape has been a particular con-

cern to the TNPA for some time, and the TNPA is pleased to see the previous restrictions on use between the Interview River and Pieman River have remained in place, and also that more protection to the natural values has been provided by prohibiting the use of the coast between Johnsons Head and the Interview River.

The TNPA is however aware that in spite of the prohibition on recreational vehicle use south of the Interview River, there has been regular illegal use of this stretch of coast by 4W bikes and this has led to significant environmental impacts. Some of this use appears to be facilitated by a private barge located at the Pieman River for ferrying the 4W bikes across the river.

Although we congratulate the government for closing more tracks to protect the dunes and fragile and irreplaceable Aboriginal sites in the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area, these measures will not protect the values of the area unless there is compliance. This requires the PWS to have both the authority and the resources to ensure that the controls are respected and policed, and that compliance can be monitored.

The TNPA will be pursuing its concerns about the recent illegal 4W bike use along the beach north of the Pieman River and the barge at the Pieman River, and the need for adequate funding to ensure compliance with the new access policy.

*Anne McConnell*

# The Forestry Intergovernmental Agreement & Tasmania's Conservation Estate

As a member group of Environment Tasmania, TNPA has been caught up to some degree in the Forest Reform process, one that is primarily concerned with providing protection for areas of 'high conservation value' (HCV) forest through withdrawing these areas from State forest and putting them into conservation estate. If all the ENGO claims are upheld, then this would increase Tasmania's conservation estate up to about 50% of Tasmania.

The process, since mid-2001, is being progressed through processes set up by the Forestry Intergovernmental Agreement, the product of an initial exploring of issues and commonalities by industry and the Tasmanian environment movement headed by Environment Tasmania, The Wilderness Society and the Australian Conservation Foundation. This was preceded by the preparation of a 'Statement of Principles' by Tasmanian ENGOs.

The Forestry Intergovernmental Agreement in essence has three parts –

1. an Independent Verification process to establish what the genuine HCV forest areas still in State forest are, and what the impact on timber product supply would be of transferring these areas to conservation.
2. Provision of funds for alternative regional economic development.
3. Funding for the PWS to manage the new conservation areas.

Under the Agreement, the funding for these three areas is being provided by the Federal government.

As the TNPA is primarily concerned with how existing conservation estate is being managed, the TNPA has not taken a major role in this matter. We have however kept a 'watching brief' and have made input on issues of concern.

While the TNPA supports, in principle, the transfer of high conservation value State forest, the TNPA has some concerns with the process that has been put in place. These concerns arise partly from the absence of process for some core decision making areas and also from the fact that it is important to get it right this time, as significant gains for conservation now mean it will be much harder to make important gains later.

There are several key issues with the current approach that the TNPA believes are important to address.

1. In relation to the *Independent Verification process* (the assessment of HCV areas occurring through the Independent Verification Panel) core concerns are –
  - a. that in considering HCV forest the assessment must also consider the need to ensure there is a sound framework for conservation management, for example through considering connectivity for biological values, management 'buffer zones', and good management boundaries;
  - b. that the range of key natural and cultural values are included, not the anomalous situation that appears to be being used with comprehensive assessment for biological values, but consideration of geoheritage and cultural values only where they are of state or higher level significance; and
  - c. the need to expand the scope of HCV to include both 'condition' and 'position' in assessing the HCV of areas (currently the explicit scope of the assessment) to avoid overlooking some HCV areas, or regarding them as being of low or zero conservation value.
2. In relation to *Regional Redevelopment* (for which \$120 million of Federal government money is available over four years, some of which has already been allocated) the TNPA is concerned with the ad hoc process that is occurring, with funds being doled out in small amounts, on apparently pet projects, with no formal

stakeholder review and no strategic analysis. One of the issues for the TNPA is the sudden proliferation of long distance walk proposals in existing and proposed conservation areas, for example the West Wellington Walk, which are being put up as redevelopment projects without any assessment of strategic desirability, environmental impact, or set up and ongoing costs. The TNPA has recommended therefore that a formal process be established for the allocation of the redevelopment funds being provided by the Federal government to ensure that the projects are desirable, environmentally sensitive, and contribute to the employment of workers who will be disadvantaged by the Forestry Intergovernmental Agreement.

3. The TNPA is also concerned that the *long term management of the present day and new conservation estate* will be seriously compromised if no formal process is set up to assess the appropriate land status and governance of the land that is transferred to conservation land. Currently the Agreement assumption is that the PWS will manage all new conservation estate. However, with its current funding and limited staff numbers and expertise, the PWS cannot properly manage the land it currently has responsibility for, let alone manage significant areas of new conservation land, even with an additional \$7 million a year from the Federal government (which will be most likely largely siphoned off to meet current shortfalls in funding, or be used as an argument to reduce the state government funding to the PWS even further). A formal review process to establish the land status of all new conservation land, and of the best management authority option for the new land, is therefore essential.

The TNPA has conveyed these concerns to Environment Tasmania, to the Independent Verification Panel and to the Legislative Council Enquiry into PWS Funding (& other matters) as appropriate. Regrettably, we have yet to see any of these fora respond to our concerns. This is very disappointing, as without a better assessment process, an improved, strategic process for regional redevelopment, and a process for making decisions about how the new conservation land is to be managed, it is inevitable that much of the good that could come out of the Forestry Intergovernmental Agreement will be lost, and will lead to increased issues in the management of Tasmania's present and future conservation estate.

Anne McConnell

## TNPA CALENDAR

## January 2011 - May 2012

2011	
Feb 7th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
March 7th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
March 23rd	TNPA Salamanca Stall
April	TNPA Autumn Walks 2011
April 4th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting & 'Wine & Cheese Chat' – Paul Smith on <i>Wilderness and Remoteness</i>
May 2nd	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
May 7th	TNPA Salamanca Stall
June 15th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
July 14th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
July 23rd	TNPA Salamanca Stall
Sept	TNPA's 10th Birthday
Sept 10th	TNPA Salamanca Stall
Sept 15th	Pedder Dreaming: Olegas Truchanus' remastered Lake Pedder Slide Show.
Sept 19th	TNPA 2011 AGM
Oct 3rd	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
Oct 15-16th	National Parks Australia Council meeting in Melbourne (attended by R. Campbell & A. McConnell)
Nov 7th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
Nov 13th	TNPA Social Picnic/BBQ at Waterworks Reserve, Hobart
Nov 26th	<i>Buttongrass Ball 2011</i> (TNPA Fundraiser courtesy of The Folk Federation of Tasmania)
Dec 8th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
Dec 23rd	Major Submission to PWS on the draft proposed Three Capes Development Proposal and Environmental Management Plan

2012	
Jan 23rd	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
Feb 18th	TNPA Salamanca Stall
Mar 8th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
April 30th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting
May	TNPA Autumn Walks 2012
May 28th	TNPA Management Committee Meeting

### Submissions, Letters, Media Releases, Meetings, Etc Jan 2011 – May 2012

#### Media Releases

- Media Release on the result of the EMRS Survey on whether there should be infrastructure in our national parks or outside

#### Media Conferences

- Media Conference with the TCT on Proposal to make the Three Capes Track development a Project of State Significance

#### Letters to Newspapers

- Letter re PWS infrastructure issues (blue signs and the Bruny Island Lighthouse fence)
- Letter re PWS philosophy on tourism and park management
- Letter re proposed Three Capes Track development (with TCT)
- Impact of proposed 2012-13 Budget cuts on the PWS and conservation area management.

## Submissions

- To the Heritage Council and Kingborough Council re the development application for the new fence at the Bruny Island Lighthouse.
- To Department Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population & Communities Submission asking for the proposed Three Capes Track development to be a controlled action under the EPBC Act.
- To the PWS on the draft proposed Three Capes Development Proposal and Environmental management Plan
- To Dept Treasury & Finance re PWS Funding and the 2012-13 Budget
- To the Legislative Council re PWS funding and other related matters in relation to the Forestry IGA.

## Letters

- To Premier and Minister re the need for a science based Marine Protected Area network for Tasmania
- To TRC Tourism Pty Ltd re the Social Values of the proposed Three Capes Track development being assessed by them
- To PWS and TLC re the management of the Skullbone Plains area and the need to provide remoting zones
- To Environment Tasmania re concerns with ET motions relating to the Forestry IGA process.
- To the Minister to accompany signed Keep the Capes Wild postcards (2 letters and 747 postcards!)
- To Tasman Council aldermen and Tasmania Peninsula tourism operators re –urgent need to consider an alternative option to the proposed Three Capes Track development
- To the Forestry IGA Independent Verification Panel commenting on the Independent Verification process
- To Environment Tasmania re criteria for nature based tourism.

- To Rumney Candidates re the proposed Three Capes Track development
- To Premier asking for the proposed Three Capes Track development to be assessed as a Project of State Significance (with the TCT)
- Council and the Central Highlands Council seeking advice on Pumphouse Point development works.

## Meetings

- PWS (Colin Shephard) re the proposed Three Capes Track development (May 2011).
- Minister (Brian Wightman) re the proposed Three Capes Track development (May 2011).
- PWS (Colin Shephard) re the proposed Three Capes Track development (Sept 2011).
- Nick McKim & Cassy O'Connor re the proposed Three Capes Track development (Apr 2011).
- Liberal Party (Matthew Groom) re the proposed Three Capes Track development- 2011?
- ET re forestry IGA process (Sept 2011)
- Independent Verification Panel (Virginia Young) re the Forestry IGA independent verification process (Dec 2011).
- Liberal Party (Matthew Groom) re the proposed Three Capes Track development and proposal to make it a Project of State significance (with TCT) – 2012/
- EDO (Jess Feehely) re proposed Three Capes Track development and potentially appealing the Federal government decision re controlling action (with TCT) (Mar 2012)
- Cassy O'Connor re the proposed Three Capes Track development (with TCT) (Mar 2012)
- ET (Peter Skillern) re Environment Tasmania operation (Mar 2012)



The Three Cakes! TNPA Members' social barbecue at the Waterworks Nov 2011

## TNPA EVENTS

# Buttongrass Ball 2011

The 2011 Buttongrass Ball, hosted by the Folk Federation of Tasmania was held in November in the Wesley Church Hall in Hobart. This annual event, started in 1998, is a great evening of folk dancing which also raises money for the TNPA, with the Ball organisers and the bands generously donating the proceedings of the night to the TNPA.

So, once again in a beautifully decorated hall with scattered buttongrass plants, those who attended the Ball, enjoyed a range of traditional and Tasmanian dances to the music of the VerandaCoots, and also this year to the Hornett's Nest, another local dance band. The MC for the evening and the dance caller was David Wanless, who made sure that we all learned what to do, danced some fabulous dances, and generally had a good time.

In other years the Buttongrass Balls have tended to have a theme related to a TNPA campaign or one of Tasmania's special protected areas, but this year there was no theme and we celebrated the special wild places of Tasmania as a whole. A few special places did feature however through the dances themselves, with some of the recent Overland Track suite of dances being featured, for example the Buttongrass Quadrille, the Pine Forest Moor Medley and the very special Pelion Waltz.

The TNPA would like to warmly thank the VerandaCoots, Hornett's Nest, David Wanless and the other Folk Federation of Tasmania dancers who organise this event, including a wonderful supper, and who decorate the hall and clean up afterwards. Our thanks also to Plants of Tasmania for providing the pots of buttongrass for the evening. It was another lovely Buttongrass Ball and the TNPA's coffers are fuller - thank you.

## Tasmanian National Parks Association Inc

**Patron:** Peter Cundall

### TNPA Management Committee

President: Robert Campbell

Vice President: Anne McConnell

Treasurer: Patsy Jones

Secretary: Liz Thomas

Public Officer: Catharine Errey

Other Committee Members: Greg Ramsay & Catharine Errey

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### Meetings

Management Committee meetings are usually held one Monday each month at 5:30 pm at Environment Tasmania, upstairs, 100 Elizabeth Street (next door to The Map Shop), Hobart. Members and supporters are welcome. Meeting dates and venue will be advertised in each TNPA Communique or please check with the Secretariat.

## Have your say...

**ABC Local Radio: Mornings - Leon Compton**  
[tasmornings@your.abc.net.au](mailto:tasmornings@your.abc.net.au) or 1300 222 936

**Letters to the Editor at The Mercury**  
[mercuryedletter@dbl.newsltd.com.au](mailto:mercuryedletter@dbl.newsltd.com.au) or  
 GPO Box 334 Hobart 7001

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**Opposition (Liberal) Spokesperson on Parks**  
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**Tasmanian Greens Spokesperson on Parks**  
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## TNPA News

TNPA News is published twice a year. It aims to provide informative articles on issues related to national parks and other reserves, as well as updates on TNPA activities and campaigns. The views expressed in TNPA News are not necessarily those of the TNPA Inc. For this issue many thanks to Robert Campbell, Paul Smith, Kevin Kiernan and Anne McConnell. Original articles in TNPA News may be reproduced, but please acknowledge the author and the source. Contributions for TNPA News No. 16 are welcomed (deadline mid Dec 2012). Please send contributions to [admin@tnpa.asn.au](mailto:admin@tnpa.asn.au) (attention:TNPA News editor).

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Editor TNPA News 15 – Catharine Errey

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