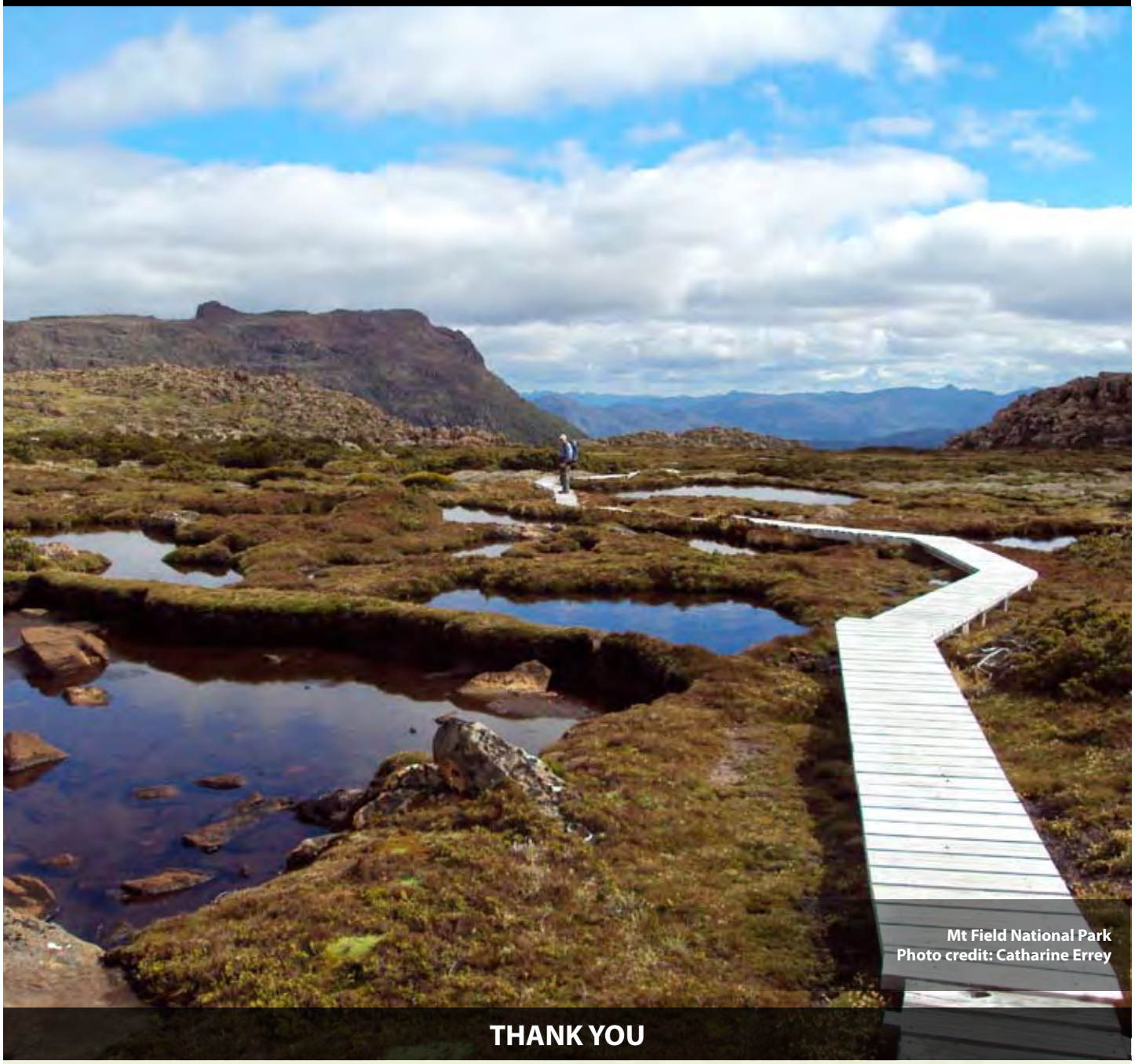
TNPA NEWS

TASMANIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION INC

Newsletter No 19 Winter 2014



Mt Field National Park
Photo credit: Catharine Errey

THANK YOU

The TNPA Committee would like to thank the following people and organisations who over the last 6 months have volunteered their time to assist the TNPA, or have helped us in other ways.

TNPA Autumn Walks 2014 Rosemary Bruce, Tim Devereux, Rob Hill, Bec Johnson, Lesley Nicklason, John Cannon (for publicity)

Secretarial Assistance to the TNPA Amy Lin

TNPA News Production (this edition)
Ricoh Business Centre Hobart and Laura Paton, Paul Smith, Ted Mead, Jenny Weber

Other Support & Assistance
Paul Smith, Tasmanian Conservation Trust

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

A TNPA member walked the Overland Track in May this year. Among the few other walkers on the Track at the end of the booking season was a young couple from Belgium. Tasmania was the first leg of their overseas trip, but it was also top of their 'must visit' list – because of our State's famed wilderness areas and national parks. They were horrified to learn that our State government would like to 'open up' Tasmania's wilderness areas to more tourist facilities. They instructed the TNPA member to "Tell your government that we came here from Europe especially to experience these wild unspoiled places and that they must keep them that way. Tell them that people come here from other countries so that they can get away from hotels, cable cars etc."

This was a reminder that we strive to preserve and protect these 'places we love', not just for ourselves, not just for future generations but also for the rest of the world. They are indeed world heritage.

The push by our current State government to allow tourism developers into our national parks and World Heritage Areas is one of the major issues facing the TNPA at this moment and highlights the crucial role played by the organization.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN:

Potential impacts on conservation reserves from seismic shifts in government policies

In my last President's Pen I wrote that we are living in "interesting times" as the future suddenly seems far less certain. This observation was based on the recent election of the Abbott Federal government and the likely change of the Tasmanian State government (which did indeed occur in March this year).

And so what has eventuated this year, and was my earlier observation warranted.

A portent of approaches by both the new Federal and State governments to conservation issues was noted in a speech the Prime Minister gave earlier this year to the Australian Forest Products Association. Mr Abbott said. "We have quite enough National Parks, we have quite enough locked up forests already. In fact, in an important respect, we have too much locked up forest." He went on to call timber workers "the ultimate conservationists."

What the Prime Minister does not seem to understand is that whilst occupying less than 8% of Australia, national parks are critical to conserving our unique biodiversity, are a major drawcard in the annual $23 billion nature-based tourism industry, and contribute significantly to our health and well-being. Also, national parks are not locked up but have the most generous form of land tenure available, being publicly available to all. As Michelle Prior, President of the National Parks Australia Council said, "Australia's national parks are not only a national achievement, but a legacy for the future. The majority of Australia's citizens value and appreciate national parks. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister is out of touch with contemporary opinions and knowledge"

Sadly, a number of developments at the Federal level reflect the Prime Minister's adverse ideological approach to conservation issues. These include the attempt to have 74,000 ha of forests revoked from the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). These forests, which had only been added to the TWWHA the previous year, were part of the larger package of forests identified for conservation as an outcome of the historic Tasmanian Forests Agreement (TFA). The government's claim that the forests were degraded, and as such should be unlocked for the timber industry, were not supported by the evidence, which clearly demonstrated that over 90% was pristine old-growth forest. As the TNPA stated in its submission to the Senate Enquiry, also noting that there is a clear obligation under the TWWHA management plan to 'rehabilitate' areas where values have been diminished, supporting the government's proposal would have been akin to punching a small hole in the Mona Lisa and then claiming the whole picture has been destroyed. Obviously we would repair the picture, just as we can with the forests.

Fortunately, at its Doha meeting in late June the United Nations' World Heritage Committee unanimously rejected the Federal Government's application, with delegates from Portugal stating that "accepting this delisting would set an unacceptable precedent". This decision needs to be celebrated, as not only does it uphold the original decision for the area to be World Heritage listed and reaffirm the universal values of these forests, but it is a triumph of rational evidence-based decision making (i.e. common sense) over blatant ideology.

However, while we can celebrate this victory, the Federal Government has continued to steam ahead in implementing its election commitment for a so-called 'one-stop-shop' approach to environmental approvals for *Matters of National Environmental Significance*, which include impacts on areas such as the Great Barrier Reef, World Heritage Areas, and wetlands of global significance. As the Australian Network of Environmental Defenders' Offices (ANEDO) told a parliamentary inquiry, the handover of environmental approval powers could lower environmental standards by reducing assessment processes, public participation or judicial scrutiny and produce a confusing 'eight-stop-shop' of environmental protection.

Draft amending bills to the EPBC Act were introduced in the House of Representatives without notice on 14th May. Together with removing the 'water trigger', which gave the Federal

government power to scrutinise the cumulative impacts of coal and coal seam gas projects on water supplies, these amendments also propose a potential role for local governments in approving developments affecting *Matters of National Environmental Significance* (MNES). This development further heightens the likelihood of significant conflicts of interest, and the obvious and complete lack of competence on the part of local government to pass judgement on MNES issues. One only needs to ask whether the Franklin River would have been saved under such a process? Indeed, an ANEDO audit of threatened species and planning laws in all Australian jurisdictions in 2012 found that "no State or Territory biodiversity or planning laws currently meet the suite of Federal environmental standards necessary to effectively and efficiently protect biodiversity." While the Senate Environment and Communications Committee Inquiry has released a report supporting these amendments, both the Labor Party and the Greens submitted dissenting reports.

Concern about the Federal government meeting appropriate environmental standards has also been reinforced by a recent Auditor-General's report which has highlighted serious problems with the Environment Department's enforcement of environment laws and slammed its 'passive' approach to ensuring developers comply with conditions to protect areas such as the Great Barrier Reef [*The Age*, 21 June]. This concern is reinforced by cuts announced in the Federal budget which will include further cuts to the Environment Department, including over 100 staff from the division responsible for compliance and enforcement.

With the election of the Hodgman Liberal government in Tasmania in March this year, there has also been a number of policy shifts which will affect national parks and the further conservation of the State's forests.

The first of these changes is the legislation introduced to Parliament in May which will repeal the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Act 2013 and remove approximately 400,000 hectares of land from its current status under the TFA of 'Future Reserve Land' and place it under a new status, 'Future Potential Production Forest', with a moratorium on harvesting in this zone for a minimum period of six years. There will also be a requirement that in future the formal reservation of further Tasmanian forest would need a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament. The right to protest is also to being stymied by the introduction of severe penalties. Claims that the TFA was based on politics and not science would seem to fly in the face of the report of the Independent Verification Group chaired by Professor West. Indeed, tearing up an agreement which was the outcome of three years of negotiations, was supported by the Tasmanian Forests Industry and ENGOs, with compromises being made by both sides, and was ultimately supported by the Tasmanian Parliament, would appear to be based purely on partisan political posturing of the worst kind.

The second major change is the Liberal Party's policy entitled "Unlocking the potential of our parks" which states that the government will facilitate 'sensible, sustainable development and improved infrastructure' in our national parks and World Heritage Areas. Specific policies included: 1) a $2 million upgrade to the South Coast Track, 2) completion of stage 3 of the Three Capes Track, and 3) partnering with the private sector to unlock our parks, and facilitate further development.

The TNPA has long called for further funding to help upgrade the network of walking tracks in Tasmania, many of which are in poor condition (see *TNPA News* No. 8). We therefore offer support for an appropriate upgrading of the South Coast Track. However, we have also voiced our concern about the manner in which Three Capes Track is being developed (see Three Capes Update later in this issue) and so we will watch how this upgrade is facilitated with close interest.

In relation to the Three Capes Track the TNPA has consistently argued that the present concept and design is flawed and that there are alternatives which would bring greater economic and environmental benefits to the Tasman Peninsula (see http://keepthecapeswild.org.au/). However, repeated calls for this concept to be reviewed have been ignored. Given this lack of inclusive consultation, the TNPA remains deeply concerned with the third policy above which "will encourage development in our national parks by calling for expressions of interest from private investors and tourism operators."

A call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) was made in *The Mercury* on Saturday 21st June. It was stated that proposals may range from activities at specific geographic locations to nature-based, resort-style accommodation, including walking tours, helicopter flights, mountain-bike riding, river cruises, new interpretative experiences or even luxury camping escapes. This call will remain open for five months. Echoing the Federal government's call that "Australia is open for business" the accompanying guidelines state that the new process will demonstrate that "Tasmania is open for business."

An assessment panel is to be formed to advise the Minister on which proposals will progress to Stage 2. Guidelines for the development of EOI state that a number of high-level principles are to apply and that any proposal that progresses to Stage Two will need to be assessed using the normal approvals pathways for developments on reserved land. While the TNPA supports this assessment process, we nevertheless have a number of concerns about other aspects of the Guidelines.

First, while the Guidelines state that proposals 'should be compatible with the statutory management objectives', EOI that are 'not fully compatible with the current statutory and regulatory framework' can still be lodged. Surely, this statement is contradictory. Second, the Guidelines also state that for 'suitable proposals that meet the assessment criteria', the Government may consider options to amend management plans if required. Again, if a proposal is compatible with the statutory management plan for a given national park then a change to the plan would not be necessary. This raises a serious concern as, in essence, this allows the Minister to decide – apparently at his discretion and not according to what is in the management plan - what is to be deemed suitable.

Unfortunately, we have seen such arbitrary rewriting of

management plans before. For example, in 2001, in order to allow a proposed development at Cockle Creek to proceed the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan had to be altered. This alteration zoned the previously unzoned development site as part of the Cockle Creek East Visitor Services Site. One of the three sentences that were changed was: "In the Southwest National Park development of infrastructure, including huts, is not allowed in view of the natural character of the area". This was replaced by "In the Southwest National Park development of infrastructure, including huts, is not allowed, except within Cockle Creek East Visitor Services Site." Fortunately this development did not proceed. There should be no arbitrary changes to regulatory frameworks and management plans, which have been developed over many years with public input, to appease a potential developer's wish!

Several recent announcements indicate that the new government is already adopting bad habits in the assessment of proposals which could potentially impact on the values protected within conservation reserves. The secretive nature in which the MONA art installation at Melaleuca was processed, and the recent announcement that Tasmanian Air Adventures has been granted a number of exclusive licences to land within the WHA (including a 12 month trial at Lake St Clair) and other national parks, indicate that little consideration is being given to community consultation. The maintenance of peace and quiet in the WHA has been identified as a significant management issue in national parks in several countries and, indeed, was a major issue in the formation of the TNPA just over a decade ago. The trial seaplane landings at Lake St Clair would also seem to ignore critical conservation issues, with lake shore erosion having been formally assessed and determined to be a critical issue in the 1990s, resulting in an agreement with Hydro Tasmania to maintain the lake levels 1m higher than had been the case.

The TNPA supports appropriate tourist-based opportunities in and around national parks and the regional benefits that will flow from such projects. However, we argue strongly that these same benefits can be achieved by placement of most such projects outside the boundaries of Tasmania's national parks. Indeed, the development of very successful tourist nodes at places such as Strahan, Coles Bay and Cradle Valley validates this argument. It is not possible to place infrastructure facilities such as 'resort-style accommodation', as mentioned in the government's call for EOIs, within a national park and World Heritage Area without degrading the very essence of the natural environment and the World Heritage conservation values for which the area was originally protected.

The TNPA urges recognition that national parks have a distinctive function to perform that is separate from the service of conventional tourism (see *TNPA News* No. 4) and calls on both the State government and the tourism industry to acknowledge this unique role, and to ensure that they remain the havens for nature conservation and self-reflection that they were originally set aside for. In this regard the TNPA supports the vision presently outlined by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) in their Strategic Framework for Visitor Services in Tasmania's Parks and Reserves:

"Everyone who visits our parks and reserves is there to experience the natural and cultural areas at first hand: to be immersed in areas that feel largely untouched: to experience their beauty and tranquility"

The TNPA looks forward to supporting the PWS to achieve this vision and will follow the EOIs which may be forthcoming with great interest to ensure that the values presently protected within our national parks are fully maintained. (Note: For an inspiring insight into the role of national parks, I highly recommend the book by Joseph Sax "Mountains without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks").

In concluding, we do indeed live in 'interesting times'. The challenges ahead remain similar to those faced before and I thank all our members and supporters for continuing to support the work of the TNPA. In endeavouring to be the public voice on issues concerning the management of Tasmania's conservation reserves, I am reminded of the famous quote from Edmund Burke, "Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little."

Postscript:

In a move which appears to be yet another attack on environmental protection across Australia and the further disenfranchisement of the community, the Liberal Party's federal council, which meet in late June, has unanimously voted to strip eco-charities of the same rights permitted to other charities, including tax-deductable donations. Federal member for Bass, Andrew Nikolic, who introduced the motion, claims "these groups attract concessions and donations, then engage in illegal activities" (*ABC News*, 29 June). Mr Nikolic targeted groups such as the Wilderness Society, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Bob Brown Foundation and all the Environmental Defenders' Offices as "engaging in the sort of activism that is at odds with Tasmania's future prosperity". And as the TNPA also has charity status I gather he is also accusing us of the same actions.

In response I refer to a media statement by the Tasmanian EDO, the community legal service that has provided legal advice to community groups (including the TNPA), local government, and small businesses for many years on a myriad of planning and appeal law and assists people to participate, lawfully and effectively, in decisions that affect them: "Our lawyers are professional, dedicated and well-respected.....The suggestion that we engage in illegal activities, or assist others to do so, is both false and offensive."

Unfortunately the community services provided by the Tasmanian EDO (as those interstate) have been significantly restricted due to the recent termination of their core funding by the Federal government. If possible, I encourage you to make a make a tax-deductable donation to the EDO Tasmania Rescue Appeal – while you can!

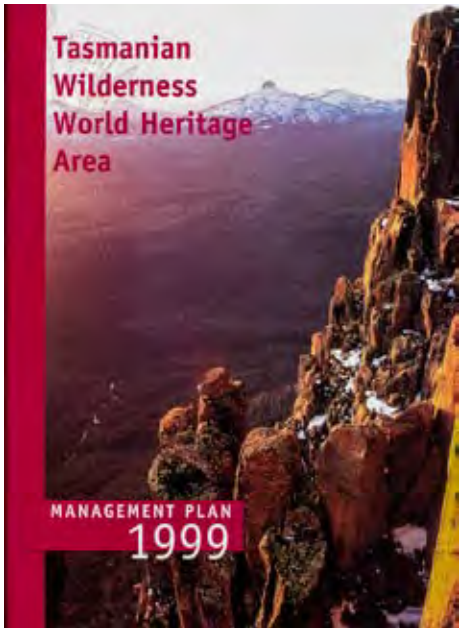
Robert Campbell (President, TNPA)

TNPA REPORT

By Nick Sawyer

The greatest current threat to Tasmania's wilderness – the review of the management plan for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

The 1999 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan (TWWHAMP) has guided the management of the TWWHA for 15 years. It is still relevant but it cannot be denied that it is overdue for review, if only because of the additional areas added to the TWWHA since 1999. Most attention has focussed on the areas added in 2013 as an outcome of the Tasmanian Forests Agreement (TFA) but the Melaleuca – Cox Bight area should not be forgotten. Previously designated Conservation Area and excluded from the TWWHA, the cessation of tin mining led to its inclusion in the Southwest National Park and it has been part of the TWWHA since 2012.



Reviews of management plans rarely attract much attention compared to actual development proposals or the recent attempts to delist parts of the TWWHA but the TWWHAMP defines the process for the assessment of development proposals of all types; it will play a crucial role in the assessment of any proposals attracted by the state government's current call for expressions of interest in tourism development in Tasmania's national parks and other reserves. As a statutory management plan under Tasmanian legislation its requirements are legally enforceable so it has considerable potential to facilitate or frustrate the government's development agenda depending on the changes made in the current review. If the review results in the removal of many of the constraints on development contained in the current plan it presents a greater threat to Tasmania's wilderness than anything else currently proposed by the state or federal governments.

Despite the apparent demise of the TFA, the timeline for the review is set by the TFA requirement that management plans for the land reserved under the TFA be developed within 12 months of their proclamation. i.e. by 18 December 2014. This is interpreted by PWS as having a final draft of a revised plan for the entire TWWHA to the Planning Commission for review by 18 December 2014. This review will take a minimum of several months so the earliest that the plan can take effect will be some time in 2015. The TNPA appreciates the desirability of developing management prescriptions for the TWWHA extension areas as soon as possible but is alarmed that this is being used to justify rushing the review of the plan for the entire TWWHA. It is impossible to do it properly in such a tight timeframe especially with the very limited resources allocated (one staff member to do most of the work). At time of writing PWS state that the public comment draft will be available "in July". This seems unlikely. The actual timeline will soon be apparent – the draft will need to be made available for public comment by the end of September at the latest if this is to be incorporated into a final draft by 18 December 2014.

A consequence of this rushed process is the minimal amount of public consultation. Most key stakeholders have been consulted directly and a series of unstructured and poorly advertised public meetings was conducted around the state in December 2013. The only other consultation planned is the mandatory period for public representations on the draft plan. This could be as short as the legal minimum of thirty days but PWS has indicated that a longer period is likely. This will be the first public exposure of policy on new issues such as deer hunting within the TWWHA – see other article in TNPA News. In these circumstances there is no chance of achieving consensus on a controversial issue such as this. A far more sensible response to the TFA requirements would be to produce some sort of interim management document for the TWWHA extension areas and then take the time required to undertake some meaningful consultation leading to a well-considered plan for the entire TWWHA.

The 1999 TWWHAMP provides a sound basis for the new plan and there are two other major documents which will also feed into the new plan. These are the 2004 State of the TWWHA Report and the 2007 limited review undertaken by PWS. This canvassed a broad range of issues which had arisen since 1999 and included a reasonable level of public consultation. The outcomes were never formally incorporated into the TWWHAMP because this was deferred pending legal advice on statutory powers which took much longer to resolve than anyone anticipated.

Concerns

The greatest concern is that the new plan will be unduly influenced by current government priorities. Despite the preceding documents providing a good balance, it is likely to be biased towards facilitating development and minimising restrictions on aerial access and damaging activities such as hunting and four-wheel-driving. The review is not being undertaken by experienced PWS planners as would be expected. The PWS has little more involvement than many other agencies and organisations that are being consulted. The review is being conducted by staff of the DPIPWE Policy Section with limited experience of reserve planning. At the Hobart public consultation meeting in December 2013 it was hinted that the new plan will prescribe a simplistic, reductionist approach to impact assessment (in contrast to the holistic approach of the 1999 plan). In short: anything goes, so long as it complies with specific requirements of Tasmanian legislation and it can be demonstrated that it has no significant impact on world heritage values. These are so broad (e.g. outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history) that they are unlikely to be significantly affected by any single development. Despite widespread misconceptions and the name of the WHA (Tasmanian Wilderness), wilderness is not a world heritage criterion and the limited protection for wilderness contained in the Tasmanian *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* does not carry much weight, so such an approach provides no guarantee of protection of wilderness. A resort in a remote location could easily be approved if it does not require the destruction of threated flora or fauna, or Aboriginal heritage.

Another tactic for achieving the December 2014 deadline is likely to be the deferring of many important decisions to subsidiary plans – to be developed later and not subject to the public scrutiny that goes into the development of a statutory plan.

A bit of history …

It is often forgotten that first TWWHAMP took effect in 1992 but never received the support of all key stakeholders because it was seen as too pro-conservation. This led to an attempt to really engage all stakeholders in the development of the 1999 TWWHAMP. This was undertaken over a period of several years by a team of experienced PWS planners. The first stage of consultation was an *Issues Stocktake* in which all users were invited to tell the planners what issues were important to them, and why. The planners used this information to prepare a set of ten *Issues and Options* papers which provided background information on each topic and canvassed possible management responses, with an associated questionnaire. These had a valuable educational role as well as providing insight into the range of opinions on these topics. As a consequence the final stage of consultation, the formal public comment on the draft plan, was uncontroversial and raised no new issues of consequence. Some have described this multistage process as causing "consultation fatigue" but the outcome was an absence of serious dissatisfaction from any major stakeholder group. The *Mercury* editorial (16 April 1999) at the time of the plan's release concluded "it provides a sensible and practical way to allow wilderness to be used, while minimising the risk of abuse".

Policy

The debate over wilderness management is often presented as a simplistic conflict between preservation (preserve wilderness by excluding people) or presentation (provide visitor facilities which destroy the wilderness). But it doesn't have to be an either/or situation; done intelligently you can have your cake and eat it too.

The policy advocated in the 1999 TWWHAMP was not perfect but it satisfied most users by providing for most accommodation to be located outside the TWWHA with interpretative facilities and a range of high standard short walks in Visitor Service Zones around the TWWHA (e.g. Cradle Mountain) while keeping remote wilderness areas wild.

This approach is broadly supported by the TNPA. It has served Tasmania well for 15 years. The tourism industry has thrived without significantly compromising the wilderness – which is what most of their clients come to see. Yet elements of the tourism industry and the current government cannot see this – their vision appears to be aircraft access and resorts in the heart of the wilderness, which will destroy wilderness, divide the Tasmanian community and will not be a net benefit for the tourism industry.

Conclusion

The 1992 plan was never widely accepted because it was seen as too pro-conservation. The 1999 plan was widely accepted as a good compromise and it has stood the test of time. It seems likely that the 2015 plan will never be widely accepted because it is too pro-development, but how much conflict will result, and irreversible damage will be done, before the pendulum swings back to the "good compromise" position?

To keep up-to-date on the development of the plan check:
http://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/conservation/tasmanian-wilderness-world-heritage-area/new-tasmanian-wilderness-world-heritage-area-management-plan

TNPA REPORT

By Nick Sawyer

Recreational deer hunting – the latest attraction in the TWWHA?

A 2005 DPIW report "The Distribution and Abundance of Fallow Deer in the Central Plateau Conservation Area (CPCA) and adjacent areas in Tasmania" confirmed the presence of deer within the TWWHA although it is unclear if their presence is permanent or transitory. There have also been reports of attempted (illegal) introductions of deer to parts of western Tasmanian where they could become established (State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, 2004).

The 1999 TWWHAMP contains a "Specific Prescription" to "Prevent the establishment of deer populations in the WHA". According to the 2004 State of the TWWHA Report active eradication was attempted but this has been discontinued: "Eradication of deer is not feasible due to the presence of deer immediately outside the CPCA. If significant impacts are detected then local control could be implemented, but is likely to be costly" (minutes of the WHACC Meeting 76, 22-24 September 2005).

PWS may now be forced to give the issue more attention. The area of the Central Plateau to the north of Arthurs Lake and north-east of Great Lake which was added to the TWWHA in 2013 contains fallow deer and has previously been used for deer hunting.

The current edition of *Game Tracks* (DPIPWE's newsletter for hunters) refers to ongoing consultation about the possibility of allowing the hunting of fallow deer within the TWWHA including other areas currently identified as wallaby hunting zones in the 1999 TWWHA Plan. If this occurs it could involve a major shift in policy from "an intent to eradicate" to "management to sustain recreational hunting".

Clearly this is another issue to be addressed in the current review of the 1999 TWWHAMP. The TNPA opposes recreational hunting within the TWWHA but would probably support the use of recreational hunters in a feral animal control program managed by the PWS.

Thanks to Peter McGlone (Tasmanian Conservation Trust) for provision of some of this information.

TNPA REPORT

TNPA Autumn Walks 2014

The annual TNPA Autumn Walks event serves two main purposes: it gives members of the public an opportunity to experience and enjoy some of our National Parks and reserved areas and it also raises the public profile of the TNPA and the crucial role that the organisation plays. Autumn Walks this year included:

Cape Queen Elizabeth, Bruny Island

This walk, within Bruny Island National Park, is both easily accessible and very scenic and includes a variety of coastal and geological features that lie within the Park. It was a very enjoyable day and some participants signed up for subsequent Autumn Walks.

Thark Ridge, Wellington Range.

Many people who have walked on Mt Wellington have never been to Thark Ridge and seen this wilder side of Mt Wellington. Participants were able to experience a relatively pristine part of the Wellington Range – but which could be encroached on if plans for a mountain bike 'Epic Ride' track go ahead (see article *Wellington to ~~Wilderness~~ Glenorchy* in TNPA News #18).

Chauncy Vale – Tim and young Autumn walkers, Image: Bec Johnson.

Chauncy Vale

Always a popular walk and this year Bec again had the assistance of Tim Devereux to help with the big group. The Chauncy Vale walk is very popular with families and Bec and Tim ensure that the children who come have a great time being out in nature in one of our reserved areas.

Tarn Shelf – Rodways circuit, Mt Field National Park

It was a perfect day for this high level walk. Walk coordinator Anne McConnell enhanced the bushwalk experience with some geomorphological explanations of the landscape - and also drew our attention to examples of PWS work not done well! The group included one participant from overseas – who stressed that these wild places need to be kept wild – no cafes, hotels etc.

Mt Direction from Risdon Brook Dam

The day started overcast but gradually cleared. Walk coordinator Rosemary led participants through some beautiful eucalypt grassy woodland. The Mt Direction summit has an impressive nineteenth century Surveyor Sprent summit cairn – and great views to the upper Derwent Estuary. The walk was all on reserved land, including the Meehan Range Nature Recreation Area.

Cape Raoul, Tasman Peninsula

Participants were again favoured by the weather, in an area very exposed to the elements. The walk provided a good opportunity to point out the many defects in the planned Three Capes multi-day walk. Two walks did not go ahead because of unsuitable weather conditions.

TNPA would like to thank all our walks coordinators, who generously volunteer their time, bushwalking experience and love of our precious natural places. A big thanks also to John Cannon, for again featuring TNPA Autumn Walks in his regular newspaper column.

Cape Raoul, Tasman Peninsula. Photo: Catharine Errey.

Tarn Shelf, Mt Field National Park. Photo: Anne McConnell.

Cape Queen Elizabeth Track, Bruny Island. Photo: Catharine Errey.

From Top: Rock Arch, Bruny Island. Photo: Catharine Errey. Bottom Image: Tarn Shelf, Mt Field National Park. Photo: Anne McConnell.

by Paul Smith

How the false promise of economic growth destroys our environment

On February 16, 2014, a month before the recent Tasmanian State election, the front page of the Sunday Tasmanian *declared: "Voters clear on what politicians must deliver… JOBS, JOBS, JOBS". It reported a poll of 2912 voters showing that 50.9% of them considered job opportunities and the economy to be the issues that would most influence their votes. In contrast only 21.3% selected health services, 12.1% education, 11.2% environment and 4.5% crime and safety.*

This random sample might be taken to summarize the environmental predicament here. With a 51% preference for economic growth versus 11% for the environment Tasmanians will degrade the environment - including our parks - wherever this seems necessary for further growth. This sense of priorities will be shown here to be misguided and a new paradigm of thought offered instead. The current paradigm, that economic growth is desirable - and usually urgently needed - is followed not only by commercial interests but also largely by environmentalists and Green politicians, who although apparently less keen on growth often advocate it for reducing unemployment with developments in industries such as tourism, the University of Tasmania, scientific research (medicine, Antarctica and the Southern Ocean), wine, horticulture, irrigated crops and renewable energy.

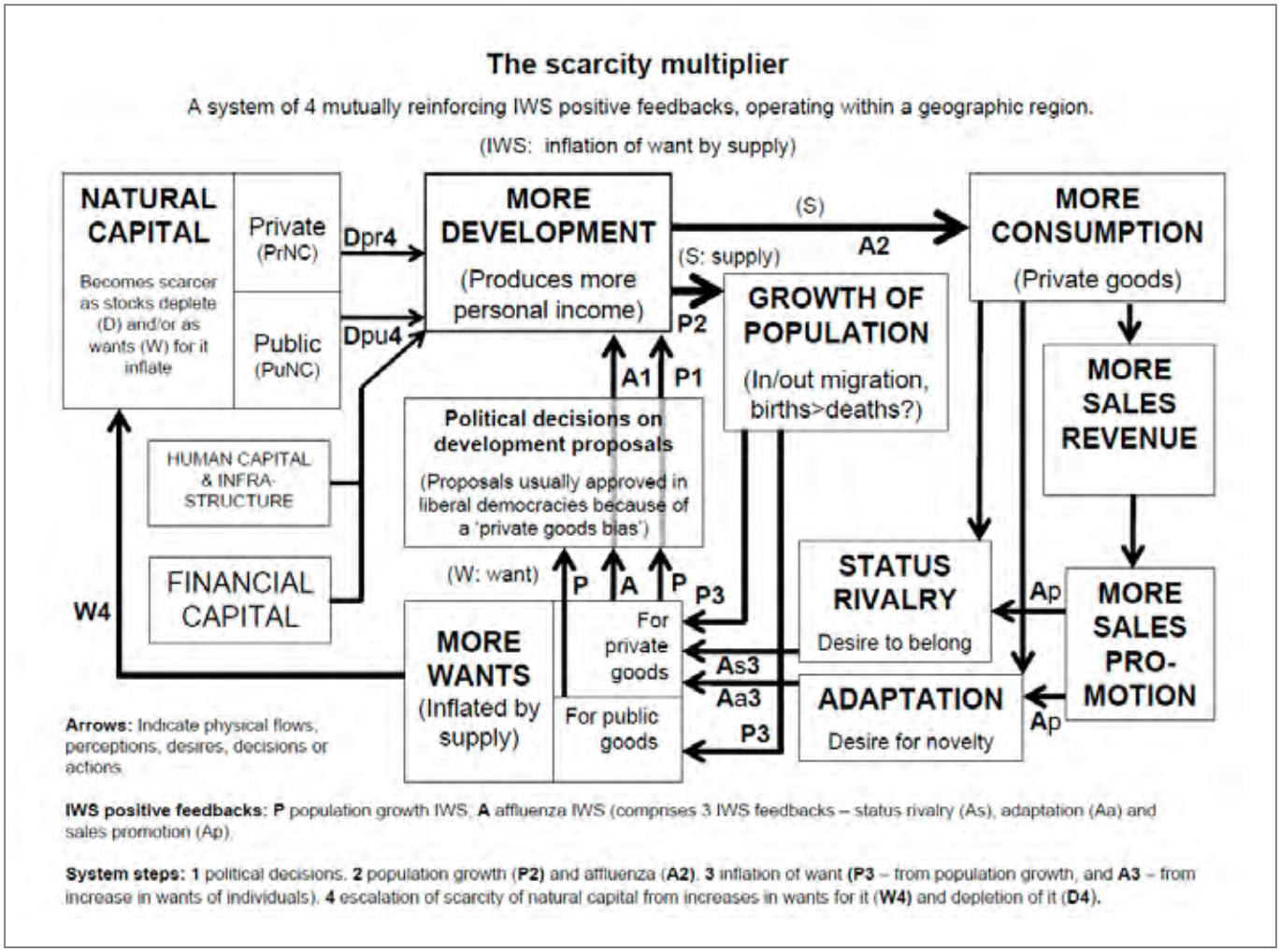
Before reviewing the current paradigm and offering a new one, a few crucial concepts must be sketched. The first is that of public and private goods. Public goods are things that are freely available for citizens to use without payment. They can be tangible, such as street signs, or intangible, like a high level of social trust. Private goods are in some sense owned by an individual or entity and thus may be used by others only with permission or by paying a price**.** These concepts lead to another, that the current paradigm is politically powerful only because it views economic growth as promising public goods. This is the promise that citizens expect from politicians and political candidates. Voters would not countenance them promising private goods, such as offering to make a few entrepreneurs wealthier by approving a new development project. Such promises are legitimate from markets, but not from governments, as the *only* justification for their existence is that they are needed to provide public goods that would not be provided unless citizens are organized (as by a government) to produce them. So, in the case of economic growth, its *politically* legitimate promise is that it will satisfy at least some of citizens' wants for more employment and income. If such satisfaction is made freely available to citizens in general, it is a public good. The current paradigm is that economic growth fulfils that promise of satisfaction. The proposed new paradigm is that economic growth not only fails to satisfy citizens' wants for more employment and income, it exacerbates those wants. If the new paradigm replaced the current one then the political case for further economic growth would be weakened or eliminated and democratic governments would become much more interested in protecting natural values.

The system analysis diagram below ('The scarcity multiplier') traces the consequences of Tasmanians following the current paradigm. These consequences are influenced by Tasmania's situation as a relatively developed region in a world of other regions, many of which are less economically and politically developed, with poorer indicators of quality of life such as lower per capita income, greater inequality, more damaged environments and relatively strong crowding effects. Because of this global context, Tasmania's population has a size and a rate of growth that result not only from its ratio of births to deaths but also its ratio of in-migration to out-migration. The argument that follows applies not only to Tasmania, but to any other region with a relatively well developed economy, such as Australia as a whole.

The central box in the diagram represents 'Political decisions' on economic growth – in other words, government decisions on applications to allow development projects and also their decisions to seek such projects. As noted in that box, democratic governments have a 'private goods bias', which means that they sometimes neglect their mission of providing public goods in order to provide private goods instead.

Democratic governments have this bias because politicians that display it tend to be more successful in elections.

As indicated by the arrows pointing from 'Political decisions…' up to 'More Development' the private goods bias means that development projects are usually approved, often despite widely recognized substantial costs for public goods such as the environment. The subsequent construction and operation of each project increases employment and income, which supports a larger population (arrow P2 to Growth of Population). That growth takes place mostly through migration: More people are attracted by the extra income and employment to live in Tasmania and fewer are compelled to leave it in order to find work. As indicated by the two arrows from 'Growth of Population' to 'More Wants' at the



centre bottom, this increase in population means that aggregate wants rise in Tasmania, for both private and public goods. This creates greater pressure to use its limited Natural Capital (upper left box) for both private (marketed) and public (free) goods. The increase in population also re-establishes some of the initial level of wants for More Development because although some of those wants for private goods have been met, there are now more Tasmanians, all wanting private (and also public) goods. Those partially re-established wants for private goods tend to renew the pressure on 'Political decisions on development proposals' for More Development. That tendency may be strengthened by a high preference in immigrants for private rather than public goods, as many of them will be from less affluent regions. This (at least partially restored) pressure for private goods then assists the private goods bias in 'Political decisions…' to again choose More Development (shown as P1). This drives Dpu4 (the conversion of public natural capital into private goods - D meaning depletion or escalation of scarcity) and Dpr4 (depletion of the per capita availability of private natural capital - such as freehold land). More Development also stimulates more Growth of Population and thus More Wants, which tend to lead again to More Development and so on.

This repetitive process is positive feedback, a cycle in which the initial drive (shown in the diagram as 'Political decisions…' for more development) is restored (at least partially) in each cycle. How far this particular feedback cycles is open to question, but immigration from other regions with fewer opportunities to exploit natural capital may continue to drive it as long as that difference between Tasmania and other regions lasts. Net migration may therefore overcrowd this State to the extent of overcrowding elsewhere, which would make its natural capital very scarce on a per capita basis. As this feedback system progressively heightens that scarcity, it is called the 'scarcity multiplier'.

As can be seen in the diagram, the scarcity multiplier also has other positive feedbacks. These work in the same direction as the population feedback so they reinforce each other in escalating scarcity. The additional feedbacks form a subsystem identified in the diagram by arrows marked A, A1, A2, As3, Aa3 and Ap, where A denotes 'affluenza', or addiction to consumption. This subsystem starts with More Development producing more income in Tasmania, which enables its citizens to increase (indicated by A2) their consumption of private goods (the More Consumption box), which in turn produces two psychological responses. These are: (1) citizens then want to consume even more private goods in order to elevate or maintain their social status relative to others (Status Rivalry or 'keeping up with the Joneses'); and (2) citizens soon adapt to their level of consumption, no matter how high it is, thinking that it would now be more interesting or convenient to consume even more (Adaptation). Status Rivalry and Adaptation therefore add More Wants (As3, Aa3). Note however, that these two responses work in private goods only, not public goods, so they increase the public pressure for political approval of new development projects (the central box) without a countervailing increase in pressure to protect public goods such as the natural environment. More Development and More Consumption follow, producing more Status Rivalry and Adaptation and so on. As

with Adaptation, Status Rivalry drives this feedback indefinitely because consumption by some provokes others to 'keep up' or 'get ahead' by consuming more, which then provokes retaliatory consumption, counter retaliation and so on. Meanwhile, the managers of commercial enterprises promote their sales with advertising that excites Status Rivalry and Adaptation, leading to even More Want for private goods, then More Development and More Consumption. The latter produces More Sales Revenue, which increases the funds for More Sales Promotion, which reinforces More Wants for private goods (via Ap then As3 and Aa3), leading to more political decisions for More Development, resulting in yet More Sales Revenue and so on. Affluenza thus comprises three feedbacks (status rivalry, adaptation and sales promotion) that inflate wants, one of which does it by boosting the other two. This system proceeds indefinitely and as it progresses it converts free public natural capital into marketed private goods and increases the prices of private natural capital, which escalates the prices of private goods.

With both the population growth and affluenza feedbacks operating simultaneously, the force of the multiplier is formidable because their growths of want are multiplied together rather than just added. While population growth increases the number of people, affluenza increases the wants of each one. The chart shows the crux of the multiplier as the central box, where politicians are under increasing pressure to provide private goods rather than public goods *such as* a *generous ratio of natural capital to population*.

This system analysis shows that the current promise of economic growth is false for Tasmania and other similar regions, such as Australia and the rest of the developed world. We need a new paradigm of thought: An understanding that economic growth does not satisfy wants for more employment and income, it exacerbates them. This would allow us to tackle the endless escalation of scarcity in natural capital. Although revolutionary, the new paradigm is shown by our analysis as actually agreeing with the current one - as far as the latter goes. All the new one does is accept the current one and then look further ahead, which produces a radically different conclusion. In the diagram, the current paradigm is the chain of events from 'Political decisions…' through More Development to More Consumption. That paradigm stops there, forming the horizon for many citizens, but as business operators are more directly concerned with the process they may be well aware that More Development leads also to Growth of Population and that both this and More Consumption generate More Wants for private goods, escalating popular pressure for yet More Development and so on. So while they may understand the process, business operators have a personal, monetary, short term incentive to see it not as a 'scarcity multiplier', but as a 'magic pudding' that grows if they eat it - and at least as fast as they can eat. This emphasizes the need for all of us - as voters - to understand the scarcity multiplier so that we can instruct our politicians to stop it and thereby enable our natural capital to be maintained at a level of per capita abundance that provides a good quality of life for our descendants.

That exhortation, however, will go unheeded because most voters are too busy with their lives to bother with such finesse. The real problem is government failure – the private goods bias at the heart of the multiplier. To protect Tasmania's quality of life we must reduce that bias. But how we might accomplish that while keeping government democratic is another story.

TNPA REPORT

By Nick Sawyer

The Changing Origins of Our Overseas Visitors – Changing Impacts on Tasmania's Natural Environment?

In the twentieth century it was rare to see a non-Caucasian face in a Tasmanian national park but now it is common (consistent with media reports of record numbers of visitors from China and other parts of Asia). This is a welcome development but it is also raises new issues for both tourism operators and natural area managers because the expectations of these visitors may be very different from what we have come to expect. See for example: http://theconversation.com/ecotourism-for-the-chinese-up-the-creek-without-a-paddle-25815

In Summary:

In the domestic Chinese white-water rafting industry the clients, up to 10,000 per day at the most popular sites, sit in small oval rafts and are flushed down the watercourse with no paddles and no control. If they fall out they are rescued by lifeguards stationed along the banks. In many ways, the activity is less like an active adventure sport and more like a fairground ride. The best estimate is that around 80 million young Chinese have already experienced this.

This implies that there is a giant pool of potential clients for natural area tourism in Australia but also that what these visitors expect may be very different from what we currently offer. If they visit a natural area in Australia they will be expected to have much more active involvement and take much greater responsibility for their own personal safety. And it is possible that this is only one aspect of the cultural differences. If visitors have no concept of wilderness as a natural area to be respected and preserved, who knows what facilities they may expect to find there.

If, as seems likely, many of our Asian visitors have expectations quite different to those of our traditional visitors, will Tasmanian tourist operators respond by giving these visitors what they think they want (modifying the local environment to provide an easy, sanitised, no-risk experience) or by educating them as to what wilderness is really all about?

TNPA REVIEW *by Anne McConnell*

Port Davey. Source - http://tasmaniaforeveryone.com.au/port-davey.htm

MONA, Dark MOFO and a Perversion, not of Art, but of process, in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

In April this year, as part of its 2014 Dark MOFO program plans MONA launched its "secret plan for an art project deep in the Tasmanian wilderness" via a Mercury article (21st April 2014). The article was somewhat bizarre as there was no information beyond that fact that the project was secret, an art installation, and was to be located in the Port Davey area. No one knew what it was or was about, who the artist was, or the opening date. It was deeply secret!

Needless to say, this sort of approach to any development or new infrastructure in Tasmania's national parks, and in particular in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, is of concern given the PWS' history of approving very dubious projects (eg, standing camps under eagles nests, high speed tourist boats on Lake St Clair with other boating use and shoreline erosion problems, and the Cockle Creek development which has never eventuated). The extreme secrecy was also of concern as this is generally the sign of an extremely dodgy development proposal.

The level of secrecy was astounding. As late as 2 weeks before the opening of Dark MOFO 3014, MONA failed to return the TNPA's phone calls and the PWS advised TNPA that they were not at liberty to divulge any information other than the proposal had been given PWS approval. Enquiries by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust at the local, state and national level had also failed to produce any information. Clearly having it at Port Davey helped maintain the secrecy of the project. In fact it was so secret it wasn't even advertised in MONA's Dark MOFO program!

But on 15th June 2013, the Mercury, who had flown down to Port Davey to inspect the very secret art installation, revealed all under the heading "IT'S not exactly what nature lovers hope to find when they travel to one of the most beautiful — and unspoilt — wilderness areas on the planet." The Mercury described the art installation as consisting of a prefabricated metal shed and associated advertising billboard advertising 'Poynduk Holiday Villas', Poynduk being the name proposed by Critchley-Parker in the early 1940s for a new Jewish homeland settlement in Southwestern Tasmania, noting that the installation would be removed after six months. Interestingly they also noted that they had to follow "a track that workers had worn through dense tea-tree scrub from the shoreline" to find the art installation, suggesting to the reader that it was not exactly well advertised. Other advice received also indicated that a track had been cut to access the hut, the installation was on stilts and therefore created little disturbance to the ground/vegetation; but - although quite small, it was very visible from the surrounding area.

The art installation is the work of Swiss artist Christoph Buchel. The identity was intended to be kept secret, but was revealed in the Mercury (26th June 2014) in relation to another Dark MOFO art work of Buchel's at MONA that had been removed following

Bathurst Harbour from Mt Rugby. Source - http://tasmaniaforeveryone.com.au/port-davey.htm

complaints by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that the work was offensive. The same article also noted that during the exhibition planning, MONA had rejected other of Buchel's material.

So what are the issues, if any, with MONA's Dark MOFO installation?

- The main issue is that the whole process has been kept secret and as such has not been able to be scrutinised by the public, or any other agency. This sets a very bad precedent for development approvals in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, and in any national parks and reserves in Tasmania. It is also of concern given some of the PWS development approvals in the last 10 years. There should be no occasion where a development proposal should need to be kept secret and assessed in secret, and the art installation at Port Davey is certainly not an example – the secrecy in this case appearing to be little more than to create additional hype around Dark MOFO. It has possibly backfired in this case, with MONA's moves to bypass public scrutiny in reality having " 'knocked some polish' off MONA's reputation" as noted by Peter McGlone of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust.
- The installation has been justified by both the PWS and MONA, because it is 'a temporary art project that celebrates Tasmania's history and heritage', presumably the temporary nature implying minimal impact. The TNPA disagrees.
- Firstly, while the installation is only for 6 months, it has necessitated a cut track and will inevitably lead to buttongrass trampling (why was there not a temporary boardwalk, or the installation located closer to the current public use area?). Also, there has been no public disclosure of anticipated visitor numbers. Is it a popular visitor attraction that will encourage more visitors, hence result in greater impacts to the local area, or as is more likely given the almost non-existent advertising and its installation over the winter and wet spring months, is it yet another white elephant in our national parks, with the impacts that have been caused, having been caused for little reason? It is hardly likely to be popular if no one knows it is there, or how to find it.
- The TNPA also argues, contrary to MONA's claims, that the installation fails to celebrate Tasmania's history and heritage. Apart from the name 'Poynduk', which is unknown to most people, there has been no attempt to relate the installation to the history of Critchley-Parker or the proposed Jewish homeland – the advertisement is for "holiday villas", hardly a serious new homeland with industry; the modern tin shed has nothing to do with a new family home or the architecture of Le Corbusier's, and is unarguably unnecessary; and there is apparently no interpretation that would allow visitors to understand the meaning behind the sign and shed. We suggest the installation does not constitute the type of 'presentation' of the values of the TWWHA provided for in the current management plan.
- Not only does the installation not present The TWWHA's values, but the approach taken by the PWS in relation to this proposal goes against recommendations made in the 2004 State of the TWWHA Report, namely:
  - Enhancing community engagement in WHA management (Recommendation 3); and
  - Maintenance of natural peace and quiet (Recommendation 22).

Although the TNPA does not support the secrecy in which the whole matter has been shrouded, in particular the secret approvals process, and does not support this particular art installation, the installation however could be considered to provide a public benefit - there could not be a better advertisement against placing developments in the TWWHA! Perhaps we have underestimated MONA, and we should appreciate this installation as a dramatic and political protest against current government policy that promotes increasing development in Tasmania's national parks for the sake of another dollar in the government's purse and unheeding of the long term impact on our parks.

Critchley Parker and a Southern Jewish Homeland

During the Second World War, a Melbourne businessman, Critchley-Parker, developed a plan to relocate persecuted Jewish Europeans to the remote south-west coast of Tasmania to form a new Jewish homeland. Critchley Parker died while he was surveying the boundaries for the new state and his vision was never realised, although he had the support of Tasmania's Premier of the time.

The Kimberleys in the remote, north-west corner of Australia had already been seriously considered as a possibility for a Jewish homeland. In 1933, before the Holocaust even emerged, a Dr Isaac Steinberg and his London-based Freeland League selected the Kimberleys as a place to purchase agricultural land for the resettlement of 75,000 Jewish refugees from Europe. This became known as the 'Kimberley Plan' and was based on the Australian government's officially-declared need to populate 'The North'. Ultimately the Federal government decided not to support the idea.

In 1941 Parker met Isaac Steinberg when he was in in Australia to discuss the Kimberley Plan. Together Parker and Steinberg set off to explore the area around Port Davey, and determined from that visit that Bathurst Harbour had the potential for a settlement. Critchley-Parker returned to Bathurst Harbour in 1942 to survey boundaries for the settlement, but died of pleurisy before he could be rescued. His grave, a designated heritage site, is in the Melaleuca area.

Before he died Critchley-Parker wrote in detail of his plans for this new Jewish homeland, including giving it the name Poynduk, the local Aboriginal word for 'swan'. The plan, which was for a settlement of towns, with buildings designed by Le Corbusier, and accompanied by industry and underpinned by the solid base of a Soviet-style planned economy, was never realised, with the State of Israel being established only a few years after World War II.

[Sources: ABC &:30 Report (18 January 2010); The Age Saturday Review 'The promised land' (24 January 2004); and http://melbourneblogger.blogspot.com.au/2012/10/a-safe-haven-for-jews-in-tasmania-1941_23.html (23/10/2012)

By Nick Sawyer

Its own Worst Enemy – The Tasmanian Tourism Industry (or parts of it)!

What are they doing?

We are witnessing increasingly strident calls for the abolition of "green tape" which is supposedly stopping Tasmanian businesses from setting up profitable and environmentally sound developments in national parks. This is justified by stories such as the one that implies that development at Pumphouse Point on Lake St Clair has been stalled by green tape for 18 years. The reality is that over this time, three separate proposals (different projects, different proponents) for this site have been approved. The reason they have not been constructed is absence of finance, not absence of approval. The only other example of a major development proposal within the TWWHA (the Cockle Creek Lodge) also received all necessary development approvals but was never constructed.

These calls originate from the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania (TICT) and prominent developers whose main interest is in wilderness lodges. It would be very interesting to understand the extent to which the TICT represents the views of the broader tourism industry. One wonders whether many of the smaller tourism operators with a stronger environmental focus share the views espoused by the TICT.

Simultaneously we have market research (most recently *Motivators and Satisfaction of Visitors to Tasmania*, Tourism Research Australia, February 2014) finding that four of the top five "core appeals" of Tasmania are provided mostly by national parks. These are wilderness and nature, heritage and history, pristine and untouched scenery, and wildlife (the other one was food, wine and produce). This makes it clear why elements of the tourism industry are so keen to have greater access to national parks but also why it is important to preserve these values. There is no greater current threat to wilderness or pristine and untouched scenery than tourism development in these areas.

Why are they doing it?

Clearly, calls for abolition of green tape are not driven by evidence – Pumphouse Point and Cockle Creek were approved under the current assessment processes and market research makes it clear that unimpeded development in national parks would eventually destroy the core appeal of Tasmania.

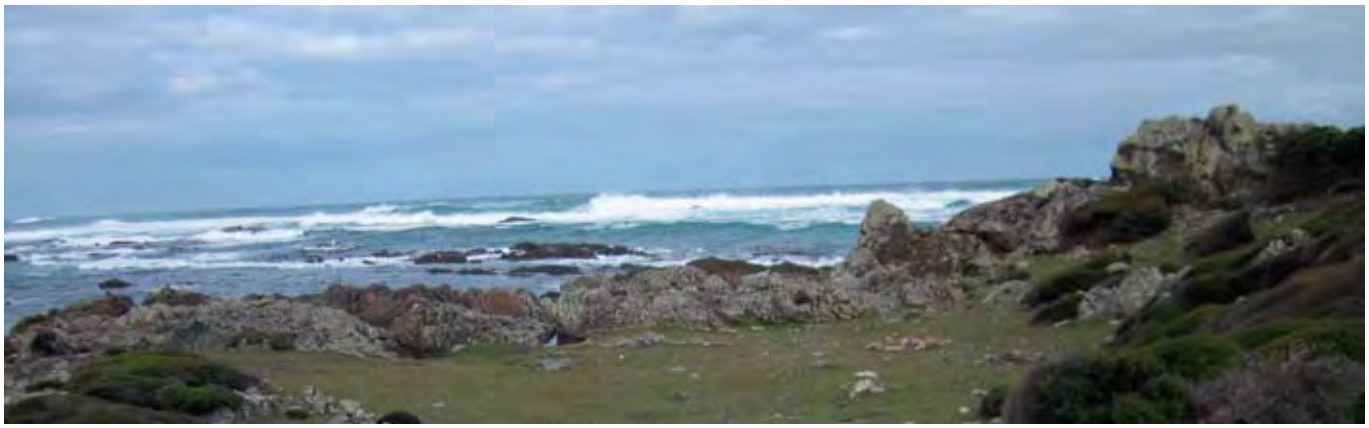
One can only conclude that the wilderness lodge lobby is motivated by an ideological belief in its right to exploit natural areas regardless of evidence that this needs to be constrained, mirroring the behaviour of our current state and federal governments in a range of areas.

And how do we respond?

I imagine that most readers of TNPA News (and many others) are motivated by a strong sense of respect for undisturbed nature but it seems clear that many vocal members of our society do not feel this – the paradigm espoused by our politicians and the wilderness lodge lobby is that nature is another resource to be exploited in order for people to make a living. This implies that campaigning solely on the basis that *wilderness/nature is wonderful – it should be protected* is unlikely to win too many arguments. If we are to convince the materialistic lobby groups in our society that nature is worth protecting, we have be more pragmatic – *wilderness/nature must be protected because it is the core appeal of the Tasmanian tourism industry*. Sadly, those who need to be convinced of this include elements of the Tasmanian tourism industry.

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY

The Tarkine Coast, Easter 2014



The following observations have been sent in by one of TNPA's members who spent Easter 2014 walking down the Tarkine coast from Temma to the Interview River (and back) over seven days.

1. Why has it taken me until now to discover what a beautiful piece of coast it is between Temma and the Pieman River?! The rocky bays, the marsupial lawns and the undisturbed crescentic shell midden ridges echoing the natural sand dunes are truly beautiful. And, although no doubt in part destabilised by human activities, the sand dune fields are magnificent. At times one is at the beach, but at times one can imagine climbing snowy crests, or exploring the Saharan desert.
2. Great to see healthy looking Devils scampering across the dunes.
3. Having followed the debate around 4 wheel driving on the coast, and being aware of the impacts of this activity, I was pleasantly surprised at how few 4WDs we encountered at what I thought would be at peak period, and at how little off road driving appeared to be occurring. We also saw very little vandalism of the PWS signs. It seems that the PWS' *Arthur Pieman Conservation Area Sustainable Recreational Vehicle Access* 2012 strategy is having some success. This reinforces that strategic approaches based on good knowledge and consultation are likely to have more success.
4. I was encouraged to encounter some PWS staff in small 4WD vehicles which I understand are all terrain and which enable the Rangers to get out and check on 4WD activity throughout the area, something they were not able to before acquiring the vehicles. It's good to see funding support happening for important PWS initiatives.
5. But, there still is a certain amount of irresponsible 4WD activity going on. In several places in the dune areas we noted new vehicle tracks through areas just starting to stabilise. So sad to see this, when there are such vast unvegetated areas of dune and beach to drive on. And so unnecessary.

Clockwise from Top: Midden, Tarkine Coast. Devil tracks, Tarkine Coast. Vehicle tracks on dunes, Tarkine Coast. Images: Anne McConnell.

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY

Mt Field Facilities

Is the shipping container the new standard for PWS visitor facilities?

The old Sitzmark Lodge adjacent to the Mount Field ski tows was demolished last year due to general deterioration and asbestos concerns which precluded restoration (fair enough). Its temporary (?) replacement is pictured above. PWS has initiated consultation about a permanent replacement (good) but does not have a budget or a timeframe for the construction of the permanent replacement (bad).

This is symptomatic of a greater malaise in the PWS – its budget is very tight, and likely to get tighter. The consequence is that PWS is now forced to defer tasks that should be part of its core business – such as this – until external funding becomes available. A much more prominent example of the same problem is the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre. Ever since the shuttle bus service commenced operation some years ago this has been operating out of an inadequate pre-existing building which uses shipping containers for public toilet blocks. PWS apparently has approved plans for a purpose built replacement but has to wait for windfall external funding to build it. And this is while it is pouring millions of dollars of external funding into the Three Capes fiasco.

Shipping containers at Mt Field. Images: Nick Sawyer.

TNPA UPDATE

Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Proposed Revocation of New Areas

As members will be aware, on coming into power in late 2013, the new Federal government lost no time in developing its proposal to have approximately 74,000 ha of the then recently added areas of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA), thus acting on an election promise. In this they were strongly supported by the Tasmanian Liberal party.

The proposal was to de-list areas the government claimed had logging coupes in, therefore was degraded forest, hence not of World Heritage value. The government also claimed neighbour issues as a secondary reason for the proposed de-listing.

The Federal government's request to the World Heritage Committee was ultimately unsuccessful. The request was considered World Heritage Committee in June this year. The Committee did not agree to the request, concluding that the Australian government had not provided sufficient compelling evidence to support their request.

The Federal government's proposal failed to show how the situation had changed since the area was listed (in effect no change), it failed to appreciate that the presence of logging coupes in the 2013 TWWHA additions had been clearly stated, and it failed to appreciate that many World Heritage properties have degraded or compromised areas, and in recognition of this, the World Heritage Operational Guidelines have as a key obligation, rehabilitation where appropriate.

Most importantly in the view of the World Heritage Committee, was the Federal government's failure to appreciate that the areas proposed for revocation included other values of World Heritage significance (outstanding universal value). Brief reviews of these are provided in the text of Anne McConnell's speech elsewhere in this issue, and also in a *Conversation* article by Kevin Kiernan which can be found on - http://theconversation.com/tasmanias-world-heritage-debate-needs-to-look-beyond-the-trees-28183

A significant amount of lobbying was also undertaken by major ENGOs, for example the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, Environment Tasmania and the Australian Conservation Foundation., as well as by other concerned groups including Australia ICOMOS and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. The Tasmanian Aboriginal community was sufficiently concerned about the proposed revocation that two members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community (Ruth Langford, Secretary of the TAC, and Rocky Sainty, Chair of the interim Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Council) went to DOHA to lobby. Although the TNPA was not actively involved in the lobbying, members of the TNPA Management Committee provided active support to this effort (see accompanying article).

The TWWHA and World Heritage Value

Defend the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Public Meeting, Wednesday 21st May 2014, Hobart Town Hall. Anne McConnell Speech

As we know, the Federal government, supported by the current state government, and with little other support, is proposing to delist some 74,000 hectares of the current Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The areas proposed for delisting are a significant part of the areas that were added to the World Heritage Area in late 2013, less than a year ago.

To support their proposal for delisting the government has promoted a number of myths:

Firstly they tell us that the World Heritage Area and national parks are 'locked up'. This is not true – this land is public estate and is open to anyone who wishes to venture onto this land in a manner that is compatible with the protection of the values for which it is reserved. If you look for the gates to keep people out, you will find these are predominantly on private land, around mines and in State forests.

Secondly, they tell us that conservation reserves are not productive, do not contribute to the economy and are a drain on the public purse. In 2009 the Federal government commissioned

Defend the TWWHA Public Meeting May 2014. Photo: Jenny Weber

a review of the economic activity of Australia's World Heritage Areas. This report found that at that time, the total management expenditure for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area was estimated at $9.3 million annually while visitation to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area alone contributed approximately $424 million annually in direct and indirect turnover and generated over three and a half thousand direct and indirect jobs. This is not an insignificant economic benefit.

Thirdly, the government would like us to believe that the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is really not that important – something we all know is not true.

To be recognised as World Heritage, a place must go through rigorous assessment at a number of levels. World Heritage status is given only to places agreed to have outstanding universal value. That is, extremely high value in a global context. It just doesn't get any more important than that!

To put it in context:

- World Heritage Areas include globally well known places such as the Pyramids, the Vatican City, the Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China, Angkor Wat, the Palaeolithic cave paintings of central France and northern Spain, and Yellowstone National Park.
- There are less than 1,000 World Heritage Areas world wide;
- Of these, only the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and 28 other World Heritage Areas have both natural and cultural values of outstanding universal value,
- The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is one of only a small number of world heritage areas globally that meets all four natural criteria for listing and as many as three of the seven cultural criteria for listing.
- And the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is one of the last expanses of temperate rainforest in the world.
- The size, diversity and integrity of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area means that it can preserve suites of, and a diversity of, vegetation, landscapes and cultural sites. This enables it to demonstrate in an unparalleled manner the geological and landscape evolution of Tasmania, temperate forests with Gondwanan connections, and the lifeways and long-term history of Tasmania's first human inhabitants.

But to do this, the full suite of values needs to be included in the area; and this brings us to the fourth and most recent myth, which is that somehow the current listing has areas that do not contribute to the World Heritage values.

To explore this, it needs to be understood that the 2013 extensions to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area are not just a grab bag of bits of forest of interest to a few radical conservationists. This extension contains a range of natural and cultural values that significantly complement the existing World Heritage values, filling in identified gaps in what was already included, and bringing into existence the World Heritage Area that was originally envisaged, but not previously realised, largely for political reasons.

And the areas proposed for delisting, contrary to the government's claims, do contain these types of value; values that are World Heritage values by virtue of the contribution they make to the outstanding universal values already recognised, and which enhance the integrity of the World Heritage Area.

Known significant natural and cultural values included in

Presenters at Defend the TWWHA Public Meeting. Photo: Jenny Weber

the areas proposed for delisting include the following:

- There is the glacial landscape complex on the Navarre Plains that tells a critical part of the story of glaciation in Tasmania, and which is rare southern hemisphere glacial landscape evidence;
- There is Nanwoon Cave in the Florentine Valley which is a highly significant Aboriginal cave site;
- There is a suite of open sites on the Navarre Plains that represent an important historical inland gathering place for Tasmanian Aboriginal people;
- There is a large part of the highly significant cultural landscape of the Recherche Bay area, arguably of World Heritage significance in its own right in relation to the historic interactions between Tasmanian Aboriginal people and early European explorers;
- And there are areas that contribute significantly to wilderness value, the value recognised in the name of this Tasmanian World Heritage Area.

Given our current knowledge, the areas to be delisted are also likely to contain other significant values that contribute to the World Heritage values, but we haven't completed the research into this.

Without these areas and their values, the World Heritage value is lessened.

One way to think of the issue is to think of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area as a book – a book that contains the history of Tasmania from geological times to the recent past, as well as documenting the human history. This is an incredibly rare and unique book, because the books that tell this story for other parts of the world are lost or badly damaged.

Before last year this rare book was missing some key sections. Last year some missing sections were found and replaced, and the book and its story is almost complete. Perhaps there are some stains on the pages, but stains can be removed and the story can still be read. But if we now tear out half the replaced pages, which would be the effect of the proposed delisting, we will be left again with only a partial story.

Surely this is not how rare and precious books should be treated? Surely this is not how our World Heritage Area should be treated?

As Newton Drury, an important historical national parks advocate, said "Our national parks and world heritage areas must be held inviolate. If we are going to whittle away at them, then Greatness will be gone."

Peter Matthiessen on Wilderness:

I feel a deep sorrow that my kids will never get to see what I've seen, and their kids will see nothing.

Peter Matthiessen was an American author best known for The Snow Leopard (1978).

He died on 5 April, 2014 aged 86.

TNPA UPDATE

THREE CAPES UPDATE

Construction of the Three Capes Track is proceeding rapidly. Like the Cape Hauy Track, it is being constructed to a much higher (i.e. expensive) standard than necessary. A TNPA member has recently walked from Fortescue to south of Lunchtime Creek including some of the newly opened sections of the Three Capes Track. His report raises two major concerns:

1. Vegetation clearance

The widest vegetation clearance observed was measured at exactly 4 metres and it continued at similar width as far as was visible. This section of track included the felling of at least one small tree. This appears to be excessive and inconsistent with the DPEMP section 4.1.4.1 which states:

"Vegetation clearance beyond the final track footprint will be limited to the minimum required to safely and efficiently construct the track and to ensure that the track meets the required standard. It is expected that the impacts on vegetation and soil within the 4m wide buffer zone, outside of the final track footprint, will be minor as track construction activities will largely be limited to the final track footprint over the majority of its length. Clearance of larger trees and shrubs will be avoided and the capacity to micro-site the track within the surveyed corridor will ensure that these will be retained, wherever practical, throughout its length."

A phone call to PWS regarding this same clearing confirmed that clearing of track should be 2 metres and PWS was not aware of any over wide clearings along the track.

On the completed (or almost completed) sections of Three Capes Track clearing width was inconsistent – there were many places where the clearing exceeded 2 metres for no apparent reason, but also similar places where it was no wider than the finished track.

The TNPA has written to PWS requesting advice on the measures taken by PWS to address this non-compliance with the requirements of the DPEMP and to ensure that it is not repeated.

2. Bushfire safety – Lunchtime Creek Hut

This hut is to be located in the upper valley of Lunchtime Creek in eucalypt forest 15-20 metres high. It is hard to imagine a more dangerous location to be trapped in if a major bushfire came through in dry conditions. There is no obvious nearby safe area (e.g. a beach or other open area) accessible to walkers and helicopter evacuation in the windy conditions usually associated with major fires would be extremely hazardous.

The bushfire safety measures prescribed in the DPEMP require reducing the vegetation within approximately 35 metres of the hut to small clumps of trees with spacing between clump canopies > 5 metres. The DPEMP also notes that "the establishment of the Bushfire Protection Zone to the north east of the hut will require careful planning". This would seem to be a massive understatement – the environmental and visual impact of the clearing will be massive.

The TNPA has written to PWS requesting:

- Reconsideration of the need for a hut at Lunchtime Creek. It is quite unnecessary because it is only about one hour's walk from the Retakuna Creek Hut. Even if both huts are constructed many walkers will choose to stay at one or the other, not both, regardless the itinerary proposed by PWS.
- Consideration of delaying the installation of the Lunchtime Creek Hut until PWS can establish that acceptable bushfire safety can be assured without unacceptable environmental and visual impacts.
- Confirmation of intention to clear a Bushfire Protection Zone as prescribed in the DPEMP, and if this clearing has already commenced.

Map showing eastern half of Three Capes Track. The southern half of the existing track is being upgraded as part of the Three Capes project while the northern half will eventually be closed. Credit: Nick Sawyer

This is not a 4WD track, this is vegetation clearing for a walking track within a national park! The widest part of this clearing was measured at exactly 4 metres. Photo: Nick Sawyer

TNPA UPDATE

THE LIFE & DEATH OF THE TASMANIAN PARKS & RESERVES AUTHORITY BILL 2013

A particular concern of the TNPA through the second half of 2013 was the proposed Parks & Reserves Authority Bill.

The Bill, which in effect would do away with the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service, was foreshadowed in a March 2013 media release by the then Deputy Premier, Bryan Green. This stated that:

> "The Government has decided to establish a new statutory parks and reserves authority within the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) (under the National Parks and Reserves Management Act), bringing together responsibility for management of national parks, reserves, crown land and carbon in reserves." (Media release, 18 March 2013).

The prime effect of the Bill was to create a new 'Authority', give the powers of the PWS Director (held since 2002 by the Secretary of Primary Industry, Parks, Water & Environment) to the Minister, and install a CEO as head of the Authority (the PWS staff). The Bill also provided for a Board to provide the Minister with strategic advice on planning and management of reserves.

Briefings were not provided to key ENGOs until July 2013, and at this point there was already a draft Bill, with the aim of presenting the Bill to the November sitting of Parliament.

On reading the Bill, several alarm bells began to ring –

- Why was the Authority being proposed, and what advantages did it have over the existing PWS (not clear)?
- In spite of being called a 'Statutory Authority' the model had none of the independence normally associated with statutory authority.
- Almost all the powers of the agency would go to the Minister.
- The proposed Board was to be less than half the size of the existing National Parks & Wildlife Advisory Council (NPWAC) and to only have responsibility for preparing reserve management plans and strategic plans, while eliminating the NPWAC, hence eliminating all formal stakeholder consultative capacity.

In the TNPA's view the actual proposal was an extremely retrograde step, and the TNPA lobbied strenuously to have the key issues addressed. The TNPA also sought active support from Environment Tasmania and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, and together with these groups initiated a number of meetings with the then Minister for Parks, Brian Wightman; the then Opposition Spokesperson for Parks, Matthew Groom; and the then leader of the Greens, Nick McKim; as well has having a number of meetings with the Secretary of DPIPWE, Kim Evans.

After considerable improvements to the Bill, made on the advice of the ENGO groups involved, the TCT and ET decided they would support the Bill. The TNPA however believed that a key stumbling block was the lack of independence of the Authority. The TNPA's position was that support would only be given to a truly independent statutory authority, although it was also the TNPA's view that there were better models and there should at least be an open informed debate on the various models.

In September 2013, the TNPA wrote to Brian Wightman advising him that – "The TNPA has a number of serious concerns with the proposal. These arise primarily out of a concern that the new management structure will not provide an effective management entity for Tasmania's extensive and high conservation value parks and reserves. At the heart of this is a need for such an entity to have a greater level of independence than the current structure has"; and noting that the TNPA would not support the Bill unless the following was included:

"1. That the Authority be an independent authority, governed by the Board

2. Given 1, that the Board have at least 50% membership comprising experts in the range of values that the parks and reserves are created to conserve.

3. That there is a regular mandated independent (third party) audit of the function of the Authority, focusing on how well the Authority is meeting the objectives of the Act with respect to conservation."

These requirements were not addressed. However, with general ENGO support, and Greens support, the Bill was tabled in Parliament in November 2013, one of a raft of dozens of pieces of new legislation or legislative amendments to be dealt with in the short sitting time before Christmas.

Ultimately the Bill was not passed. Since the government has changed, the Bill cannot be re-introduced. It would need to be put up as a new Bill. The TNPA understands that at this time the current government has no plan to re-put the proposal as a new

Bill, but has not ruled out doing so in the longer term.

The saga of the Parks & Reserves Authority Bill is something that environmentalists might also learn from. It is very much a case of 'be careful what you wish for, because you might get it' – and it won't be what you want!

After some sleuthing, it appears, curiously, that this Bill was the progeny of the environmental movement. It appears to be a bastardised version of the 'Department of Environment' proposal that Environment Tasmania and other groups, including the TNPA, have been advocating since the late 2000s, and which was something included in the list of desired outcomes from the Tasmanian Forest Agreement process.

Sadly however it was abandoned on the government's doorstep. Taken in by the government, and wet-nursed by DPIPWE, it was seriously whittled down to a mere shadow of what was originally intended. Apparently a 'Department' was too expensive so perhaps an 'Authority' would do. Not content with this diminishment, it appears that the proposal was also seen as a way to take more control from the management agency and conveniently place it in the hands of the Minister, at the same time giving the Minister responsibilities that were quite specific and which a Minister would never have the time to carry out.

What can we take away from the experience of the 2013 Parks & Reserves Authority proposal? Perhaps the clearest message is that in making proposals for significant changes, environmental groups need to be an integral part of the discussion and brokering throughout the process; and to have very clear, well stated ideas of what the significant changes will achieve, a framework for the desired change, and a set of core principles to be respected in the process.

Lake Newdegate, Mt Field National Park. Photo: Catharine Errey.

Above: TNPA Management Committee Meeting – we need new committee members to fill those vacant spots! Top Image: TNPA at the rally opposing delisting of 47,000 hectares of World Heritage Area. Photo credit: Ted Mead

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, Anne McConnell, Nick Sawyer and Paul Smith. Original articles in TNPA News may be reproduced , but please acknowledge the author and the source. Contributions for TNPA News No.20 are welcomed (deadline Nov 14 2014). Please send contributions to admin@tnpa.asn.au (attention: TNPA News editor).

This newsletter was correct as at 4 Aug 2014.

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Meetings
Management Committee meetings are usually held one Monday each month at 5:30 pm. Members and supporters are welcome. Meeting dates and venue will be advertised in each TNPA Communique or please check with the Secretariat.

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