TNPA NEWS

TASMANIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION INC

Newsletter No 3 Winter 2004

EXCLUSIVE DEAL EXPOSED: COCKLE CREEK EAST!

Approval was given on the 25 June 2001 for David Marriner of Stage Designs Pty Ltd to construct a new road 800m into the Southwest National Park, to build a lodge and tavern, 80 cabins, a 50m jetty, boathouses and spas, parking for 90 cars and four bus bays.

There was no development of the project over the following two years and the permit was extended in mid 2003 for another two years. A suspected hitch was the Catamaran bridge, which is unable to take the load which would be required for construction vehicles. On the 28 March 2004 Premier Paul Lennon announced the Government would spend $500,000 on the bridge upgrade, and that a development agreement had been signed with David Marriner of Stage Designs.

So it seems from this point the development will be full steam ahead. However the community opposition is mounting very rapidly. The TNPA lunchtime rally on Friday 7 May drew a passionate crowd of a few hundred. More people are offering assistance with the campaign as they become informed and a great many plans are evolving for action over coming months.

Tasmanians may well wonder how this development inside a National Park is possible.

Just how does David Marriner of Stage Designs get his hands on a prime coastal location that is rightfully protected in the Southwest National Park? Its natural and cultural values are so significant that the area is managed in accordance with the World Heritage Area Management Plan.

Freedom of Information received on the Planter Beach development reveals communication sent in an email on 25 August 1999 from Glenn Appleyard (Deputy Secretary of DPIWE) to Staged Development's [now Stage Design] Project Manager Rod King. Extracts from this email follow:

"Dear Rodney,

Thank you for showing myself, Max Kitchell and Bob Tyson the sites at Cockle Creek that you are considering for your proposed development. I note that your company has yet to finalise the preferred site and the precise scale of the possible development.

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

"During the site inspection we discussed the nature of the approval process that would be necessary for any proposal at the location you are investigating. While some things are clear, for example, there is no doubt the WHA management plan would have to be changed to accommodate any proposed development, other matters still require clarification. The most significant of these outstanding matters is whether the Commonwealth Government has a role or not. We have received some preliminary legal advice but will need to canvass the Commonwealth to obtain certainty on this issue.

"Firstly, a decision will need to be made as to whether Government deals with your company as preferred developer or whether it puts the site out for competitive expressions of interest process. To assist the government in making this judgement you might like to indicate the benefits you believe your proposal would bring to the State, particularly in terms of job creation and wealth generation. It would also be very useful to know what return to the Crown you propose for use of the site and whether you would be willing to enter into a partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service to assist with management of the surrounding national park. The Crown would, of course, also have to undertake a due diligence on your company prior to deciding preferred developer status..."

'Preferred site', 'WHA management plan changes', 'preferred developer', and 'partnership to assist with management'. These key phrases were used back in 1999.

The approval process failed to follow the correct sequence of steps, to the point where a letter was sent on 27 April 2000 to Glenn Appleyard from Kevin Keeffe, Assistant Secretary of the World Heritage Branch at the Commonwealth's Environment Australia office. An extract from the summary in their letter follows:

"Environment Australia has concerns regarding a number of aspects of the EIA.

It would appear that, in pursuit of a speedy assessment of the proposal, there has been a departure from the required sequence of steps for some important elements of the New Proposals and Impact Assessment Process. Important elements of the process have been undertaken without the necessary consultation with key stakeholders and a key step has been bypassed without reference to Ministerial Council."

Tim O'Loughlin, the WHA Planning Officer, advised that following receipt of this letter Ministerial Council revised the EIA to address the impact of the proposal on world heritage values and gave in-principle approval.

So, with scant community consultation, the Tasmanian Wilderness WHA Management Plan was duly altered in order to allow the East Cockle development. The development site was re-zoned into the Cockle Creek East Visitor Services Site and three sentences were altered in the text, notably:

"The following sentence:

'In the Southwest National Park development of infrastructure, including huts, is not allowed in view of the natural character of the area' is to be replaced by:

'In the Southwest National Park, in view of the natural character of the area, development of accommodation infrastructure, including huts is not allowed, except within the Cockle Creek East Visitor Services Site."

The "Cockle Creek East Assessment of Aboriginal Values" Report by Petra Schell was commissioned and managed by DPIWE on behalf of the developer, then Staged Developments Australia. Extracts from this include the following:

- *"Eighteen Aboriginal sites have been identified in the Primary Impact Zone with 15 further sites in the Secondary Impact Zone."*
- *"The Primary Impact Zone is the area to be impacted through construction of the development. The Secondary Impact Zone is the area potentially impacted by increased visitation following the construction of the development."*
- *"The proposed development will impact on Aboriginal values. As all Aboriginal values are interconnected, all values will be impacted (Schell 2000)."*
- *"The South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council do not support the proposed development."*

Despite further challenges via public submissions and opposition from Senator Brown at the planning tribunal the development was given the green light.

HAVE YOUR SAY...

Letters to the Editor at *The Mercury*
Please email: mercuryedletter@dbl.news.ltd.com.au
Letters to the Editor at *The Age*
(the developer is a well known Victorian) letters@theage.com.au
Letters to the Editor at *Herald Sun*
Please email: hsletters@hwt.newsltd.com.au
Please also provide name address and contact number.
Letters to the developer
(remember address the development in Parks issue, not the person):
reception@marrinertheatres.com.au

Such approval relies on a spurious interpretation of Article 4 of the *Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention* pertaining to presentation.

It is ridiculous to claim that a private sector resort and tavern development which destroys Aboriginal landscape values is consistent with Article 4. As no specific presentation proposal has been put forward by the developer, it is assumed that merely siting a resort in a National Park is presentation of that Park. How will the developer present the Aboriginal values which he has destroyed? It was clearly wrong for the Parks & Wildlife Director to claim that there is nothing in the Tasmanian World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999 that precludes a development of a 60-80 cabin resort/tavern development. The fact that there had to be a change of the Management Plan to accommodate it indicates that it is inconsistent with the Plan.

Instead of recognising the need to protect landscape values throughout Tasmania as part of an ecologically sustainable development strategy, the government has chosen to allow tourism proponents to consider cashing in on pristine landscapes within Parks. The State must determine the parameters of development in Parks. Why would any developer in the future buy land outside a Park when he/she can secure the site for a minimal lease and capitalise on the advertising of being able to say that the development is in a Park or WHA? To argue that there is merely a preference for siting outside Parks is the beginning of the end for the integrity of the Parks system in Tasmania. As is Minister Ken Bacon's assertion of 7 May that his government *does not generally, as a rule favour developments inside National Parks!!!* (Just now and then, sometimes, well... when a multi-millionaire rocks up we just can't resist!)

The final designs of water volumes and effluent disposal systems are not available and the Huon Valley Council are to sign off on these issues. All that is known is that the water will be sourced from ground water and that the effluent will be disposed of in the dunes. There is no baseline data of water quality and the monitoring regime has yet to be determined and no doubt will be subject to the developer's willingness to pay.

The next few months will be crucial before the bridge is upgraded. A key strategy is to put pressure on Stage Designs. To let them know how we feel! The TNPA have succeeded in stopping wilderness helicopter tourism and the Maria Island and Pumphouse Point projects by pressuring the developers. Send the message loud and clear: 'HANDS OFF OUR PROTECTED AREAS!'

Parks & Wildlife will consider amendments to the 'Major Pathway' process for assessing development proposals when it reviews the TWWHA Management Plan later this year. Public comment will be sought during this mini-review process. So, while it will be important to engage with that opportunity, the only course of action for Cockle Creek is to jump up and down loudly.

Letters to David Marriner of Stage Designs and to the Editor at the *Age* and *Mercury* are critical. Let us build the momentum. It has been an outrageous project from the start and must be stopped. Lets protect our precious Cockle Creek and in so doing, all our National Parks.

Helen Gee

NEWS UPDATE

A warm welcome to our new Patron, Peter Cundall, all the new members and our friendly supporters. Welcome aboard! We thank you all for the tremendous support you gave to the Protect our Protected Areas Rally on 7 May when 300 people gathered at Parliament House to say 'Hands off our special, protected places'. Over $1000 was raised for TNPA. The issues we raised got a first response from our new Minister for Parks, Ken Bacon: "The Government... does not, as a rule, favour developments in National Parks". Well, ho-hum!!

Since the last newsletter TNPA has launched its Manifesto, almost doubled its membership and, in November, mock-auctioned off our parks as we delivered over 1000 Our parks are not for sale postcards to then-Minister Jim Bacon. (Thanks to new member Alice Graham for some great street-theatre!) TNPA has taken issue with a series of developments in parks and conservation areas in recent months. Following our last newsletter and appeals to Michael Doherty to reconsider his proposed Pumphouse Point development, he pulled out in Spring 2003. This was a very noble gesture demonstrating understanding and integrity. TNPA thanks Michael Doherty and you can too (PO Box 413 Launceston 7250.) However the site was put up for tender again and two new proponents are waiting in the wings. It's the principle, not personalities we will confront, head on, once again.

The Bicentenary Cattle Drive created a huge headache early in the year as Parks failed to curb trampling of aboriginal sites within the Arthur Pieman Protected Area. Then TNPA members protested peacefully, with placards, at the Canoe Bay auction on 13 February (shame on the Government for failing to incorporate this coastal block into the contiguous Tasman National Park).

With press releases and letters to the editor keeping our profile high, the recent Protect Our Protected Areas Rally cemented solidarity with other groups, such as the Save Ralphs Bay group, members of the South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation and shack owners. The Tasmanian Government is clearly pursuing a policy direction of allowing commercial development in our Conservation Areas, National Parks and World Heritage Areas. There is a totally false assumption that merely siting a resort in a National Park

NOTE FOR OUR TOURISM MINISTER:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND HAS JUST BANNED ALL FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN THE DAINTREE RAINFOREST. THE REASON – TO PROTECT THEIR $370 MILLION TOURISM INDUSTRY.

qualifies as presentation of that park. High-tech eco-tourism is a contradiction in terms and the pandering to the big end of town is out of step with the century-old parks ethos. The unique destinations here in Tasmania are devalued by being made into consumerables that merely replicate tourism experiences to be had around the globe by the materially-hooked. There is a huge market for genuine niche eco-tourism experiences and TNPA is neither opposed to sensitively guided operations within our parks, nor up-market accommodation outside the boundaries of our parks, utilising existing infrastructure.

Hunter Island is a Conservation Area of considerable significance, recognised as such by the Australian Bush Heritage Fund which has been deeply frustrated by the Parks' Minister's abrogation of responsibility. Allowing vested interests to circumvent the normal, legal, commercial process in train for the sale of the lease to Bush Heritage smacks of bloody-mindedness and has raised the ire of many conservation organisations around the state. TNPA sees this as a very serious signal of an overturning of established values in this State. When we add Ralphs Bay to the threatened conservation estate, we see that no area legislated as a conservation area by past governments, is safe. Please get out there, lobbying: politicians, other organisations you belong to, friends and relatives! Never have our parks come under more pressure. The Tin Mines Dam at Freycinet is to be enlarged, flooding the National Park for Federal Hotels' fountains and spas! And it's not just tourism the Government is bowing to: It may be about to revoke part of the Rocky Cape national Park for a Sisters Beach sewerage treatment plant! TNPA will be taking these issue to the newly formed State representative conservation body, Environment Australia Inc.

We have allies around Australia in the National Parks Associations. This year we are joining them all on Sunday 24 October in the Great Australian Bushwalk – why not get involved? One of our local members was on 'The Really Great Prom Walk' in Victoria in 1998 which put an end to a four star hotel inside the Wilsons Prom National Park when 1000 walkers descended on Parliament. This issue of TNPA News will, I hope, inspire you all. TNPA is making a difference, and there is no end to the great events/fundraising ideas, we just need you to join in the fun and help make it happen!

Helen Gee, Editor

PARKS ADVISORY BOARD

The National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council is the State Government's community advisory body for matters relevant to the functions of Tasmania's national parks and reserves. TNPA nominated Chris Bell, President of TNPA, unsuccessfully, and it is unfortunate that the Board will not have TNPA's feedback on strategies, policies and management plans.

The council: Rowena Bell of Launceston (Chair), Ross Britton of Smithton, Bob Cotgrove of Mt Nelson, Wendy Horniblow of Turners Beach, Doug Humann of West Hobart, Michael Lockwood of South Hobart, Alwyn Medwin of Roseberry and Guy Nicholson of Penguin.

TWO BAYS, ONE COAST, ONE THREAT... SAVE RALPHS BAY

If the Sydney-based developer Walker Corporation gets its way, the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area in the Derwent estuary will be revoked and bought (we suspect) for a song. Ralphs Bay will be dammed, and around two and a half million tonnes of material excavated and in-filled for 800 waterfront homes and a 200 berth marina.

It is an understatement to say the community is appalled. We are seething. What's the point of paying all those highly qualified public servants and experts to produce the State Coastal Policy, the State of the Derwent Report and the State of the Environment Report if our government will not act on their recommendations? And the threat to Tasmania is real. Ralphs Bay, Dunalley, Triabunna, St Helens, Port Sorell – so many possibilities to feed that voracious appetite.

No coastal community should have to go through this trauma again. Save Ralphs Bay Incorporated is pushing for a complete overhaul of the State Coastal Policy, to sharpen its teeth, and for the passing of anti-canal estate legislation modelled on the NSW example as a matter of urgency.

The list of environmental consequences caused by canal estates includes wetland habitat destruction, wildlife mortality, declining fisheries, erosion damage, loss of public access and on it goes.

The State Labor Government should have the courage and the heart to say *No* to Walker. It should refuse to accept a development application for the Ralphs Bay Village project. It should say,Tasmania deserves better.

www.saveralphsbay.org

Cassy O'Connor

KENT GROUP NATIONAL PARK AND MARINE PROTECTED AREA

TNPA PROPOSES

1. an integrated approach to management of the terrestrial and marine components of the park; this entails a re-write of the Draft Management Plan;
2. commitment of the necessary resources for a full-time appropriately trained and experienced level 4 Ranger and an appropriate vessel for adequate patrolling of the MPA;
3. volunteer-based co-management to assist the ranger and increase safety - this means a continuation of the very successful volunteer program that has meant a continuous presence on Deal Island since 1998, a win-win-win for the park, the Parks' budget and the people who get the experience of a lifetime!
4. Baseline monitoring of the new MPA as a matter of urgency.

The natural and cultural values of the scenic windswept islands of the Kent Group, collectively, make this National Park very special indeed. The rare and threatened species on Dover Island, including the special heath communities, warrant protection as does the seal colony on Judgment Rocks. All of the islands together comprise a unique cultural landscape. A year-round presence is vital and Deal is the obvious island for that presence, with its historic lightstation and associated buildings that are vulnerable if unattended.

TNPA strongly advises a continuation of the inputs of both volunteer caretakers and Wildcare, along with a continuing close liaison with relevant Parks staff.

The caretakers have made a tremendous contribution to the condition of the lightstation, often exceeding what could be expected of a paid workforce. The people who opt to go to Deal for three months are highly motivated, self reliant and focused on a range of duties. As professionals or trades people their inputs have often been highly skilled, so that the Government has not had to pay for a great range of services, maintenance to buildings and landcare outcomes. (N.B. Amendments to the Draft Plan have corrected the oversight.)

The thought that 60 commercial tour visitors (40 overnight) is deemed an appropriate number to preserve the sense of loneliness and isolation seems frankly absurd. Just how realistic is it to see 40 - 60 tourists being transported reliably to and from the island at regular times demanded by the modern tourist with travel connections to make? The weather and the sea are limiting factors for much of the year.

There is a tradition at stake here; there is emerging a new window of opportunity to experience something of the way of life that passed with the end of the lightkeepers. It is a niche experience that will, over the years, enrich hundreds of people. Luxury tourism experiences cannot compete with real life for the adventurous sector, and more and more people are wanting real life experiences.

As a number of issues have been inconclusively dealt with regarding the management arrangement for the National Park, the Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC) conducted a public hearing on 1 June. TNPA was represented by Helen Gee at the hearing, with Eloise Carr as an observer. The views of the other presenters: Erith Mob (David Murray-Smith), MCCN (Christian Bell) and Furneaux botanist John Whinray, concurred pretty well with those of TNPA (above). It seems from our point of view that it will be very worthwhile to work closely with the planning processes for the new park and we await the RPDC's findings with strong interest.

The Tasmanian National Parks Association wishes to see scientific baselines established for both the Kent Group and Port Davey. It is the highest priority task that needs to be done after declaration. Surveys of fish stocks and of species composition will be vital to the success of any future monitoring effort. Proper management of the MPA's is vital: *What we don't want is a breeding ground for poachers instead of a breeding ground for fish* – Lyn Mason Deputy Mayor, Flinders Island.

More info: TNPA submission on the Kent Group National Park Draft Management Plan: www.tnpa.asn.org

Helen Gee

TNPA congratulates Christian Bell for winning the prestigious 2004 Prof Harry Bloom Memorial Award. Christian Bell has worked in a selfless, tireless and focused manner for the past 15 years to ensure the adequate reservation of two marine areas of state and national significance – the Kent Group in Bass Strait and Port Davey . Coordinator of the Marine and Coastal Community Network, Christian facilitated policy input and mobilised community awareness to ensure the rich biodiversity of these areas was appropriately reserved.

MARINE RESERVES: KENT GROUP AND PORT DAVEY

The Tasmanian Government has declared two large-scale marine reserves around Port Davey in the South-West, and the Kent Group of islands in Bass Strait. The sanctuary zones within the Port Davey Reserve meet the highest level criteria for protection as set out by IUCN. The Kent Group Reserve is a marine addition to the existing Kent Group National Park which includes state waters out to three nautical miles. (Aprox. half of each new reserve will be no-take sanctuary zones; remaining areas will be habitat protection zones allowing restricted take of abalone and rock-lobster and hand-lining for scale fish.) The creation of the two new reserves in April 2004 means Tasmania now has reserved five of its nine marine bioregions. TNPA congratulated the Ministers responsible for the great outcome and is encouraging the Government to work towards meeting its obligations to have all other identified areas in reserves as soon as possible as part of Tasmania Together Goal 21.

Many groups are uniting on this issue of Cockle Creek East.

PROTECT OUR PROTECTED AREAS RALLY

On Friday 7 May over 300 people gathered on Parliament House lawns in Hobart to send a clear message to the State Government that it's *Hands off our protected areas!*

An impressive line-up of speakers reinforced the breadth of community support TNPA is gaining: Peter Cundall (Patron, TNPA), Christine Milne (IUCN rep), Cassy O'Connor (Save Ralphs Bay Inc.), Glen Shaw (Aboriginal spokesperson) and Lynette Collins (representing shack owners of Cockle Creek). TNPA's Greg Wood officiated and reminded us all that we are facing a series of intrusions by a government with little understanding of the national park ethos. The reaction from our new Minister for Parks & Wildlife, the Hon Ken Bacon MHA, was rather to be expected, especially his blinkered view of the rally as 'another stunt organised by a Green front group!'

"The Government is clear on its policy regarding developments in our National Parks. We do not generally, as a rule, favour developments within National Parks. However there are some areas within our National Parks that have been subject to human intervention and disturbance over the years. Some of these sites, such as Cockle Creek, are suitable for use as eco-tourism developments..." – Ken Bacon MHA

We would inform you, Mr Bacon, of two fundamental principles enshrined in the World Heritage Convention; that development should be outside our national parks and world heritage areas and that degraded sites, such as Pump house Point, cannot be further degraded. Indeed member states have an obligation to make good the damage to degraded World Heritage sites.

Editor

You can pressure me as much as you like but you are not going to put words in my mouth. – Minister Ken Bacon responding to Peg Putt MHA, Hansard, June 2004

CATTLE DRIVE IMPACT ON WEST COAST

Circular Head's 100km Greenham Bicentenary Cattle Drive organised by members of the Tasmanian Cattlemen's Association in February was billed as the epitomy of the pioneering spirit of the people. The 'traditional' activity of supplying live meat to miners in the 1880s was very occasional and the route from Redpa to Granville Harbour was last used in the 1930s. The Tasmanian National Parks Association believes the cultural and environmental values of the West coast are worth more than any traditional cattle drive, real or manufactured.

Aboriginal occupation dates back some 22,000 years and the Australian Heritage Commission has described the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area, with its numerous middens, rock engravings and stone arrangements, as 'one of the world's great archaeological regions'.

Recreational riders were openly encouraged to join the drive, through a number of newspaper articles, in which there was no mention of the concerns raised by several organisations with the Parks and Wildlife Service. None of the articles mentioned environmental values.

The coast of the Tarkine, as this area is now known, features sweeping sand dunes and rocky capes, but also swamps, marshes and lagoons. These fragile areas are important habitats for the myriad of bird life and part of an unprotected wilderness of global ecological significance. Increased disturbance of button-grass moorlands behind the coast creates the real possibility of a spread of the fungal pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. However, by far the greatest threat was to the integrity of aboriginal sites of international significance.

It was precisely because of these values the Arthur Pieman Protected Area received a change in land classification to Conservation Area. This status should mean that we recognise the values of the region and want to protect them from known threats.

It was astounding the Federal Bicentenary funding of the drive was forthcoming without state government involvement and without reference to the status of the Conservation Area through which the drive was to pass. Furthermore, no permit was obtained, as required under the Aboriginal Relic Act 1975. This drive was a litmus test of the commitment of the Parks and Wildlife Service to the values they purport to protect; in our book they failed to protect some of the country's richest archaeological sites.

Will the drive be repeated next year? Both the Tarkine National Coalition (TNC) and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council (TALC) believe that the cattle drive should not be banned but that from Temma the route should go inland on the road to Granville Harbour thereby avoiding the fragile and culturally rich coastal area. TNPA joins TALC in calling for a cultural heritage tourism plan to enable people to visit the area and enjoy the sites in an appropriate manner.

Greg Wood and Helen Gee

HUNTER ISLAND OUTRAGE

In July 2002 Hunter Island (7,330ha) was declared a Conservation Area under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970. It is also designated a category 5 reserve according to IUCN criteria. The island has significant biodiversity conservation values and a very significant Aboriginal and European cultural heritage – Cave Bay cave evidences 23,000 years of continuous occupation until European arrival. *Conservation Area* status applies to an area in a predominantly natural state but mining, hunting or grazing may in certain cases be permitted. A grazing lease currently operating over 6,500ha of the island is for sale and Bush Heritage, in its negotiations to purchase the lease, has made it clear that, while it is not opposed to grazing *per se*, grazing is causing extensive degradation to plant communities, beach dunes and scrub understory of great conservation significance, and is therefore inappropriate :

Grazing should only be allowed based on a review of existing ecological and economic evidence by local and regional experts and subject to managing the Island's natural and cultural heritage – Australian Bush Heritage Fund

In early May the Government announced, with a complete lack of consultation, it would not approve the transfer of the Hunter Island lease from its present owner to Bush Heritage.

By overriding a commercial lease arrangement in this way, Minister Bacon, has acted with contempt for the community consultation process this Government initiated and undermines its ability to deliver strong environmental outcomes. The debacle reflects poorly on the Government which appears to be simply caving in to political pressure. TNPA made its extreme concern known to the Circular Head Council on 1 June, reinforcing Bush Heritage's fine management record and the firm intention to allow ongoing access to the island.

Helen Gee

TNPA
TASMANIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION INC

Media Statement

Monday 31 May 2004

Minister Bacon compromising his own realm:
Hunter Island and the sale of the lease to the Australian Bush Heritage Fund

The latest consultation process, established, so it would seem to many Tasmanians, to allow vested interests to circumvent the normal, quite legal, commercial process in train for the sale of the Hunter Island lease has raised the ire of organizations around the state, and Helen Gee, spokesperson for the Tasmanian National Parks Association Inc. explained the sense of outrage:

"Bush Heritage is a national, non-profit organization with enormous prestige for its ability to manage land for conservation outcomes. Managed by a Board of Directors, it has a growing support base, providing a much-needed avenue for concerned citizens to actively protect areas of significant biodiversity, such as Hunter Island."

"The Tasmanian National Parks Association (TNPA) believes the democratic process as well as nationally significant values are being compromised by Minister Bacon's farcical proposal for resolving the future of the lease. The Minister has given no reason for this process which flies in the face of all expert advice to the Government to date. Does Mr Bacon realize that he is overturning the position of three previous Ministers who believed the Island ought to be managed for conservation? After all, Hunter Island was declared a Conservation Area under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970; furthermore, it is designated as a Category 5 reserve according to IUCN criteria", she explained.

Ms Gee called on the Minister and many members of the North West community "to do some serious homework on the conservation values of the island and feasible alternatives for its effective management as a Conservation Area", and asked " Does he intend to abrogate his responsibilities in other areas by handing over to community groups his legislated decision making powers?"

"Bush Heritage has reiterated its proposal to develop camping areas and allow access, manage volunteer programs to contain weeds, as well as look fairly at future opportunities for local graziers to agist cattle, with the best long-term interests of the island at the core of its management plan. All this will cost the Government zero. The opportunity is unique."

"TNPA appeals to the Council to acknowledge the wide support, experience and practical expertise of Bush Heritage and allow the Fund to get on with its great work."

Helen Gee
Campaign Officer

Postal address: GPO Box 2188, Hobart Tasmania 7001
Tel: (03) 6224 9011 • Email: admin@tnpa.asn.au • Web: www.tnpa.asn.au

TNPA Inc thanks the Apple Shed Sugar Gliders, and especially wonderful Fred Pribac, for the highly successful Button-Grass Ball at the Sandfly Hall last October which raised over $1000 for TNPA.
Below from left: Nigel Legg, Cathy Hutchinson, Dave Wanless, Fred Pribac, Louise Bell and Stuart Graham.

SOUTHPORT LAGOON WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Update on the Southport Lagoon Wildlife Sanctuary draft Management Plan (SLWSMP) May 2004

Southport Lagoon has been a Wildlife Sanctuary for many years, a special place for wading and migratory birds and a range of other wildlife species. In 1997 a draft Management Plan was circulated for public comment, but little has been heard since! 4WD and recreational vehicles have continued to damage the swamps and coastal verges and the impacts are totally unacceptable. This area is in the spotlight at present for its early botanical collections, starting with Labillardiere in 1792, and the historic significance of the D'Entrecasteaux Expedition, generally. The Management Plan must be delivered without further delay. Please write letters and lobby politicians.

A watching brief has been kept on the development of the Draft Management Plan (DMP) circulated for public comment from February to April 1997. The prologue of this draft said "This Plan was based substantially on an unpublished report prepared by Phillip J Bell *'Southport Lagoon Wildlife Sanctuary – A Report on the Management of Recreational Activites'*. The report was reviewed by the Recreational Vehicles Working Group – and it was recommended that the report be used as the basis for future management of the Sanctuary .

Comments on the DMP were made by members of Birds Australia, the Australian Plants Society Tasmania, and many other groups and individuals. Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) had updated it during the RFA Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative Reserves process, including protection of the rare plant species *Epacris stuartii,* found only there. Recorded users have been botanists, historians, fishermen, hunters, bushwalkers, 4Wdrivers,trail bikers and mountain bikers, horse trail riders, and miners – a large range of recreational, tourist and commercial users. Preventing any destruction of the woodlands, forests and open heathland of this area depends upon a strong Management Plan. The continuing integrity of the whole area is of vital importance within this debate. The Plan went forward for Ministerial approval, but little has been heard since. PWS refers to the DMP 1997 for administrative purposes, in the absence of any other official document. There is deep concern that much damage has occurred in the intervening seven years.

Prior to 1997, the PWS had tried to bring Southport Lagoon Area under a reserves strategy, but was hampered by the response from the local hunters and recreational drivers of the district, who threatened a vigorous response if they were excluded from the area. The PWS found it all too hard, being seriously shortchanged for planners during the 1990's when a chain of quality-managed and well-maintained Parks could have been implemented. The demands of the Regional Forestry Agreement exacerbated the problem. An upper management philosophy emerges again and again, – *if the integrity of the area is destroyed, there will be no need to write management plans!* And the problems are thus addressed!

Southport Lagoon and the adjacent coastline is considered a special place – of historical significance of early European discoveries, an initial botanical collecting spot in Van Diemen's Land. The explorers left behind them the place names of Bruni, D'Entrecasteaux, Recherche, Esperance, Huon and Kermandec, and Labillardiere. An area 'rich in plant communities' is still there today, particularly coastal heath which is poorly reserved elsewhere. This is a perfect place to bring the schoolroom to the children of the State through the Ida Bay Railway – of easy access and sufficiently isolated to create a wonderful adventure. The adjoining Ida Bay State Reserve (and Railway) did not even gain a cross-reference within the SLWSMP.

It is said that a new planner will return to this DMP shortly and we should be ready. At the very least, this area should be declared a State Reserve.

Melva Truchanas

Southport Lagoon – Suburbanisation of the bush

Roads are the biggest culprit bringing infestation, disease, pollution and inevitably, erosion to this precious area. The Government's sanctioning of a logging road, yet to be completed, through the Wildlife Sanctuary has been soundly and widely criticized and TNPA, together with many other organisations, including TCT, will actively oppose the construction of this road should the Government persist in ignoring the status of the land.

Helen Gee, Editor

Uncontrolled 4WD access continues to devastate the Southport Lagoon Conservation Area.

RECHERCHE BAY, CULTURAL AND HERITAGE TREASURE

There aren't many places in the world that remain in a similar degree of biophysical naturalness to that of the time they were first recorded and described. The rarity of such sites gives them great significance. Gone from Australia's east coast, and especially at those places of early exploration such as Botany Bay and Cooktown, is the feeling of a world wide and new, of a future of hope for humanity...

France has offered to assist with interpreting the site at Recherche Bay, off-setting the short term opportunity foregone by a timber harvest that would destroy the integrity of this site and its cultural landscape.

The State and Federal Governments must act, in this the Bicentennial year, to protect the cultural landscape, including the site of the 1792 - 3 D'Entrecasteaux Expedition's gardens and other scientific work at Recherche Bay, as a first step in making the site an attraction of international significance.

Prof John Mulvaney has recently nominated the NE Peninsula of Recherche Bay for listing on the National Heritage Register.

Christine Milne

There is no doubt the North East Peninsula at Recherche Bay is an area of historic and Aboriginal heritage significance, and I assure you that the State Government is committed to doing whatever it can to make sure we protect these heritage assets that are of significance not only to Tasmania but also to the wider international community. There has been no approved Forest Practices Plan lodged for the Peninsula and I am confident nothing will be done contrary to the Tasmanian Heritage Council's recommendations until the declaration issue is resolved.

Jim Bacon MHA
Premier Minister for Tourism, Parks and Heritage, 16 Feb 2004

BUSHWALKING AND TRACK REVIEW (BATR): WESTERN ARTHUR RANGE

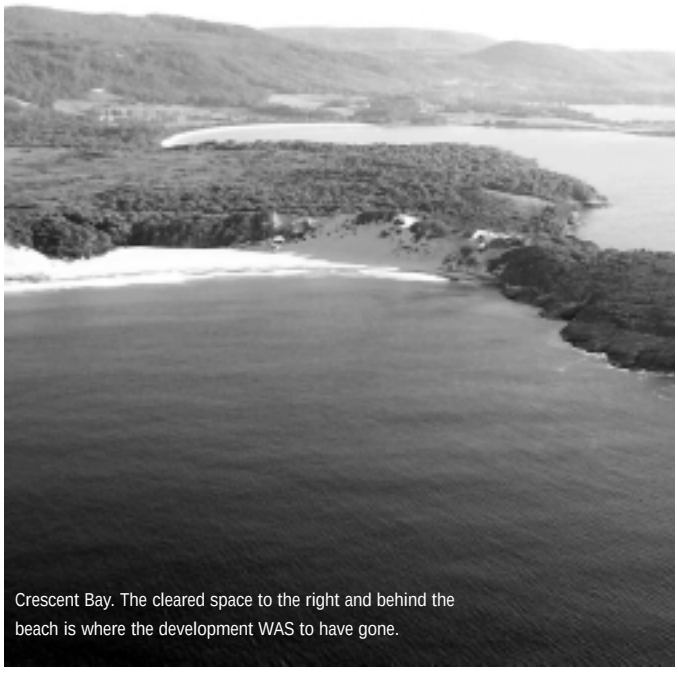
After reviewing the submissions and votes received during the public comment period on the various management options for the Western Arthur Range, the Parks & Wildlife Bushwalking and Track Review (BATR) Panel finalized its recommendations in March and April this year. With one dissenting view, the basic recommendation is to manage the track to the following standards – T2 to Lake Cygnus, T3 to Moraine K and T4 for the remainder. The process of repairing/upgrading the track is to be staged over time, with the first priority being environmental stabilisation of the track along the range. As the track is stabilised, it will be brought to the standard appropriate for that section of the track. Until the T2 upgrade is completed, the recommended group size will remain at eight. The campsite occupancy at Lake Cygnus will be monitored and breaches of the number limits would see the introduction of other management arrangements, including a campsite booking system. Further information on the BATR panel can be found by logging onto the PWS website at www.parks.tas.gov.au and following the links to: Services and Management/Bushwalking and Track Review (BATR)

Robert Campbell, TNPA's BATR rep.

CRESCENT BEACH

As TNPA goes to press news comes of the glorious triumph of people power! The Tasman Council has finally rejected the Crescent Beach development, affirming that Coastal Protection Areas can not be rezoned. In March this year, Safety Cove Holdings Pty Ltd lodged an application for development of a Tourist Retreat adjacent to the Tasman National Park and within the Coastal Protection Zone. Approval was initially granted by the Tasman Council for an amendment to the Coastal Protection Zone of the Tasman Planning Scheme 1979 and the matter went before the Resource Planning and Development Commission. With outstanding scenic and high natural qualities, the site is important habitat for a number of listed species and development was contrary to the principle enshrined in the State Coastal Policy that natural and coastal values shall be protected. TNPA congratulates the people of the Tasman Peninsula who lobbyed so successfully.

Robert Campbell



Crescent Bay. The cleared space to the right and behind the beach is where the development WAS to have gone.

THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BUSHWALK – SUNDAY 24 OCTOBER 2004

GREAT AUSTRALIAN BUSHWALK

Tasmania joins in this year! Calling all experienced walk leaders to register their interest NOW! TNPA will coordinate the event state-wide. Sponsors are needed and three volunteers to get the event underway! The Great Australian Bushwalk is a national event brought to you by a nationwide consortium of state-wide NPAs and affiliated bushwalking groups. It is a free, day-long event consisting of numerous bushwalks held in different locations throughout Australia. (Longer walks are encouraged, but must include 24 October.) Minimal impact bushwalking must be practised and TNPA will invite bushwalking clubs, school and community groups to participate.

The Great Australian Bushwalk is a ground-breaking project, with the potential to become as much part of our collective psyche as "Clean Up Australia Day". There has never before been a yearly, one-day event dedicated to bushwalking. The Great Australian Bushwalk brings together the community to celebrate this healthy activity which promotes many of the values underlying the Australian way of life.

History of the Great Australian Bushwalk

This event was created by the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) a non-profit, non-government organisation dedicated to protecting the natural areas of NSW. NSW Premier Bob Carr, the Great Australian Bushwalk Patron, launched the event on 18 October 2003 before participating in the event on 25 October 2003. He will be writing to all State Premiers, Paul Lennon included, inviting their active participation this year! TNPA hopes to have several politicians lining up!

Numerous walks were organised across the state of NSW last year, in 20 locations with over 600 participants. This year, the success of the premiere event has lead to the expansion of the Great Australian Bushwalk from a state-wide to a national event. NPA of NSW has therefore teamed up with other National Parks Associations (NPAs) and affiliated groups, all over the nation to help create a 'walk across Australia'.

The objective of the Great Australian Bushwalk is to hold a series of free, popular bushwalks throughout Australia for the whole community which fosters environmental protection, community spirit and a healthy lifestyle.

TNPA is currently calling for leaders and other volunteers to help make this event a great success in Tasmania! Lead a history walk through the streets of Battery Point or a walk to Mt Anne, as you are able. Don't miss the fun. In Hobart we will all meet for a barbecue afterwards.

By September all leaders will be provided with precise instructions. Bookings will be made through the web which will contain all necessary walks information and have a simple registration process for participants. TNPA's web site will be linked to the dedicated site:
www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au

Helen Gee

TNPA INVITES COMMENT ON TRACK POLICY

As large guided groups are totally inappropriate in the Western Arthurs, TNPA regards the T2 upgrade as upsetting and that there is little time now for stalling on the Permit system that must be instigated to protect this iconic mountain range. It is encouraging to see the new Parks Minister, Ken Bacon, planning to counter the impacts on the Overland Track by introducing caps on numbers and permit fees in peak months. This announcement on 1 June was long overdue.

editor

A WALK WITH RESULTS – PLANTING THE IDEA!

In the Spring of 1998 the Kennett government was persuing its privitization/bash the unions/play the big end of town policies. Victorian National Parks were under threat, much as ours in Tassie are today. Environment Minister Marie Tehan declared she wanted to sip chardonnay in the comfort of a (proposed) 4 star hotel at Tidal River inside Wilsons Promontory National Park.

To focus public attention on this outrage the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) together with the Federation of Victorian Bushwalking Clubs set up the *Really Great Prom Walk* from Tidal River to Parliament House. The route was well planned and rallies were held along the way. Each day local people accompanied the walk through the streets with loud hailers, banners and placards. The crowd increased as Melbourne was reached and 1000 marched on the steps of Parliament House presenting VNPA's alternative plan for a development outside the national park. The result:

- An enjoyable walk with like minded conservationists
- No four star hotel at the Prom
- Jeff Kennett out at the next election largely due to the country vote.

Rob Hill

(Rob screened the video of The Really Great Prom Walk *at the June meeting of TNPA, and it sparked ideas for the Great Aussie Bushwalk – thanks Rob!)*

NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

Another autumn passes. The fagus had turned and was falling when a handful of friends and I realized the urgency of our excursion to the Mt Field National Park. The following weekend the rusty flakes would have surrendered, leaving silver branches naked. Others followed our weekend pilgrimage and despite the number of visitors, a sense of calm prevailed on Tarn Shelf. We admired the gentle pools where golden reflections merged with turquoise. Homage was paid to things uniquely Tasmanian and to the changing seasons.

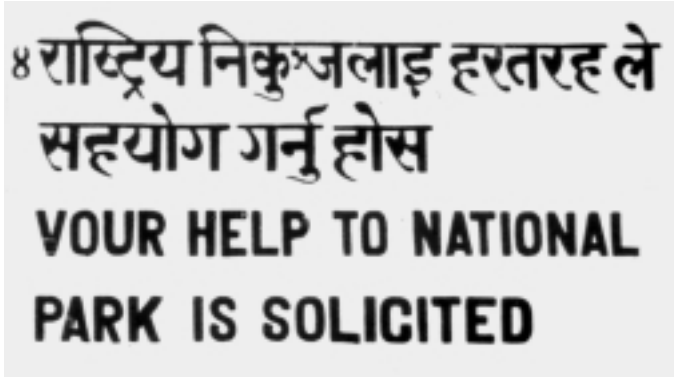
How vital these simple rituals are for my well-being. They restore and regenerate. Through these practices, I feel nourished and renewed. Maintaining relationships in and with special places is vital, and for me many special places are within our National Parks. That is not to say that we need to go there every weekend, but rather that we take time to reflect on the importance of these places to ourselves individually, to the community and to humanity as a whole – and of course to other life forms.

As TNPA President Chris Bell writes, National Parks are

'*...a milepost in the evolution of our ethics which now encompass the spiritual welfare of all the creatures with which we share the planet... their fate will be determined by not just our management, but by the love we bestow upon them. National parks are a measure of that love*' *(TNPA flier).*

In Tasmania our National Parks have been fought for, secured, loved and lost. The battles continue with ongoing threats to Parks and conservation areas at Cockle Creek, Ralph's Bay and Pumphouse Point. Today's actions (or inactions) speak of our commitment. I believe that nurturing our relationships with these unique places is vital to enlarge our capacity to care. Practice today, and renew your own appreciation of our National Parks.

Margie Jenkin



Sign in Nepal: If we can't get it right here, how can we expect poor nations to do the right thing?

SKI TRAVERSE OF THE KARAKORAM HIMALAYA

GREAT TNPA FUNDRAISER COMING UP!

A SLIDE PRESENTATION BY GRANT DIXON

7 pm Thursday 22 July
at the Stanley Burbury Theatre,
University of Tasmania

Admission $10

Tasmanian adventurer Grant Dixon has returned from one of the longest ski journeys ever attempted in the high mountains of the Karakoram Himalaya, in northern Pakistan. This 37-day journey, at an elevation above 4000m, followed the main Karakoram watershed close to the Pakistan/China frontier.

This will be a night to remember; a night to catch up with old friends and new. Supper will be provided.

TNPA MANIFESTO LAUNCH 9 NOVEMBER 2003, LAKE ST CLAIR

CHRIS BELL, PRESIDENT OF TNPA, SPEAKING AT THE LAUNCH:

The Manifesto launch highlights values and is about people who care for places like Lake St Clair and want to ensure they will be here in 1000 years time. Apart from the changes that nature decrees they're going to be the same as they are now. That's what we're here for. It's a significant occasion, there's another conservation organization on the block now and we're here for the long haul. It's a shame that it's taken many years to get going. We are here to reclaim these places for nature.

JESSIE LUCKMAN, LAKE ST CLAIR, 1937

A founding member of the TCT, with a lifetime's efforts for conservation, Jessie Luckman sent her congratulations and recollections for our special day:

My first long trip with the Hobart Walking Club was in December 1937 to Lake St Clair and the Du Cane Range. There were pretty little beaches at Cynthia Bay where Bert Fergusson had accommodation for visitors. His dining room was memorable with white canvas roof, white gravel floor and lots of thriving tree ferns. Bert ferried us up to the northern end of the lake and we walked from there up onto the plateau... The view down Lake St Clair was superb, with no sign of human habitation anywhere. I am so glad I saw it before that ugly 'pump house' was erected, the lake outlet dammed and those little beaches drowned. 'Fergie's' accommodation was unobtrusive and out of sight from any vantage point, which is how any well managed National Park should be.

BACK TO THE ORIGINS OF THE NATIONAL PARK IDEAL

On Saturday, 9 November 2003, at the source of the Derwent in the bicentenary year of the first European settlement on the banks of this river, Tasmanians revisited the origins of the National Park ideal to launch the TNPA Manifesto, two years after the foundation of the fiery young organisation. Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick launched the Manifesto and Debbie Quarmby, whose Masters thesis dealt with the history of the Scenery Preservation Board, gave the guest speech. Lake St Clair is but one place where the Tasmanian Government is prepared to change all the ground rules established over 100 years ago. When Michael Doherty decided to forego his plans for a tourist lodge at Pumphouse Point, another period of tender followed. There are two proponents in the wings and TNPA will be there again in the public interest, at the fore with a Parks' consciousness to galvanise Tasmanians once again. The Manifesto is available at www.tnpa.asn.au.

THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN PARK PROTECTION IS NOW OURS TO DEFEND

Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, speaking at the launch:

I was brought up in Moorabin, in the south of Melbourne, just as Moorabin was turning from market gardens and quarries full of leeches and interesting things into boring 1950s houses. Where I was everything was changing and usually not for what

I perceived to be for the better. Wild things that were chaotic and didn't belong - that weren't controlled – were disappearing and control was everywhere. I thought to myself, looking at the atlas, (I'm a geographer after all) I looked at Tasmania, this island to the south, and saw great swadges of green on the maps which were the National Parks and I thought to myself, even as a teenager, those are places that will always be there in a natural condition and the Tasmanians seems to be doing better than anyone else at protecting those sort of places.

Since moving to Tasmania in 1972, I've been involved in a lot of research and a lot of campaigns and in trying to increase the area of the state that is not subject to the vagaries of the new growth society with the chaos and ugliness it produces in the landscape all around us. And as I've been doing this Tasmania has been getting uglier and uglier and less sustainable. There is more erosion in the farming country, trees dying and really really ugly houses are being built among the colonial buildings in places like Richmond and Ross. The Parks have been getting bigger, but there has also been a lot of tree shortening going on in the place over the last 20-30 years. I've been involved with the Parks and Wildlife Service through various advisory bodies, the Service having started in 1972. It developed as an organization filled with people absolutely dedicated to the concept of conservation. Those people are gradually being pushed out of the organization which is now dedicated to the concept of economic growth through tourism and is in danger of almost ignoring the wonderful heritage. This has been a deliberate strategy of development over the last 2-3 years, to take the conservation out of the conservation agency, stick the conservation people in with primary industry people, and under their control. These conservation people have been seen as terrible obstacles to development, saying *You can't build that Visitor Centre there because there are rare plant species there or field moraine of international significance.* That's why its world heritage here – (Pumphouse Point). There are no World Heritage prizes for Visitor Centres. You are all here because you don't just want National Parks because they are vacant land, you're here because you want National Parks run for nature and for ordinary people to enjoy nature, not for profit, not for the rich.

Eco-tourism resorts are wonderful places if you can ignore the terrible morality behind them. There's no reason why they shouldn't be outside national parks, and actually increase the conservation benefit rather than decrease it. There is opportunity for that to happen in Tasmania and everywhere.

I was just so glad when TNPA was established. At last here was a group of people taking the side of the parks, and the side of nature and ordinary people and the original concept of parks at a time when the concept was fragmenting. The idea of a Manifesto is absolutely wonderful. I really love it, having been a bit of a student radical in my time and recalling the communist manifesto....

This is a Manifesto that shouldn't get people shivering with fear. Almost everyone in Australia, with the exception of one or two eco-tourism developers, think that this is what national parks' should be about. Virtually none of them want private developments in national parks. For the national parks are what people are coming for, they're not coming to see hideous visitor centres that are popping up everywhere. They're coming to see nature and scenery. Parks are for nature, parks are for ordinary people, not for developers, it's a message that will resonate with just about everyone in our society. It's a message that all will hear and it wasn't coming from conservation organisations before TNPA started. Id like to launch the TNPA Manifesto and we've got nothing to lose but eco-tourism resorts in national parks!!

POLITICS OF PARKS: THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

Debbie Quarmby

Colonel William Legge – a Tasmanian-born Army Commander, naturalist and ornithologist – wrote a description of his walk in the highlands of Lake St. Clair, which was published in the Royal Society's papers of 1887. He described the lake, with its mountainous surrounds, as 'beautiful', and about forest nearby he wrote:

At the foot of Mount King William... is a splendid beech grove, in which I measured a monarch of the forest which was 27 feet in girth. Perhaps most of the Fellows of this Society have wandered through the beech forests of the West of Tasmania, but there may be some whose acquaintance with the tree is limited to the solitary specimens met with here and there in the dells of Mount Wellington. To such, I may be permitted to say, that on suddenly entering one of these beautiful woods, ignominiously called 'myrtle scrubs', the traveller is translated in an instant to the cool, shady, and romantic forests of Southern or Central Europe. All around stand weird and moss-covered trunks of lofty stature, whose gigantic lichen-clad limbs stretch out amongst the feathery beech foliage, upon which, as the wind sways the branches overhead, fitful gleams of sunlight play for an instant, and then fall on the massive decaying logs which lay strewn among the ferns.[1]

William Legge was an active member of the early Tasmanian national park movement. Among his contemporaries in the movement were: William Crooke, Henry Dobson, Clive Lord, Herbert Nicholls and Leonard Rodway. They were men who appreciated and respected nature. Most of them also shared

TNPA WISH LIST

- **We need** a computer and printer and/or laptop for our little office in the TEC. This would enable us to access files easily and efficiently, centralizing our growing work load.
- **We need** graphic artists, entrepreneurs and fundraisers to run with our exciting new plans for a small range of merchandise.
- **We suggest** you may be able to hold a small fundraising event in your own home. TNPA will provide speakers, videos, slides and assistance with other ideas you may wish to explore.
- **Great Australian Bushwalk.**
  Three great voluntary part-time positions available
  (July to October 2004) Coordinator/Partnership Development, Media Liaison/Publicity Officer, Fundraiser.
  Join our team for that feeling of positive involvement that will make the difference!

a political leaning towards democratic socialism. Their interest in preserving Tasmania's natural environment and their understanding of environmental ethics went hand-in-hand with a commitment to social ethics and improving Tasmanians' quality of life.

William Crooke, who galvanised Tasmania's first National Park Association around 1912, was a community worker as much as he was an environmentalist. He was involved in the Workers' Political League and the Workers' Educational Association in addition to being the founder of the Childrens' Excursion Association. Crooke was quoted as saying, at the opening of National Park at Mount Field:

The idea of the Park was not originally conceived simply for tourists. Only by preserving a Park in this way would the people of Tasmania in the far future be able to see what primeval Tasmania was like. That was one of the objects. Another was the preservation of the native flora and fauna, and still another, the recreation of the people of Tasmania. The tourists, to his mind, came last ... [2]

Henry Dobson, who had fought unsuccessfully to achieve a National Park on Mount Wellington prior to joining the Mount Field campaign, and who became the first Chair of the National Park Board, was an ex-politician with a social conscience. While he was Premier during the early 1890s, he refused to take the salary pertaining to the office because of the financial hardship being faced by the wider community, and he was responsible for a number of socially progressive initiatives during his political career.

Herbert Nicholls was Lieutenant-Governor between 1930-1933, and during those depression years he accepted a reduction of 83% in the governor's and 25% in the chief justice's salaries, and organized and chaired the Citizens' Relief Committee.

From its beginnings, Tasmania's national parks movement has not been about making money from the reserves, or about providing benefits to select groups of people. It has been about preserving parts of Tasmania in its natural state; respect for natural beauty; appreciation of the peace and solitude of nature protected from the onslaught of 'progress', protection of wildlife and the enjoyment of generations. It has been about environmental protection and national pride.

Some of the members of the State's early national parks movement were promoters of tourism and members of the Tasmanian Tourist Association, which had, at one stage, a parks and reserves sub-committee. Recognising the role of reserves in attracting visitors to Tasmania, the Tourist Association organised transport to scenic spots such as The Springs on Mount Wellington. It built shelters and tracks on Mount Wellington and picnic grounds at the entrance to National Park. The potential of reserves to encourage visitors to the State was acknowledged, but the reserves themselves were quarantined from 'development' and were not exploited for the purpose of making money.

National parks have been proclaimed in order to place them out of bounds to encroachment by 'development', and the damage that 'development' leaves in its wake. Since the advent of the motor car and, later, aeroplanes, larger national parks have developed another important role – that of keeping some areas free from the intrusive artificial noises of 'civilisation'. There have always been people, even within the parks movement, who are prepared to compromise the integrity of nature reserves and national parks for the sake of 'economic development'. But the national park ideal aims to protect natural areas from damage due to resource exploitation.

William Simmonds, who was editor of the Mercury when National Park was officially opened, clearly stated the case for protecting National Park from exploitation. He declared;

The only creature to be driven out of the Park and kept out with flaming swords is the Utilitarian, who would indiscriminately chop trees, spoil waterfalls, dig up rare plants, kill live things, and spoil and ravage everything for money profit. If there ever come to exist legislators who cannot see the value of such a place we hope it will become a recognised custom to shoot them on sight whenever seen within three miles of the Park.[3]

These ideals of equal access and minimal intrusion had their roots in earlier European and American history. Prior to the egalitarian revolutions of the nineteenth century, Europe's parklands were held in private hands, mostly those of nobility. The word 'park' actually derives from the Old French, or Middle English word 'parc', meaning 'an enclosed piece of ground stocked with beasts of the chase, held by prescription or by the King's grant'. Following the French Revolution, however, some of these parks were taken from the Crown and opened to the public, and many of London's parks were, similarly, turned-over to public use. The concept was taken to the Australian colonies, where public recreation parks were set aside in most of the new settlements. In Australia and in America there was also the potential for a different type of park, incorporating landscapes that were national monuments, a kind of reserve that came to be known as a 'national park'.

An early experience of this kind was Niagara Falls. But, by the 1930s, Americans were condemned by European visitors for allowing the beauty of Niagara Falls to be spoiled by private tourist operations. 'Such spots should be deemed the property of mankind', commented a pair of visiting Congregational ministers, because, they said, their destruction by profiteers compromised 'the tastes, the morals, and the enjoyments of all men'.[4] Criticism did not go unheeded, and, in 1864, on the eve of the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln signed the Yosemite Bill, proclaiming the reserve that was to form the basis of the present Yosemite National Park.

The political philosophy that supported a reservation such as Yosemite was propounded by the man known as the father of landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmstead. In the report he wrote to the Yosemite Commissioners on the park's management, Olmstead rejected the elitist tradition of a few rich people monopolising ownership of, and access to, areas of scenic beauty. In his view, it was a duty of government to

TNPA AGM

Monday 2 August 2004 at 7pm
TEC, 102 Bathurst Street, Hobart

The AGM will be followed by a General Meeting.
If you can, bring a handful of slides of your favourite National Park and a contribution towards supper

provide a means of protection for all citizens in their pursuit of happiness, by creating public parks. Inspired, no doubt, by the lesson provided by the commercial exploitation of Niagara Falls, Olmstead wrote that it was a government's duty to protect areas of outstanding natural beauty from despoliation in order that their scenic beauty would be preserved for public enjoyment for all time[5].

The political philosophy and ideals that inspired the world's, and Tasmania's earliest national parks have faced constant challenge. The challenge has come not only from profiteers, including timber barons, mining companies and tourism operators, with their strong influence over governments, but challenges to the national park ideal have also arisen from dilemmas posed by the impact of increased visitor usage. But the national park ideal should remain the basis of management decisions and conflict resolution involving land of national park status.

Activists in the National Parks Association might take heart from William Crook's obituary. Crook, who was the foundation Secretary of the earlier National Park Association, appears to have spoken his mind without compromising for the sake of his popularity. But, following his death, he received this fitting obituary in the local press:

In appraising the worth of any individual citizen many things have to be taken into consideration, and many factors in the work of the day closely regarded and nicely weighed. The best kind of citizen is, of course, he who not only lives an exemplary life and has high ideals of citizenship, but who comes out into the open in the whirl and whirr of the times, and with voice, pen, and personal effort does his very best to lift up moral tone and place a stone, or many stones, in the building of a strong foundation for civic and state progress. William Crooke was this kind of man. He had a wide and a long vision, and he builded as well as he knew and as well as those with whom he worked in a public sense, and for whom he worked, would allow. In very many matters he was years ahead of current thought, and he had to fight his way through many obstacles erected by stodgy minds. He was intensely patriotic, wonderfully progressive, and of nature untiring, resourceful, and courageous. He was of that type who will not accept defeat of a momentary nature where the public good is at stake, and his tenaciousness carried him very often to a wise success where a weaker nature and less fearless men would have given up in disgust.

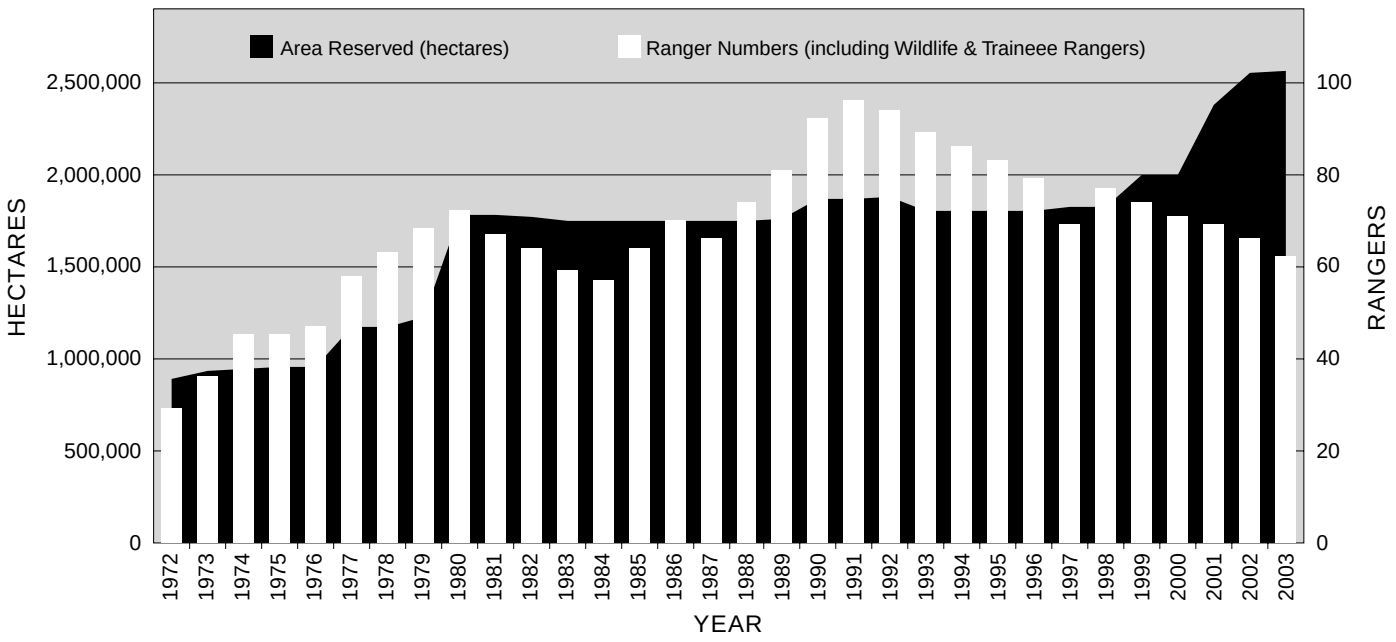
... it was his never ceasing propaganda and utterly self-effacing effort which was in large measure responsible, too, for one of the greatest glories this state will ever have as a national and priceless possession - the great National Park up Tyenna way.

... Quite naturally such men get opposition from those who are content to stay in the rut forever, be they ordinary citizens or politicians, because the tired we will always have with us, but it is men of the outlook of the late Mr. Crooke who achieve things, and their work lives after them.[6]

Notes

1 Col. W.V.Legge, 'The Highlands of Lake St. Clair', in *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania for 1887*, The Mercury Office, Hobart, 1888, p.116.
2 *Mercury*, 15 October 1917.
3 ibid.
4 Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, University of Nebraska Press, USA, 1979, p.6
5 A. & M. MacEwen, *National Parks: Conservation or Cosmetics?* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1982, pp. 3-4.
6 *Weekly Courier*, 2 September 1920.

Total Ranger numbers compared with Area Reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*
(formerly the national Parks & Wildlife Act 1970)
Tasmania 1972-2003



Despite person visits in Tasmanian National Parks rising 30% since 1998 (from 921,000 in 1997/1998 to 1,310,000 in 2002/2003), Park ranger numbers continue to fall. In 1998 seventy-seven rangers were employed. By 2003 this had fallen to sixty two according to Parks and Wildlife figures.

Photograph: courtesy of Parks & Wildlife Service

NATIONAL PARKS – FOR THE PEOPLE FOR ALL TIME

Freycinet National Park Draft Management Plan 2004
(Altering the Freycinet National Park, Wye River State Reserve Management Plan 2000)

The Tasmanian National Parks Association has concerns about both the Tin Mines Dam Application and the text changes to the Plan to allow for tracks within the Conservation Zone of the Park. There is a FUNDAMENTAL principle at stake in each instance: our National Parks are, and ought to be, inviolate, 'for the people for all time'. If each generation nibbles away at the edges, manipulating the Plans to suit immediate needs/wants, the values of the Parks erode, even if at an imperceptible rate, such that the trend is increasingly nurtured by reduced expectations.

1 Tin Mines Dam

TNPA would like to have read some alternative options for a secure water supply for a) the community and b) Federal Hotels – options for sourcing the water from outside the boundaries of the Park. For anyone to oppose this scheme there is not much sympathy; water is seen as a god-given right, regardless of the meaning of National Park status. TNPA finds that fact extraordinarily short-sighted.

When TNPA asked a local Ranger if there would be any impact on the Park from Federal Hotels proposed new resort development the answer was a firm 'no'. This seemed an extraordinary response, and it was followed by an assurance that the whole Coles Bay community was behind the water scheme. Of course they would be, they have been hoodwinked.

Will Federal be made to restrict their use or will we in fact have a situation where the Park generates the supply for spas and swimming pools? The desirability of water conservation is obvious, but unstated.

2 Section 4: Alterations to the Freycinet National Park

TNPA opposed the text change that would allow a track within a conservation zone.

Wineglass Bay is an icon, visited by increasing numbers of tourists and the increase is apparently only going to continue, exponentially. There are problems with the impact that will not be simply solved by a hardened loop track. TNPA suggests much more sensitive interpretation to make people fully aware of the options to the walk, fitness levels required and the nature of the climb. We believe for many the track will always be too steep, too slippery, and too hard. There is no hard evidence (see Parks surveys) to suggest that the frequency of encounters actually degrades visitor experience. It is a gregarious experience, people enjoy to stop and to talk to passers by and in doing so take more time. Given that the loop track as proposed is almost within waving distance it seems illogical to scar more ground. After much discussion, a consensus has been reached that if there must be redevelopment, upgrade the existing track, harden it and re-step it where necessary, but do so with the minimum disturbance.

Helen Gee

FREYCINET NATIONAL PARK DRAFT WINEGLASS CARPARK AND LOOKOUT TRACK SITE PLAN 2004

may be viewed at www.parks.tas.gov.au/teck/wineglass/summary

The single most important attraction at Freycinet is the Wineglass Bay viewfield from the saddle between Mt Amos and Mt Mayson, and record numbers are focusing on the iconic tourism experience, presenting risk management issues and impacting on the existing track. Parks' intention has been to develop a one-way loop system (track standard AS 2156 Class 2) to the lookout with a more gradual and consistent grade than the existing track After much debate a compromise partial loop is now proposed. TNPA has expressed its preference for a single hardened track of sufficient width to maintain the social ambience of the walk and disagrees with the virtual doubling of the carpark to cope with the numbers. The answer, at peak times of the year, is to keep cars back at the Park entrance and institute shuttle buses. Do we simply keep doubling carparks within our parks forever, creating what Edward Abbey calls 'National Parking Lots'? There is a need to develop alternative softer options for those who are not capable of walking to the saddle in safety.

editor

Campaigner, Helen Gee studying the Swepol converter station in Karlshamn, Sweden, 2002.

BASSLINK – ITS IMPACT ON THE WORLD HERITAGE AREA

Basslink will have a significant detrimental impact on the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and on the World Heritage Values for which it was inscribed on the World Heritage List. Because of these impacts, Basslink will result in Australia being in breach of its obligations under the *World Heritage Convention*.

The Gordon River Hydro Electric Scheme is entirely within the South-West Wilderness World Heritage Area; it predated the nomination. The power station has markedly altered the flow regime of the middle Gordon by reducing peak flows, changing the seasonality of flows and causing water levels to rise and fall at rates that are much more rapid than occur under natural conditions.

From late 2005, the Gordon River stands to be impacted by massively increased fluctuations of water flow that will scour the gorges of the Gordon River for the generation of hydro power to export across Bass Strait into the National Electricity Grid. Hydro Tasmania has already been authorised to exercise statutory powers within the TWWHA. This effectively sanctions present altered flow regimes and consequent impacts on river-bank stability and riparian habitat. Although the Splits are, collectively, a unique natural World Heritage site, they are under attack once again. They are another symbol of the disregard this Government has for natural Tasmania and its remarkable diversity.

There is a fundamental flaw in the logic of the Hydro's perception of World Heritage values. The Basslink Integrated Impact Assessment (IIAS) *Values* Assessment refers, on page 2, to the fact that the features of the Gordon River are not unique and are well represented in the WHA, that *the power station does not substantially impact on the overall integrity of the WHA* (Summary Document/Gordon River WHA Values Assessment p2).[1] Basslink *will* effect the riparian habitats of the Gordon River as acknowledged elsewhere in the same document:

..under Basslink this reduction of species cover and diversity will be accelerated (p33).[1] The extraordinary claim of the consultants is that *Basslink will actually mitigate existing erosion problems, improving the river*.

Gordon River

The lack of transparency of the EIS process has resulted in scientific claims resistent to critique. This is frustratingly reminiscent of the Pedder fiasco and the early days of the Franklin-below-Gordon scheme. But remember the Franklin. In 1982 in Tasmania both political parties, both houses of Parliament, all three newspapers and the unions were solidly for a dam and huge expenditure had already been committed to the project. PM Malcolm Fraser said „It,s a State,s matter.‰ But Bob Brown told us all „while the river is still there we have to keep on.‰ Within a year it was saved.

Investment in Basslink constitutes a similar serious misdirection of public resources. Basslink was originally costed at $500m but this had blown out by 56% to $780m by June 2003. We don,t have current figures and there is another year to go! TNPA calls for a full financial analysis to determine the real risks, and full and open disclosure.

The legal framework is shonky

Basslink would appear to be illegal under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999; however, it is not subject to that Act . The whole project is subject to a substantially less onerous, earlier act, the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974. The project was declared under this EPIP Act prior to 16 July 2000 and the assessment was finalised before 16 July 2002. Therefore, the Basslink project did not have to be referred to the Minister for approval under the EPBC Act.

This was one of the reasons for the indecent haste with which the project was pushed through the environment assessment process. If this process had exceeded the three year period allowed under the old act, then the whole process would have had to be repeated under the EPBC Act.

With that in mind, where does the project stand with regard to the EPBC-superceded World Heritage Properties Conservation (WHPC) Act 1983?

The WHPC Act continues to apply only to the affected area of the Gordon River proclaimed under that Act – that is, the stretch between the Olga River and the confluence with the Franklin River. Ministerial consent will be required if the activity will damage the world heritage values of this area.

The Joint Advisory Panel decided that no consent was required under the WHPC Act *based on current information*. However, if damage is identified through monitoring, consent will be required. Third parties can enforce the development and environmental permits granted in respect of the Basslink project in the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal and should obtain copies of these permits and monitor compliance with the conditions.

Hydro Tasmania's activities already have a large environmental impact on Tasmania. The catchments which supply its power stations occupy about one-third of the land mass and their mode of operation significantly affects the environment and public amenity of the rivers and lakes involved. Basslink will impact on the Gordon River, the marine environment of Bass Strait and on the environment along the route of the proposed overhead transmission lines in Tasmania and Victoria, however the less visually obvious impacts, those on the TWWHA are numerous, in summation:

1 Basslink will have a significant and detrimental impact on the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and the World Heritage Values for which it was inscribed on the World Heritage List. Because of these impacts, Basslink will result in Australia being in breach of its obligations under the *World Heritage Convention*. A Party is in breach of the Convention duty if it takes the view that it can damage a value because that value is represented elsewhere in the World Heritage area. A Party taking this view would be usurping the role of the World Heritage Committee which during the nomination process determined the values and agreed to inscribe the area on the World Heritage List because it is satisfied that the values are going to be protected.

2 Basslink will increase the scouring of the Gordon River's banks and kill river life. There is a barren section of exposed soil and roots extending up to 4m high, the high water mark. This totals about 43ha of riverbank. A third turbine will be used more often under Basslink, raising the watermark further and claiming another 19ha of riverbank. According to freshwater ecosystem specialist Dr Neil Davidson, this will create scouring, erosion, land-slip and accelerated loss of vegetation. Dr Peter Davies said there had already been a substantial loss of river bank life and that Basslink will further reduce the variety and abundance of micro-invertebrates.

Gordon River

The truth is, we have no real idea how the banks will stand up to the massive (unnaturally massive) fluctuating flows over the years ahead. There is no baseline data on the riparian zone, pre Hydro industrialization, and little in the way of comparative surveys. The need to provide peak load power will work against mitigation work required to deal with the existing damage to the riparian zone. That is, a slow ramping strategy and minimum environmental flows will not be possible in the *all or nothing* Basslink flow regime required by Victoria's demand for peak power.

3 At the time of listing the World Heritage Committee expressed concern about the impact of the scheme on the Gordon River and also on the meromictic lakes.

The current operation of the Gordon Power station poses risks for the sustained meromixis of Lake Morrison, Lake Fidler and the Sulphide Pool – the meromictic lakes. Less than 150 such lakes are known in the world and only four others occur in Australia The sediments of these lakes are seen as a chronicle of Aboriginal fortunes, an archaeological time capsule. The maintenance of meromixis depends on saline recharge as a result of salt wedge intrusion from the Gordon River upstream of the lakes. Since the commissioning of the Gordon dam the lack of saline recharge has been of grave concern. Basslink will exacerbate the risk to these unique lakes. It will diminish the likelihood of flexibility in power station operations and hasten the demise of the archaeological record and the lakes themselves.

In mid June Hydro Tasmania sent a tanker up the Gordon to pump salt water into Lake Fidler in an attempt to restore meromixis to these ancient lakes for pehaps 10 years. The cost? $300,000. Emerius Prof Peter Tyler admits it's the only alternative to periodic power station shut downs. Why is this unthinkable?

The Joint Advisory Panel report concluded that no change to the meromictic lakes was predicted due to the Basslink project as the project *'would not affect the timing or duration of long maintenance shutdowns.'* However, at the time of the WHA listing the World Heritage Committee expressed concern about the impact of the Gordon Power Development on the Gordon River and also on the meromictic lakes.

In its final report on the project, the Joint Advisory Panel stated: *At this stage the Panel does not consider that Hydro Tasmania is required to seek written consent from the Minister administering the WHPC Act under section 10 of the Act. However ... if the monitoring shows that damage is occurring in the Proclaimed Area it will be a matter for the Commonwealth Minister to determine what is 'damage' or an acceptable level of 'damage' for the purposes of the WHPC Act.*

Environment Australia supported this view in its Environment Assessment Report. Has consent been granted

REPORT FROM THE FIFTH IUCN WORLD PARKS CONGRESS

Durban, South Africa, 8-17th September 2003

Summary of a paper by Penelope Figgis AM, Vice President, Australian Conservation Foundation

We celebrate one of the greatest collective land use commitments in the history of human kind - a worldwide system of some 100,000 protected areas and a tripling of the world's protected areas over the last 20 years.
Durban Accord

The core lands and waters in the global effort to conserve life on earth are its protected areas. The leading body in the world for national parks and protected areas is the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), a global network of protected area professionals and a Commission of IUCN, the World Conservation Union.

Every ten years IUCN/WCPA holds a World Congress to debate the issues surrounding protected areas. This forum is undoubtedly the most prestigious and influential forum in the world in determining global directions for nature conservation through reserves. In September this year the 5th IUCN World Parks Congress (WPC) Congress was held in Durban, South Africa.

The event attended by over 3000 invited delegates from 154 countries celebrated protected areas as irreplaceable global assets and provided a close-up picture of their status, issues and challenges. The Congress aimed to build partnerships and deliver real outcomes for global action.

The Wilderness Society had a strong contingent of six or seven and ACF had three at the Congress. Penny Figgis (ACF) presented a paper 'Private Lands Conservation: The Australian Experience'. Australians are also prominent in IUCN, WCPA and the World Heritage Centre.

The theme of the conference was 'Benefits Beyond Boundaries'. The Congress focussed on how protected areas are relevant to the broader economic, social and environmental agenda for humankind in the 21st Century.

The critical importance of protected areas to the global struggle for biodiversity is increasingly apparent. Russell Mittermeier, USA President of Conservation International said 'protected areas are simply the single most important biodiversity tool we have'. He also said 'without adequate protected areas none of the critically endangered or endangered species will survive'.

Not only does biodiversity face the impacts of materialism and over consumption but also the impacts of the desperation of poverty, both exacerbated by population growth. To these threats have been added the impacts of climate change, the collapse, or non-existence, of the rule of law and civic society, war, and the depredation of HIV/Aids. As a result a great deal of emphasis was put on bringing home the major benefits of protected areas to decision makers and broad constituencies. We are likely to face a continued struggle to maintain the concept of strict protection with the very powerful push for human benefits.

Debate centred on the need to integrate conservation and development agendas, roles and rights of indigenous and mobile people and mining in Protected Areas. The latter was probably the most contentious area with concerns that that dialogue between IUCN – The World Conservation Union and the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) over recent times had led to mining interests being over-represented at the Congress and in the draft recommendations. There is deep distrust of the motives of mining interests and Australia's Christine Milne and Alec Marr were prominent in the debate.

A task force on wilderness has been established driven by the concern that the very strong emphasis on human needs is undermining the concept of lands where nature has priority.

Marine Protected Areas was a major topic of debate with the point being made many times that while some 10% of the terrestrial environment is in some kind of reserve, less than 1% of the marine environment is protected. A call was made for a major increase in marine protected areas by 2012.

The Durban Accord is a powerful inspirational statement which celebrates the achievements of protected areas and voices concern over the many threats. The key site for the many layers of information available is
www.iucn.org/wpc2003

THE AIMS OF THE TNPA ARE:

- To ensure the conservation, protection, and where required the rehabilitation, of the natural environment of National Parks.
- To promote the conservation of cultural heritage within National Parks.
- To maintain conservation as a primary role of the National Parks and Wildlife Service
- To secure the reservation of suitable areas of National Parks
- To encourage community involvement in National Park management
- To promote effective legislation for our National Parks
- To increase community awareness of the value and importance of National Parks...

HAVE YOUR SAY...

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or applied for under the WHPC Act in respect of the Basslink project? That is uncertain, TNPA is persuing an answer. It is worth noting that the Gordon River Basslink Monitoring Annual Reports are public documents, as are the Baseline and Review reports. Confidentiality was waived.

There is ongoing debate regarding whether 'damage' relates to the proclaimed area itself or to the identified world heritage values of the area. Undoubtedly the Basslink project will cause damage to the cultural and heritage values of the proclaimed area.

Community scrutiny was limited by commercial in confidence restrictions and overruled by science that was deployed to fortify the proponents' claims. A paper by Ronlyn Duncan of the Centre for Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania exposes the constraints that have prevented public views from influencing the Basslink Joint Advisory Panel. Duncan shows how the effectiveness, equity and transparency of the Basslink Hearings may have been undermined by scientific claims resistant to critique.[2]

4 Nowhere in the Basslink Integrated Impact Assessment was there reference to the impact of Basslink on the proposal to restore Lake Pedder, yet this is a serious idea held in the minds and hearts of many in Australia, and beyond, and I'm sure TNPA members would identify with it strongly. It is a far superior project for the long-term as Lake Pedder restored would be a national icon to inspire ecological restoration worldwide, underpinning like nothing else can that image Tasmanians love to project: clean and green!. The restoration of the heart of our Wilderness area was found to be technically feasible by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment in June 1995. (See *Inquiry into Proposal to drain and restore Lake Pedder,* Commonwealth of Australia, 1995.) Basslink undermines the chances of restoration only to the extent that it places a greater *perceived* imperative on the need for the water of the Huon-Serpentine Impoundment. This water body contributes only 9.5% to the Gordon power station through-put, and as such is, and always was, expendable.[3]

Serpentine River

Concerned?

Write letters; spread this article (see website); question:

- Basslink Pty Ltd;
- Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Heritage; and
- State Minister for Economic Development.

References

1 *Tasmania.* Resource Planning and Development Commission *Hearing of Representations – Reports,* see http://www.rpdc.tas.gov.au/dwnl/sw_decision.pdf

2 *Constructing barriers in the translation and deployment of science: Basslink* – a case study by Ronlyn Duncan, Australian Journal of Public Administration, 61(4):3-11 March, 2003

3 Submission to the Basslink Advisory Panel on the Basslink Draft Integrated Assessment Statement, June 2001 from the Lake Pedder Restoration Committee, (Tasmania) March 2002

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Meetings
General meeting: First Monday of the month at the Tasmanian Environment Centre – 102 Bathurst St, Hobart.
Committee meeting 6pm (all welcome), General Meeting 7pm

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