



## Tamar Valley Pulp Mill has no seal of approval

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Above: Underwater opposition to Tamar Valley Pulp Mill.  
Front cover: Tamar Valley pulp mill has no seal of approval.  
Photos: Jon Bryan.

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**Dans Hill nickel mine**

In October 2009 we ran a front page story in the *Tasmanian Conservationist*, 'Nickel Mine Nightmare', regarding the proposal by the New South Wales-based company Proto Resources to mine for nickel and other minerals in the Dans Hill Conservation Area and nearby private land near Beaconsfield. The original proposal, if approved, would have destroyed half the known individuals of the nationally listed, critically endangered plant species *Tetratheca gunnii*. It would have also involved mining 100 hectares of the conservation area, which was purchased in 1999-2000 with Australian Government funds through the Private Forests Reserve Program, specifically to protect *T.gunnii*; it is also important habitat for other threatened plant species and forest communities.

The Australian Government failed to refuse the project outright, as recommended by the TCT, deciding in November 2009 that the project requires assessment and, if it proceeds, approval, under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and that the proposed mine would be assessed by the Tasmanian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) pursuant to the Tasmanian bilateral agreement.

However, our concerns regarding the project's impacts on *T.gunnii*, other threatened plant species and land purchased for addition to the conservation area, has been acknowledged by the Tasmanian EPA in its final assessment guidelines, issued in March 2010. More importantly, our concerns had been noticed by the proponent, Proto Resources.

In February 2011, representatives of Proto Resources asked to meet the TCT to discuss our concerns and presented us with an outline of the revised mining proposal. Based on the December 2010 'Barnes Hill Nickel Cobalt Project Terrestrial Botanical Survey and Fauna Habitat Assessment', the proponent has altered its mining proposal to ensure there will be no direct impacts on the threatened plant species *T.gunnii* and *Spyridium obcordatum*. It also proposes some quite significant offsets (mining will cause considerable destruction to important forests within the conservation area) such as acquiring adjacent land for inclusion in the conservation area, and has moved the most damaging infrastructure (including very large spent ore dams and overburden storage areas) outside the conservation area into state forest.

While some of these measures are yet to be actually delivered, such as the land purchases, Proto Resources should be congratulated for making these very significant alternations to its project. As well as the expense of the proposed off-sets, it appears that the company has given up one small but important mineral deposit to ensure it has no direct impacts on *T.gunnii*. Some of our concerns regarding management of phytophthora, destruction of forest communities and other matters have not been addressed and we will seek further concessions from Proto. No large mining proposal in a natural area



*Tetratheca gunnii*, shy Susan. Photo: Roy Skabo

can ever have negligible impacts, but it is important to acknowledge mining companies for changing proposals, at considerable cost, in response to our concerns.

Proto Resources will shortly be submitting its full Development Proposal and Environmental Management Plan to the EPA and the TCT will make a further submission, looking to obtain the best possible outcome for the threatened species and forest communities.

Peter McGlone

**TCT Councillor Janice Miller**

I was delighted when Peter invited me to nominate for the TCT Council back in August 2009. Originally from the UK, I have lived mostly in the country-urban interface, which presents many social and ecological challenges. My first 'real' introduction to Australian ecological issues was in NSW, working as a coordinator for a wildlife rescue and rehabilitation organisation.



Janice Miller

Over the last 10 years, I have delivered many externally funded Australian Government grant projects in Tasmania, under the various 'care' programs. Employed by a government or non-government service provider, I have worked with landholders across the north of the state. A major focus of this work has been to protect, enhance and re-establish native vegetation on farms, both riparian and non-riparian, as well as working to improve freshwater and wetland ecosystems. Recently I have changed direction slightly and am working in the field of emergency response to natural and other crises whilst at the same time working towards a Masters in Sustainable Development. I firmly believe that the two areas are integrally linked and enjoy the connectivity between my work and study. Being involved with the TCT provides a fantastic avenue for me to continue to build on my conservation knowledge and contribute in a small but positive way to an important organisation.

On 10 March the Australian Government Minister for Environment, Tony Burke, gave final approval to the three outstanding modules for Gunns' Tamar Valley pulp mill.

Given the history of the Commonwealth's compliance with Gunns' requests, this came as no surprise at all. What was somewhat surprising was the Environment Minister's spruiking of the mill and the amount of spin he put on his decision-making process. This clearly went above and beyond the call of duty, with one highlight occurring during an ABC *Lateline* interview where the Minister suggested he was supporting a new pulping process (elemental chlorine free—ECF Lite) in response to demands by environmental groups. In fact, the outstanding demand from all Tasmanian environmental groups in relation to Gunns pulp mill is that it not be built in the Tamar Valley.

Documentation supporting the minister's decision was released on the day of the announcement. The TCT has been asking for this documentation for some time. If you are cynical about the process you might think that releasing reports, which had been completed and available for some time, on the day of the announcement of the decision would be a way to limit access to information and make it difficult for groups with a different view of the mill to respond.

An element of anticipation was introduced into the otherwise predictable ministerial decision with a last-minute announcement that there would be an unexpected delay before an announcement was made, while an assessment of further material provided by Gunns was carried out.

There is a lot of new material relating to this recent decision, and at the time of writing the TCT has not had an opportunity to make a comprehensive assessment. At this stage, however, there are some highlights which look as if they deserve further investigation.

One of the TCT's longstanding concerns has been the potential for dioxins and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs) to bioaccumulate and poison marine mammals such as bottlenose dolphins and Australian fur seals that live and feed in the area of the proposed pulp mill's effluent outfall. A monitoring program that would address this concern appears to have been abandoned in this round of assessments, which is surprising since protected marine mammal species such as these would appear to require a complete consideration by the Australian Government.

POPs tend to accumulate in the top long-lived order predators such as marine mammals, which are particularly vulnerable as they have a great propensity to store these toxins in their insulating blubber and then pass them on to their young via mother's milk.

The response of Gunns and the Commonwealth Government has been to ignore marine mammals altogether and use the colony of little blue penguins at Low Head as a proxy. Little blue penguins are not top-order predators, do not have large amounts of blubber and, as birds, do not feed their young milk. Little blue penguins live to be around 6.5 years old, compared to Australian fur seals which tend to live around 19 to 20 years, or bottlenose dolphins which may live much longer. It is difficult to see how monitoring contamination of short-lived little blue penguins can be a good indicator of contamination of marine mammals.

Another technique suggested by Gunns is to monitor leatherjackets for contamination by POPs, as previous research indicates that these fish form part of the diet of Australian fur seals. As far as I am aware, there has been no research that shows that the fish that will be sampled for this monitoring program are representative of the diet of the Australian fur seals from the Tenth Island seal colony close to the outfall. In fact, the documentation suggests that samples for this program will include leatherjackets from Tenth Island, which by their very existence indicate that they are not part of the seals' normal diet.

To a diver who has been observing the seals and marine environment in this part of Bass Strait for many years, the reef-living leatherjackets do not appear to be a particularly important part of the diet of those seals; it would seem more appropriate to sample squid and school fish in this region.

Toxicology testing appears to have been improved with regard to the samples of effluent being used and the use of local marine species. However, I understand that testing is still limited to a maximum of 48 hours; this may not be long enough to identify chronic effects. It should be remembered that the proposed pulp mill has a lifespan in the order of 30 years. Toxic effects identified by just 48 hours of testing may not give a good indication of long-term effects.

Other areas that should be addressed are the determination of the final fate of solid wastes in the environment and the development of a monitoring system that does not rely on Gunns. Given the mistrust that has surrounded this pulp mill proposal, any environmental monitoring system needs to be seen to be completely independent of the operator.

One fundamental problem with the approvals process is that Gunns appears to have introduced a new pulping process into the design of the mill. The company claims that this so-called ECF Lite process will reduce the production of dioxins, for example, but this has not been adequately assessed by any level of government. The complexities of the pulping process are such that an objective assessment by a government body equivalent to the Tasmanian Planning Commission (which has replaced the Resource Planning and Development Commission – RPDC) needs to be carried out for the public to have confidence in the results.



Whether you think that the federal assessment of these marine modules is sufficient or not, it is important to remember that this assessment has had a very narrow scope. A large number of important environmental, social and economic issues that lie within Tasmania's own jurisdiction have simply not been addressed at all, because the Tasmanian Government allowed Gunns to quit the RPDC assessment process when the pulp mill proposal was identified as being critically non-compliant. The oft-repeated claim that this proposed pulp mill has been thoroughly assessed is simply incorrect.

While writing this piece I came across an article in the *Examiner* (of all places) reporting that Kim Booth had revealed a letter from a consultant to Gunns warning that the site-selection process for the Bell Bay pulp mill fell 'well short' of the requirements, that there was very little documented evidence to meet the RPDC guidelines and that 'The assessment process undertaken by Gunns falls well short of the guideline requirements and assessment which would typically be undertaken for such a project'. The obvious shortcomings of the proposed site for the mill are just another illustration of how dubious and inadequate the Tasmanian Government-sponsored assessment process for this pulp mill proposal has been.

### What now for the mill?

Despite the long-anticipated Commonwealth approvals being granted, Gunns has still not announced a start date for building the mill, or any joint-venture partner (JVP) or other mechanism to source funding so that construction can begin.

Gunns appears to have positioned itself so that this Tamar Valley pulp mill forms the core of its future business activities and has indicated it wants to move out of operations in native forests or those that are dependent on native timber. Communications to the Australian Stock Exchange indicate that, 'If the project were not probable, this would involve the expensing of a substantial proportion of the \$219.4 million included in capital work in progress at 31 December through the profit and loss'. I believe that this means that if Gunns walks away from pulp mill proposal immediately it has to add a loss of \$219.4 million to its books, and the company does not appear to be in any position to absorb such a loss. In its half-yearly statement to the Australian Stock Exchange, Gunns reported a loss of \$ 4.6 million (\$5 million before interest and tax). This included a revaluation (by over \$18 million) of a recently purchased mill. As far as I know there is nothing illegal about this sort of creative accounting, but without the revaluation the real loss would have been over \$23 million.

Gunns' share price has fallen yet again, even after the approvals were granted by Minister Burke. Uncertainty over demand for woodchips by Japanese paper companies has grown, particularly since the earthquake and tsunami disaster.

If the proposed mill is such a good commercial venture, then why has no private company come forward to get a piece of the action? One potential reason is that it isn't such a good proposition. The low share price, forest assets, compliant governments and a pulp mill package that is ready to go might seem to make Gunns an attractive takeover target for any potential JVP, but then you have to consider the high Australian dollar as well as the small scale of plantations and relatively slow tree growth compared to South American competitors.

World stock markets are stumbling again as. With ongoing tensions in the Middle East, natural disaster in Japan and rising oil prices, it would be a bold company that would jump into any joint venture with Gunns. It is difficult to imagine any responsible company taking on the ongoing and widespread community opposition created by the fatally flawed approval process. Whatever your view of forest management and conservation, the Tasmanian forestry industry has proven to be economically unsustainable. It is on its knees, despite many hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer-funded subsidies. One economic analysis (Wells Economic Analysis May 2009, Support for Tasmanian Forestry 1997-98 to 2007-08) indicated that over \$630 million of subsidies were provided to the Tasmanian forestry industry just between 1997 and 2008. At the moment, the only way that this pulp mill has any chance of being built in the near future is if the Commonwealth injects a huge amount of taxpayer dollars into the project to get it started and then provides ongoing support so that the deal becomes too good to resist.

*Jon Bryan  
TCT Marine Campaigner*

### Postscript

Since early 2011 the TCT has been seeking meaningful consultation with Gunns in relation to last minute changes to its pulp mill. Our frustrations culminated in sending an open letter to Gunns on 25 February, following a hastily arranged briefing, making it clear that we did not feel that this constituted meaningful consultation and that our concerns and opposition remained. On 8 March we sent a complaint to the Australian Securities Exchange regarding Gunns' public claims of consultation with conservation groups. The TCT's open letter to Gunns and letter to the ASX document our long and frustrating attempts to have meaningful consultation and both are available on the TCT's web site.

Even though Gunns has all required government permits, it will also want support from community and conservation groups to assist with obtaining finance. We will maintain our opposition to the pulp mill and continue to monitor Gunns' public statements on the subject.

The forestry debate has moved very rapidly over the last few weeks, concluding with the Australian Government approval of the Gunns Bell Bay pulp mill on 10 March and the release of Bill Kelty's forests moratorium statement on 11 March.

But before addressing these recent and most significant developments, let us consider the background to these events. For instance, it is important when reading the Kelty statement to recognise that neither the state nor Australian governments has set out a policy or defined its interests regarding forest protection or forest industry reform, other than to strongly support the Gunns Bell Bay pulp mill. It is important to note the extremely limited instructions that have been given to Forestry Tasmania (FT) in relation to its role in a logging moratorium. It is also vital to know Gunns' true position on native forest logging and what the 'forests for the pulp mill' deal is, if, in fact, it is real.

When this is explained, it makes it very clear that the Kelty forests moratorium statement is appallingly weak and appears to equate to a 'forests for the pulp mill' deal, which we have all feared was being discussed.

### State and Australian governments' policy vacuum

On 2 February 2011, the newly appointed Premier, Lara Giddings, responded to the TCT's 11 November 2010 letter to the former Premier, David Bartlett, and copied to the Prime Minister and her ministers for forestry and environment (published in full in the *Tasmanian Conservationist* No. 321), which outlined the key shortcomings of the Forests Statement of Principles Agreement (FSoP). As expected, the Premier's letter did not contain a detailed or substantive response to the many policy recommendations we made. But it did say that we could expect a meeting with Tasmanian Minister for Energy and Resources Bryan Green, whom the Premier described, as 'leading the Tasmanian Government's engagement with this (the Kelty) process'.

At the time of printing, the TCT has not yet received a response or a meeting invitation from Bryan Green. No reply has been received from the Australian Government.

It is not surprising that the TCT has not received responses to its recommendations because under David Bartlett, and now Lara Giddings, the state government has pointedly avoided articulating a clear position on forest conservation or forestry industry reform. The conservation groups involved in the FSoP discussions should not have allowed the government to so comfortably sit on the fence over the last nine months.

First Bartlett got away with giving support to the FSoP process and saying the state government must give conservation and industry groups room to work

out a deal. Then, after the FSoP was presented to him on 19 October 2011, Bartlett said that it represented a major step forward and reflected the substantial good will on both sides. Bryan Green also said in the same media release that the state government would prepare a response to the FSoP and would carry out 'broad public consultation' in preparing this response, but this promise has not been fulfilled. Then followed statements from Bartlett that confirmed the government's general commitment to the forest industry, including no forced buy-backs of wood licences. But no commitments to forest conservation. Contrary to claims by some conservation groups, David Bartlett never committed his government to the 15 March date for commencement of a moratorium on logging in high conservation value forests (as identified by the Wilderness Society and Environment Tasmania).

The state government has also used the FSoP discussions as an excuse for not addressing major policy issues that have held up the review of the Forest Practices Code.

When Bill Kelty was appointed as an independent facilitator, Bartlett, and then Giddings, said the state government's role was merely to provide input to the Kelty process.

The signed FSoP was provided to the former Premier on 19 October 2010 but, after five months, the state government still has not come out with a formal policy response to it. Without such commitments, the state government is safely placed to ignore or, at best, deliver part of the modest reserve agenda of conservation groups which are signatories to the FSoP.

While the TCT has not had a reply from the Australian Government, Julia Gillard issued a media release on 7 December in response to the FSoP. It avoided any policy statements but announced the commitment of both governments to the appointment of an independent facilitator.

The Tasmanian public does not know what the state or Australian governments' interests or commitments are, with one exception: we know very clearly that both governments want the Gunns Bell Bay pulp mill built. We are right to assume that both governments are looking to the FSoP process to assist with ensuring the pulp mill proceeds, or at least does nothing to block it.

Since writing to the former Premier, the TCT has elaborated on some of our concerns by sending letters to the state and Australian governments (as yet unanswered) about:

- the failure of reserve proposals made by conservation groups who are signatories to the FSoP to incorporate key breeding habitat of the swift parrot, and the need for any agreement on forests to protect the habitat of the swift parrot and other threatened species
- the potential for strengthened biodiversity provisions of the Tasmanian Forest Practices Code to provide an ongoing process for defining high conservation value forests (HCVF) in areas left available for

forestry operations (the need for a definition of HCVF was specifically identified in Prime Minister Gillard's media release of 7 December 2010, which announced the Australian Government's response to the FSoP)

### **Gunns' exit from native forest logging**

Gunns has dominated Tasmania's native forest timber industry. It owns licences issued by Forestry Tasmania for the supply of more than 200,000 cubic metres of native forest timber per annum (or 60% of the total) from public forests. Yet on 8 September 2010, in response to declining demand, Gunns announced its intention to cease using native forest wood. Six months later it has still not sold its licences. Gunns has been selling most other assets in a desperate bid to pay its debts, but has clung onto its wood licences. Why is it doing this?

When the TCT met with representatives of Gunns on 23 February 2011, they made it perfectly clear that the promise to exit the native forest sector was reliant on the state and/or Australian governments buying their wood licences. If Gunns' licences are bought by the governments, they could be extinguished, which would enable more forests to be reserved, although no such commitment has been publicly made by the state government. With no government funds for a buy-back, Gunns made it perfectly clear that it would have no other option but to sell to another forestry company, and logging may continue at the same rates.

This may be bluff from Gunns as it would be highly unlikely to find another buyer or attract a good price, given the massive decline in the native forest sector. But, if this bluff is believed by conservation groups involved in the FSoP process, it has great importance. We are working on the assumption that other conservation groups are accepting this bluff.

This bluster also has an important role in rebranding Gunns as more environmentally responsible. Until a deal is struck, Gunns seems happy for the general public and potential investors to assume that it has ceased native forest logging and is helping to progress the FSoP. Many media commentators write or speak as if Gunns has delivered on this promise.

### **The 'forests for the pulp mill' deal**

We do not know for sure whether Gunns and conservation groups, which are signatories to the FSoP, have done a 'forests for the pulp mill' deal but it appears to be consistent with what we know has been occurring. Such a deal would involve Gunns agreeing to sell its native forest wood licences back to the state government in exchange for conservation groups easing their opposition to the pulp mill and assisting with lobbying to get compensation for the licence buy-back.

However, in the absence of state government support for a forced buy-back of native forest wood licences, a 'forests for the pulp mill' deal is the only

way we can see, currently, in which conservation groups can get protection of significant areas of public forests. Such a deal would also make good business sense for Gunns, which sees its future as being entirely dependent on building the pulp mill. The deal as described would maximise the value of the wood licences, being both a source of funds for the pulp mill but also, perhaps more importantly, an enticement for its arch enemies to not restart their previously very successful campaign to deter potential financiers.

### **The Kelty process**

On 15 December 2010 the state and Australian governments announced the appointment of former leading unionist Bill Kelty as the independent facilitator to work, over a six-month period, with the forestry industry, conservation groups and both governments, in an attempt to develop a formal agreement to implement the FSoP.

The Kelty process commenced in early February 2011 and is operating in a complete policy vacuum. We could not obtain a statement from either the state or Australian governments as to their positions on forestry-industry reform or forest conservation and Kelty's terms of reference also failed to state what the governments' respective objectives were.

On 8 February the TCT met with Bill Kelty. After the meeting we had little confidence about anything coming out of his work. Mr Kelty summed up his job as talking to the signatories and other stakeholders, who may not agree with the FSoP, to determine whether an agreement could be formed. This is a pessimistic outlook, but realistic from our viewpoint.

Mr Kelty did not provide documents or even a detailed description of the process he will follow to develop a forests agreement. He said he would meet with the signatories, and non-signatories such as the TCT, Forestry Tasmania and Gunns, and after this would meet us again. However, this promise now seems very hollow, given that the TCT was never involved in the discussions that led to Kelty's 11 March announcement regarding a logging moratorium.

Mr Kelty seemed totally unaware of our concerns or previous correspondence with the Premier, even though the Premier's response promised to provide him with copies.

Other than confirming our assumption that the Australian Government wanted a deal over Tasmania's forests to clear the way for Gunns Bell Bay pulp mill, Kelty could not provide a specific reason why the Australian Government wanted him involved.

His acknowledgement that regional development is a key issue, to be addressed as part of a possible Tasmanian forests agreement, gave us some hope that the Australian Government may take the issue seriously and potentially could provide funding for implementation of a forests deal.

We undertook to send him all our previous correspondence with the state and Australian governments regarding the FSoP. This has been done but we have no confidence that we will meet with him again or, if we do, that our input will be taken into account when he formulates his final recommendations.

### **Instructions to Forestry Tasmania**

On 9 March 2011 the Minister for Forests, Bryan Green, issued written instructions to Forestry Tasmania (FT) on behalf of himself and the Premier, which state in part that:

'I write on behalf of the Premier and myself in my capacity as the Portfolio Minister for Forestry Tasmania pursuant to the Government Business Enterprises Act 1995 to convey our expectations in relation to supporting the development and implementation of a moratorium on High Conservation Forest, and a guaranteed sustainable quantity and quality of wood supply, once agreed by all signatories to the Forestry Principles'.

This letter makes perfectly clear that FT is not obliged to actually reserve any forests, is not required to cease logging in any forests, is not bound by any timeframes in respect to a logging moratorium and is left to decide for itself which forests, if any, are HCV.

### **Bill Kelty's Claytons moratorium statement**

The 11 March statement issued by Bill Kelty is a record of an oral agreement between the FSoP signatory organisations and FT, which claims to establish a logging moratorium (over 600,000 hectares of state forest identified as HCV forest by conservation organisations who are signatories to the FSoP) for a period of six months, while maintaining wood supply to meet existing contracts. The Kelty statement is available at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/documents/scribd.htm?id=50502637&key=key-1qhx8kgi5cjoo3szvxx4>

With FT in charge of deciding whether logging is needed within the HCV areas, we can expect virtually business as usual, with logging continuing at the same rate. Get ready for FT to promote the fact that logging will not take place in some important areas, but these will be areas not currently in its three-year logging plans.

The Kelty moratorium has paradoxically been called a partial moratorium. It is clear this is not a moratorium at all. But, worse, the statement gives little hope of any permanent forest protection at the end of the six-month Claytons moratorium. The only exception is if the conservation groups accept the 'forests for the pulp mill' deal.

Everything about the Kelty statement is consistent with a pre-arranged deal between the Labor governments in Canberra and Hobart, FT and industry groups. The statement is a product solely of

the FSoP parties and FT (the TCT and many other key stakeholders had no prior knowledge of or input into it) and was released the day after the pulp mill decision and two days after the state government instructed FT to participate in talks about a moratorium. Magically, the Claytons moratorium lasts until 11 days after the permitted deadline for construction of the pulp mill. This could be accidental or it might be a big hint to the FSoP signatory organisations that the moratorium ceases if the pulp mill does not get built.

If you were looking for confirmation of a stitch-up, the *Mercury* may have provided it. On 12 March Sue Neales reported that FT chief Bob Gordon claimed that,

'Mr Kelty believed a lasting peace in Tasmania's forests after three decades of conflict was only possible "if the pulp mill at Bell Bay proceeds".'

### **Where to from now?**

The 11 March statement addressed one key component of the FSoP but many other elements are yet to be addressed by Mr Kelty.

The Tasmanian public has been kept entirely in the dark as to whether the process will move onto other issues addressed in the FSoP or will conclude once it has provided further details in regard to the moratorium, as has been hinted at in media statements. Even if the moratorium over 600,000 hectares of state forest were real, this would only be a first step in delivering peace in Tasmania's forests. The Kelty statement does not go close to providing a comprehensive plan for conservation of forests, does not propose any new strategies for the future of the native forest industry and does not address the needs of regional communities affected by the current decline in the forests industry or as a result of further forest protection.

Only one thing seems clear: that the Gunns proposed Bell Bay pulp mill must be stopped; the TCT will continue assisting other groups to achieve this. We have always believed that forest conservation can be progressed without the Gunns pulp mill proceeding, even if this means Gunns going broke as a company and possibly being bought out.

The TCT will continue to point out the weaknesses in the Kelty statement and lobby for a real moratorium over identified HCV forest. More importantly, we will continue to urge the state and Australian governments to address the numerous serious shortcomings in the FSoP, as outlined in the previous *Tasmanian Conservationist*.

We are not expecting the ongoing Kelty-facilitated FSoP process to survive very long. With too little certainty of gains for too many players, discussions are likely to break down.

While we will not attempt to wreck these talks, if the Kelty process breaks down it would be preferable to pushing through a deal which delivers so little but purports to be delivering peace in the forests.

*Peter McGlone*

The 'Tasmanian Forests Statement of Principles', signed last year between forest industry and some conservation organisations, doubtless presents both an opportunity and significant challenges if its broad intention is to be realised. In this article I address one of those challenges - the protection of High Conservation Value (HCV) forests.

The Statement has as one of its principles to: 'Immediately protect, maintain and enhance High Conservation Value forests identified by ENGO's on public land'.

ENGOs stands for Environment Non-Government Organisations and is defined in the Statement as those who are signatories to it—Environment Tasmania, The Wilderness Society and the Australian Conservation Foundation.

There are a number of reasons for concern about the high conservation value elements of the Statement which, if implemented without elaboration and detail, may ultimately fail to protect a significant amount of the conservation value in Tasmania's forests.

Before elaborating my concerns, let me outline that basis for comment. I have spent the last 20 years running a consulting business that specialises in principles and processes for the identification of conservation values. Most of the last 15 years have been spent designing such systems in Tasmania, for example for the former Private Forest Reserves Program, the Forest Conservation Fund and the Conservation of Freshwater Ecosystems Values project. Last year our business was also successful in bringing Forest Stewardship Council certification for management of native forests to Tasmania, a process in which addressing HCVs is essential.

My first concern is that the Statement seeks to appropriate the identification of HCV forests to only the ENGOs who are signatories.

Assessment of conservation values is a substantive field of scientific research throughout the world, including in Tasmania. I know a number of conservation scientists who have expressed concern about various aspects of the Statement, including those related to the monopolisation of HCV identification by one stakeholder group and the seemingly endless media reports about ending native forest logging.

I can understand the reasons why ENGOs might want to control the identification of HCV forests. There is certainly a view that scientific expertise has not been well represented in the outcomes of past forest conservation initiatives, and that there is merely the facade of having followed a science-based process.

I will address the basis of scientific concern in the following sections, but the point here is that a significant body of expertise has been sidelined. Perhaps the authors of the Statement should have given more thought to ways of ensuring good science—and good scientific process—is accounted for. It is there, but it's a matter for later, and that is of concern.

At the heart of the problem around science is my second concern—that HCV forests are being interpreted as only those areas that appear on Environment Tasmania's map of areas proposed for reservation. These areas are described in the organisation's forest policy and are broadly depicted on a map<sup>1</sup>. The Statement envisages the development of a plan that includes 'verification' of HCV boundaries.

There is no doubt in my mind that many areas on the map are of high conservation value, and that substantive scientific support for their protection can be found.

I also believe some areas on the map are not of high conservation value, at least from the perspective of their importance for protecting biodiversity. At the heart of this issue I suspect are confounded perceptions among proponents of these areas on issues such as clearfelling, the permanence or otherwise of impacts, and visual amenity.

Though all forests are of some conservation value, protecting by reservation those that are of limited importance can increase the political and economic cost of those that really need this type of protection. Reservation is one form of management; there are many others.

There are also doubtless areas of high conservation value which do not appear on the map. Some of these areas can be readily identified: for example, vegetation communities which are inadequately reserved under existing forest policy.

However, it is important to recognise that many high conservation values cannot be broadly mapped. My view is that the importance of these is probably at least of similar magnitude to the biodiversity value in the areas proposed for reservation, and possibly more so. The protection of these values will ultimately depend on adequate forest management systems and the continuing evolution of scientific knowledge.

It is true that the Statement has a principle to: 'Develop a fully-funded, independent, scientifically-led landscape conservation, restoration and integrated-catchment management program, and associated governance and regulatory improvements.'

I have grave concerns that any undue focus on mapped areas, and the idea that protection always means reservation, may lead to details such as these being ignored. If this occurs, the suite of biodiversity values which depend on such a management system will be compromised. I would have much preferred to see the Statement identify specifics, such as the need to implement the recommendations of the review of the biodiversity provisions of the Forest Practices Code.

My final concern relates to forests on private land. Forests on private land contain a very significant proportion of the biodiversity conservation values that are threatened in Tasmania. Not all of these are threatened by forest operations; most are threatened by



Biodiversity rich dry eucalypt forest must be a priority in forests agreement. Photo: Andrew Ricketts.

## TEXAS NEEDLE GRASS

*urgent response needed on serious new weed*

An infestation of Texas needle grass (*Nassella leucotricha*) covering hectares of land has been confirmed in southern Tasmania.

This weed is very closely related to the widespread and devastating serrated tussock (*N. trichotoma*). Texas needle grass, along with several other grasses is not a declared weed in Tasmania. It has no legal status as a weed and, as such, managers of land affected by this weed are not in any way obliged to control it. Nor is the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE), the authority responsible for enforcing the Weed Management Act 1999, able to compel land managers to do anything about this weed.

This is a desperate situation. Texas needle grass is probably the most serious weed threat Tasmania has faced in a long time. DPIPWE should be doing everything in its power to implement a program to contain and control it with a view to its eradication from the state.

The responsible minister, Bryan Green, has considerable powers around the immediate emergency declaration of this and related weeds. Once a weed is declared, DPIPWE can develop a statutory management plan for it, including the declaration of 'infested areas'. This allows for effective quarantine of infested sites.

Regrettably, DPIPWE and Minister Green have opted not to make an emergency declaration. Instead, they have pressed on with an existing declaration, in progress probably since 2008, which will take until at least April 2011 to come into effect.

DPIPWE has acted on this matter by physically removing existing plants from the infested site and committing to monitoring the site into the future. This is commendable.

Preliminary control of the weed is a first step. The second step is to effectively quarantine the site to prevent its spread, as far as is practicable. Emergency declaration followed by the immediate development of a statutory management plan, including declaration of an 'infested area', may be the way to achieve this.

Emergency declaration, and the immediate development and adequately funded implementation of a statutory management plan should be one of DPIPWE's highest priorities at the current time. So should an effective publicity campaign to alert Tasmanians to Texas needle grass, its risks and management, and progress against this weed.

*Peter McGlone*

current and past land management practices. The Statement seeks to encourage and support private forest owners to manage and protect HCVs. And so it should—private land has historically accounted for around 40% of wood production.

Tasmania has had well-funded, voluntary programs for conservation on private land since the late 1990s. Significant progress has been made in some respects but there is still much to be done. There is already public debate about the potential costs to governments of implementing the Statement. The 'poor cousin' way in which private land is dealt with in the agreement, along with the emphasis on public land reservation and finances, does not inspire confidence.

I consider the Statement has the potential to significantly enhance forest conservation in Tasmania. Much of the detail is there, but there is also much that could be improved. For example, we could do worse than ensure that public native forests managed for wood production are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council rather than simply 'Encourage Forestry Tasmania' to do so. ENGOs could project a more positive view about the future of the native forest sector, including challenging media reports about the Statement seeking to end native forest logging. Silence and tacit assent on this issue is alienating the scientific community, and others such as private forest owners. And we have not yet scratched the surface on whether new administration and governance of public forests is needed to deliver the Principles.

My main worry at the moment is that we are seeing a very narrow focus in the public debate, and that this will lead to selective implementation of the agreement around those points of focus at the expense of the big picture. If this occurs, the outcome for high conservation values will be piecemeal, and for some values extremely poor.

*Rod Knight is the CEO and Chair of Natural Resource Planning Pty Ltd, and a foundation member of FSC Australia. NRP is a Tasmanian company specialising in the science and practice of natural resource management.*

### Footnote

1. <http://www.et.org.au/old-growth-regrowth-and-hcv-high-conservation-value-native-forest>

## WEED ALERT NETWORK TRAINING

*volunteers, finding target weeds and planning  
for the future*

The Tasmanian Weed Alert Network has passed its recruitment target of 70 volunteers.

Project Officer Jonah Gouldthorpe and the Tasmanian Herbarium's Weed Taxonomist Matthew Baker have been rolling out training events for these volunteers around the state.

Volunteers have come together in Bicheno, Cambridge, Hobart, Launceston and Longford to look at specimens of the Network's target weeds, as well as for training in the collection of high-quality plant specimens.

The Network also has events planned for Burnie, Queenstown and the Bass Strait Islands.

Volunteers have reported a number of naturalised infestations of the target weed *Iris pseudacorus*, (yellow flag iris) from a number of riverbank sites across the Meander and South Esk catchments. Yellow flag iris has become a serious weed of wetlands in the United States and has demonstrated its weed potential in Tasmania also. It displaces native aquatic plants, is toxic to people and stock and its buoyant seeds are a nuisance in irrigation hardware.

Once volunteer training is complete, the current Weed Alert Network project will move into its closing phase: establishing itself as a self-sustaining entity which can survive beyond the tenure of its current Project Officer and funding. We need to gain commitments from government and industry to support the core functions of the Network (website, recipient of volunteer-collected target weed specimens) for an indefinite period into the future.

*Jonah Gouldthorpe*  
Project Office

Target weed: African feather grass.  
Photo: Jonah Gouldthorpe



## CROWN LAND ASSESSMENT AND

## CLASSIFICATION PROCESS

As reported in recent editions of the *Tasmanian Conservationist*, the Crown Land Assessment and Classification (CLAC) program was completed in June 2006 and for nearly five years the TCT has been pushing successive ministers to implement the recommended 77,500 hectares of proposed reserves.

The first batch of CLAC reserve proposals has been sent to the Parliamentary Counsel for them to draft the first proclamations. The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) anticipate the first set of reserves to be proclaimed in April 2011. All of the CLAC proposed reserves will be proclaimed in small batches over the next few years. We do not accept the DPIPWE assertion that the proclamation of all CLAC reserves will take three years. Some delay is understandable given the limited resources of the Parliamentary Counsel which are required to prepare proclamations.

An additional delay which cannot be avoided is that some reserve classes require Parliamentary approval prior to being sent for final approval to the Governor. Reserve classes which require Parliamentary approval are National Park, State Reserve, Nature Reserve, Game Reserve and Historic Site. Classes that do not require Parliamentary approval include Conservation Area, Regional Reserve and Nature Recreation Area.

We will continue to push the state government to ensure adequate resources of the DPIPWE and Parliamentary Counsel are allocated to this project to ensure it is completed as soon as possible.

*Peter McGlone*

Tor, western end of Long  
Island (CLAC Reserve).  
Photo: Karen Ziegler



Unease about new developments in the Tasmanian aquaculture industry is once again becoming obvious after several years of a more or less steady state situation. On the one hand, rumblings from within industry indicate that there is renewed interest in further significant expansion. On the other, people sensitised by the last round of expansions simply don't want any more fish farms taking over public waterways and causing environmental problems.

Public statements from some sections of the industry suggest an increase in production in the order of 50% is seriously being considered. Although it is not clear where this growth would actually occur, there is a clear expectation that a fair proportion of it would require more cages in the sea, more environmental impacts and the loss of access to waterways.

These issues have recently been highlighted by a proposal by fish farming company Tassal to increase the area of one of its farm sites, at Soldiers Point in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. After a period of public display and submission-taking from interested parties, a hearing of the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel was held on 21 February 2011. This demonstrated that, as far as amenity and environmental issues of public concern, nothing much has changed since the boom days of aquaculture expansion in the 1990s.

The aquaculture industry in Tasmania, along with the forestry and mining industry, is quarantined from the mainstream planning process. Planning for changes to farmed areas is carried out by the marine farming branch of DPIPW, referred to as the 'Planning Authority' in the relevant documentation, and reviewed by the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel.

The TCT has long criticised this process, and we are not alone in our view that recreational and environmental stakeholders are inadequately represented by panel members. In the past it is clear that non-industry positions have not been given the consideration they deserve, and that the planning process has acted more as a rubber stamp for industry expansion than as a mechanism for balancing the needs of different members of the community.

Problems with the latest development proposal at Soldiers Point include the following:

#### **Mapping Anomaly**

A mapping anomaly in the documentation created some confusion in the public consultation process as to what was actually being proposed. Identifying an area under consideration for development is fundamental to any planning process, and it is incredible that such a basic mistake could have been permitted to occur. This error should at least mean that further opportunities for public consultation are provided, based on the corrected documentation.

#### **Destruction of Seals by the Aquaculture Industry**

The need for an option to destroy problem seals was reinforced by the documentation supporting this proposal. Experience in the USA indicates that there should be no need to destroy seals if proper technology is used. The desire to kill or translocate seals is simply a band-aid solution to a problem that only exists because the aquaculture industry is unwilling to invest in appropriate technologies and procedures.

Recently, the Global Aquaculture Alliance (a standards system backed by big US retailers, not conservation groups) stated in a draft salmonid farming practices document that there should be no need to kill predators and other strategies and technologies should be used to prevent unwanted interactions with animals such as seals.

#### **Loss of Amenity**

Loss of access for recreational users has been a longstanding complaint about the increasing area being given over to the aquaculture industry. For example, other water users such as sailors, fishers and divers are being excluded from traditionally important areas. Beachgoers, shore walkers and residents are being confronted by what is perceived by many as a noisy and unsightly industrial activity.

The Planning Authority is dismissive of such concerns, stating on page 26 of its assessment of written submissions that '... this proposed amendment will increase the visual impact of marine farming operations at Soldiers Point to surrounding residents. This is an unavoidable impact of this proposal'.

Lack of concern about noise, visual pollution and reduced access caused by the aquaculture industry has been a feature of DPIPW in the past, and has been supported by previous decisions made by the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel. It highlights the failure of this planning process to take into account the legitimate concerns of the wider community.

For example, some years ago, an area just to the north of Ninepin Point in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel was being considered as a new aquaculture lease area. Opposition came from three Tasmanian government departments (Parks and Wildlife, Tourism and the coastal unit in the Primary Industries Department), along with one of Australia's leading marine ecologists, local residents and the TCT. The only support for this proposal came from the marine farming branch of the Primary Industries Department and just one aquaculture company. The result was predictable, but never adequately explained or justified, and the new farming area was created.

In the wake of this decision, the TCT understands that there was a government direction that its departments no longer make critical public submissions in the aquaculture planning process. In a bizarre twist that highlights the bias of this process, the new area was never actually occupied since, on further consideration by the aquaculture company, it was considered to be unsuitable as a farm site.

*A proposal by salmon farmer Tassal to increase the size of its Soldiers Point farm in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel renews concerns about the environmental impacts of fish farming, loss of access to publicly owned waterways and the planning process that regulates the Tasmanian aquaculture industry. A recent hearing of the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel highlighted these concerns.*

### **Solid Wastes**

While the TCT recognises that solid wastes are largely restricted to areas under cages, and the process of site recovery is relatively well researched and understood, it has recently come to our attention that there are proposals to physically remove anaerobic sediment from the vicinity of cages to reduce health risks for farmed fish (from toxic hydrogen sulphide emissions, for example). This raises the concern that polluted sediment will be much more widely distributed in the environment and become an unacceptable environmental impact.

### **Nutrient Emissions**

In the 1990s, the TCT was informed that its concerns about nutrients from aquaculture were unfounded and that such inputs would be insignificant. In fact, a CSIRO study of the Huon system indicates that aquaculture contributes around 25% of total nutrient loading (human-related inputs make up about 50% of the total). The ecological consequences are not completely understood, particularly with regard to benthic communities but, in any case, present a threat to the aquaculture industry itself as raised nutrient levels can encourage blooms of toxic dinoflagellates, for example. A similar risk is associated with increasing nutrient loading in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel.

In its response to written submissions the Planning Authority actually acknowledged our concerns about nutrients. As far as this writer can remember, this is the first time DPIPWE has acknowledged our concerns about nutrients since the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel was created. The TCT has been raising this issue since the 1990s.

There has been some worthwhile work done in this area—by CSIRO's Huon Estuary study etc, and more recently, apparently useful monitoring by the Broad Scale Environmental Monitoring Program (BEMP). In fact the Planning Authority states (on page 7) that 'TAFI have been engaged by DPIPWE to evaluate and interpret the data from the BEMP. This work is expected to commence in mid 2011 and together with other relevant research will assess the monitoring site specific and regional data against the predictions of earlier system-wide modeling... This evaluation will inform the PA's (Planning Authority's) future management strategies for the MFDP (Marine Farm Development Plan) area.'

It seems irresponsible to allow any further expansion of the aquaculture industry in this region until at least after the proposed evaluation has been completed and more thorough assessment of nutrient impacts has been carried out.

One advance in aquaculture management has been the introduction of a cap on nitrogen inputs. This is a kind of de facto limit on nutrient loading. Unfortunately, this upper limit needs more justification, and there is an urgent need for an independent auditing process to ensure that the cap is actually being applied.

### **Sustainability**

Because farmed salmonids need omega-3 fatty acids in their diet, their feed needs to contain marine organisms that have this nutrient. Generally, a high proportion of fish meal is made up of wild caught fish. As a general rule, it takes about 4 to 5kg of wild caught fish to produce 1kg of farmed Atlantic salmon. This is not a particularly efficient use of fish stocks, and is made worse by the fact that the small pelagics that are often used to make fish feed are not always fished sustainably. So, in effect, by eating farmed salmon you may be contributing to the overfishing of small fish that are ecologically important as they normally feed tuna, whales, seals, dolphins and other marine life, and are critical to the function of marine ecosystems.

### **Antibiotic Pollution**

Antibiotic residues have been found in wild fish caught near fish cages. In one instance it appears that contamination of flathead by antibiotics was five times the maximum permitted by Australian Standards. It is the view of the TCT that antibiotic use for animal husbandry is unethical. Apart from anything else, regular low level exposure of bacteria to antibiotics encourages the development of resistant strains. Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are becoming a major threat to human health. There should be no need to use large amounts of antibiotics to grow salmonids in Tasmania. One local company does not use antibiotics and manages to grow salmonids, probably because at their farms they use lower stocking densities.

### **Inadequate Assessment of Benthic Environment?**

In its EIS, Tassal indicates that its initial survey did not identify the existence of an important reef in the proposed lease area. The failure to identify such a relatively large structure does not give confidence that other important features were identified, such as the presence of the critically endangered spotted handfish. Significant spotted handfish populations may be found in a relatively small area of seabed and at the moment this species can not afford to suffer any losses.

After the reef area was pointed out to the proponent by the Woodbridge Marine Discovery Centre, the proposed farm area was moved to avoid impacting the reef. This reef has an interesting and relatively rare assemblage of invertebrates that occur in shallow water because low light levels created by tannin-stained water prevent algae growing successfully. This reef is apparently used by the Marine Discovery Centre during some of its educational activities.

At the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel hearing of 21 February 2011, we heard from Assistant Professor Stewart Frusher from the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute, who described the invertebrate community as being similar to those found in the Bathurst Harbour region in southwest Tasmania. These

One of the main problems with aquaculture planning in Tasmania is that there is no clearly defined planning strategy for this industry. Planning is done on a piecemeal basis as each small area is assessed with no regard for the overall environmental impact or community concerns.

unusual communities are similar to those found in very deep water in the normal marine environment. The communities in the Bathurst Harbour region also seem to be there because of low nutrient levels. If the invertebrate community on the reef near this proposed aquaculture development really is similar to the ones found in the Bathurst Harbour region, then it does not seem like a good idea to place a big nutrient emitter such as a fish farm alongside, unless you want to make it disappear.

I am not sure how similar the invertebrate community is to the ones near Bathurst Harbour as it has been a long time since I have dived near Soldiers Point, but if the reef community is to be protected from expanding fish farm activities then this aspect needs further investigation.

### **Need for Expansion Unjustified**

The stated justification for the expansion of the Soldiers Point fish farm is to allow more fish from a nearby lease to be held at the Soldiers Point farm, and therefore allow the separation of year classes of fish in the production cycle. The separation of year classes is used in industrial-scale animal farming to reduce the risk of diseases spreading from one year class to another.

It should be remembered that Tassal already has multiple areas being used for farming. It already has the capacity to separate year classes to reduce the risk of disease without the need for additional farm area, although it may perhaps be necessary to reduce stocking density.

What this proposed expansion is really about is making more of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel available to a marine farming company. That means that less area will be available to other users. At the end of the hearing, after listening to arguments and information from the company, the managers and opponents, it seemed clear to many that the proposal was a good commercial proposition for a company, but that there would be a clear cost to the rest of the community.

One of the main problems with aquaculture planning in Tasmania is that there is no clearly defined planning strategy for this industry. Planning is done on a piecemeal basis as each small area is assessed with no regard for the overall environmental impact or community concerns. For example, it would help if there was some indication about how much more of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel the aquaculture industry wants. From the point of view of many recreational fishers and other water users, there is already too much space taken up by fish farms.

Previous decisions by the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel have reinforced the TCT's lack of confidence in the planning process, and the Planning Authority has almost always appeared to be insensitive to the concerns of anyone in the community apart from the aquaculture industry.

During the assessment process for the current proposal, a dismissive approach by DPIW to community concerns raised in written submissions and at the hearing indicates that it is business as usual in the government body that oversees the management of Tasmania's aquaculture industry. However, membership of the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel has changed, providing some hope that community concerns will be taken more seriously. In fact, during the hearing panel members actually seemed interested and asked many very relevant questions. They certainly had access to enough information upon which to base a good decision.

Opposition to further aquaculture expansion was obvious at the hearing and in many of the written submissions. Well-prepared representations were made by the Woodbridge Community Association, Environmental Defenders Office and others, as well as the TCT. While there were many good reasons given for not proceeding with this expansion, relating to loss of amenity and other environmental impacts, it seemed that the only justification for increasing the area used for aquaculture at Soldiers Point was increased profitability.

The Marine Farming Planning Review Panel decision on the Soldiers Point proposal will be particularly interesting as it should provide a good indication about how balanced the aquaculture planning is in its current incarnation. For a long time the TCT has pointed out that recreational and environmental stakeholders are not adequately represented in the planning process and by panel members, and that non-industry positions have not been given the consideration they deserve. Having new members on the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel provides some hope that this will change, but does not really solve the underlying problems associated with the planning process for the aquaculture industry in Tasmania. A planning process that depends on the individuals working in it for a successful outcome is completely unsatisfactory.

The current planning process associated with aquaculture development in Tasmania cannot be compared to the much more comprehensive and transparent process of the Tasmanian Planning Commission, or its predecessor the RPDC. It is interesting to note that many of the planning fiascos, such as the pulp mill, that have beleaguered the Tasmanian Government and community in recent times have occurred because the government has tried to short-circuit its own planning process. The Tasmanian aquaculture industry should be mature enough by now to survive exposure to normal planning processes in the same way as practically every other Tasmanian business.

*Jon Bryan, TCT Marine Campaigner*

### *Are off-road recreational vehicles appropriate in conservation areas?*

The recreational use of off-road vehicles in conservation areas, particularly coastal areas, remains a controversial issue throughout Tasmania. This activity can have considerable impacts on threatened vegetation communities, coastal morphology and resident and migratory shorebird populations, and lead to the destruction of sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance, such as middens.

Many conservation groups advocate banning off-road vehicles in coastal conservation areas. Off-road vehicle users actively resist efforts to restrict their activities and emphasise the historical and social values attached to this recreational pursuit. Clearly, there is a tension between these views and the Tasmanian government has preferred to mediate between various stakeholders with a view to continuing to provide for 'sustainable recreational vehicle use'.

This article looks briefly at the legal obligations in relation to management of conservation areas and whether off-road vehicle use conflicts with obligations to protect the values for which the areas were reserved. The article focuses principally on management of the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area, where off-road driving by four-wheel drives (4WD), quad bikes and motorbikes has been recognised as one of the most significant pressures on cultural and natural values.

#### **Managing Conservation Areas in Tasmania**

The Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) is required to give effect to the management plan for a reserved area under its management or, where no management plan exists, to manage the reserve in 'a manner that is consistent with the purposes for which the land was reserved' and having regard to the management objectives for the relevant reserve class.<sup>1</sup>

Conservation areas are reserved under the Nature Conservation Act 2002<sup>2</sup> for the purpose of 'protection and maintenance of the natural and cultural values of the area of land and the sustainable use of the natural resources of that area of land.'<sup>3</sup>

Management objectives include conserving biological and geological diversity and sites of cultural significance, rehabilitation work, cooperative management with Aboriginal communities and encouraging education and research based on natural and cultural values. However, the objectives also provide for exploration activities, hunting, commercial uses of coastal areas and encouraging appropriate tourism and recreational activities 'consistent with the conservation of the conservation area's natural and cultural values.'<sup>4</sup>

This multiple-use approach to reserve management is a common strategy in Australia, where managing authorities are required to balance wide ranging,

often competing, objectives. This strategy is 'underpinned by assumptions that nature constitutes a series of resources for human use and that such resources are accorded equal weight in governance of the overall resource.'<sup>5</sup> However, in practice, managing multiple uses can lead to compromises that threaten significant natural and cultural values.

The Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice (the Code) provides guidance for management authorities making decisions in a multiple-use framework and identifies the following strategies for managing conflicts between competing reserve values:<sup>6</sup>

1. Identify and describe the nature of the conflict between the maintenance of values.
2. Identify and fill important gaps in knowledge of the values affected as far as practicable.
3. Consider alternative approaches to management that avoid or minimise the effect on values.
4. Identify how irreversible alternative management approaches are. Take into account the potential for cumulative impacts.
5. Identify the relative importance of the conflict for the maintenance of each of the associated values.
6. Determine the significance of the value before making a final decision. Internationally significant values are generally rated higher than locally significant values but this needs to be balanced against local abundance and national significance.
7. Give priority to the most significant value, taking into account the cumulative effects of an activity.
8. Implement the most appropriate guidelines, procedure or plan and monitor as required.
9. If necessary, halt or modify the guidelines, procedure or plan on the basis of the results of monitoring.

The Code explicitly provides that protection and maintenance of natural and cultural values is a fundamental objective in managing reserved areas and should direct all aspects of management.

Significantly for off-road track management, the Code recognises that recreational activities may give rise to contemporary social values if the activities have been practiced for a long time. However, the Code promotes those activities only where they are 'consistent with the reserve's management objectives, and are in accordance with existing strategies and a reserve's management plan'.

The Code also emphasises the need to gather reliable, comprehensive information regarding values and impacts in order to manage reserves effectively.

It explicitly notes that tracks in dune areas should be carefully planned and checked for Aboriginal sites and relics prior to approval.<sup>7</sup>

### **Regulating off-road vehicle use**

The National Parks and Reserved Lands Regulations 2009 prohibit driving vehicles off-road in a reserve other than in 'designated vehicle areas.'<sup>8</sup> PWS can designate off-road vehicle areas in conservation areas, regional reserves or nature recreation areas and has adopted a 4WD permit system allowing access to designated vehicle areas, subject to a range of conditions. It is an offence to drive off-road without a permit, or outside the track network authorised by the permit.

In the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area, 4WD permits allow access to the track network identified in the map attached to the permit. As discussed below, many of these tracks are controversial. As enforcement is difficult, many permit-holders have been driving outside the designated areas, largely without penalty.

### **Protecting Aboriginal heritage values**

The principal legislation for the protection of Aboriginal heritage in Tasmania is the Aboriginal Relics Act 1975. This legislation is outdated, focusing on protection of localised 'sites' rather than landscape values generally, and remains difficult to enforce. However, the Act imposes clear obligations on managing authorities to manage and maintain protected sites and objects<sup>9</sup> and makes it an offence to destroy or damage identified relics.<sup>10</sup>

The management objectives for conservation areas include conserving sites or areas of cultural significance and many management plans explicitly outline measures for protection of Aboriginal heritage places. The National Parks and Reserved Lands Regulations 2009 also prohibit damaging, defacing or disturbing Aboriginal relics, unless an authorisation has been granted for the activity.<sup>11</sup>

### **Responsibilities of managing authorities**

The courts have held that government authorities have a legally binding obligation to manage areas under their control in accordance with applicable management plans or legislative objectives. The managing authority should develop policies consistent with the achievement of those objectives, and should not be influenced by considerations that do not relate to those objectives. However, the nature and extent of the obligations that arise from management plans and objectives are left largely to the discretion of the managing authority.<sup>12</sup>

In *Bannister Quest v Australian Fisheries Management Authority*<sup>13</sup>, the Federal Court considered a policy adopted by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) to restrict long vessels in the South East Fishery. The Fisheries Management Act 1991 set out clear management objectives which the AFMA was obliged to pursue, including efficient and cost-effective fisheries, ecologically sustainable development and maximising economic returns. The

AFMA was also required to consult the Management Committee for the South East Fishery in relation to decisions affecting the fishery.

The AFMA initially intended to lift the restriction, recognising the economic benefits of allowing access by larger vessels. However, after consultation with the Management Committee, the AFMA decided to maintain the restrictions, to avoid social and economic impacts on small-scale operators. *Bannister Quest*, an applicant for a permit for a long vessel, sought review of the decision, arguing that the restriction on long vessels was inconsistent with the legislative objectives and based on irrelevant social and equity considerations.

The Federal Court noted that, while the AFMA had an obligation to consider the views of the Management Committee, its overriding duty was to pursue the management objectives set out in the legislation. The Court was satisfied that lifting the restriction was consistent with those objectives but the revised policy was in direct conflict with the objective of maximising economic efficiency and did not contribute to achievement of the other objectives. Concerns regarding the economic pressure and social upheaval associated with allowing long vessels to access the fishery were irrelevant and did not justify the change in position.

In *Bannister Quest*, the social considerations were in conflict with the objectives expressed in the legislation. However, the courts have also recognised that management objectives themselves are often in conflict (as recognised in the Reserves Code). Where authorities are responsible for managing multiple uses, and potentially competing objectives, the courts have been reluctant to dictate the manner in which objectives are to be achieved. Provided the managing authority 'has regard to' all the relevant objectives, the weight to be given to competing objectives is left to its discretion.<sup>14</sup>

### **Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area**

The Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area (APCA) covers over 100,000 hectares in north-west Tasmania. The area was reserved in 1982 and its status was elevated to conservation area in 1999.<sup>15</sup>

The APCA, which forms the western section of the Tarkine, has been identified as 'one of the world's greatest archaeological regions' in terms of Aboriginal heritage. Numerous sites throughout the APCA are identified in the Register of the National Estate and protected under the Aboriginal Relics Act 1975.

The area provides an important corridor for migratory bird species and breeding habitat for shorebirds, and comprises significant and diverse vegetation communities, including buttongrass moorland, rainforest and Sphagnum communities.

The APCA has been a popular recreational destination for many years, with a strong local culture of off-road vehicle use. The need to manage

Sandy Cape, north-west Tasmania.  
All tracks were made since last  
tide – so in 6-12 hours.  
Photo: ©Louise Blight, c/- Birds Tasmania



the impacts of this activity was recognised in the Interim Arthur–Pieman Protected Area Plan of Management 1991. Despite this, when the current management plan for the reserve was introduced in 2000 PWS noted that there had been rapid growth in off-road vehicle use in the preceding 10-15 years and impacts on reserve values had accelerated.<sup>16</sup>

The Resource Planning and Development Commission reviewed a new draft management plan in 2001 and received numerous submissions concerned that off-road vehicle use in the APCA was causing 'unremitting damage' to cultural sites. However, the Commission was satisfied that off-road vehicle use could continue in the area:

*The Commission remains of the view that with careful management the impacts of recreational vehicle use can be minimised and therefore does not support a banning of recreational vehicles from the area. However, the Commission does advocate banning recreational vehicles from more sensitive areas of the APCA if the management system is proven ineffective.*<sup>17</sup>

The final Arthur–Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan 2000 (the Management Plan) addressed off-road vehicle use in light of the 'urgent need to protect vulnerable natural and cultural heritage values'.<sup>18</sup> The Management Plan establishes an Off-Road Vehicle Consultative Group, comprising representatives of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council (now TALSC), the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, the fishing industry, PWS, local government and off-road vehicle clubs. The Management Plan also requires:

- a sustainable off-road vehicle policy to be developed which provides for 'responsible, low-impact experiences' within the reserve and minimises conflicts with other recreational activities and conservation of natural and cultural values;<sup>19</sup>
- the managing authority to implement a management system incorporating various regulatory tools (including a permit system, self-management and education). Within three years, the system must be shown to substantially reduce degradation of natural and cultural values and improve compliance with permit conditions.<sup>20</sup>
- The Management Plan sets default prescriptions which can be enlivened if the Minister is satisfied that the new system is not achieving its aims, including a prohibition on 'use or construction of access routes and infrastructure which adversely impact on Aboriginal sites'.

The Management Plan also set out a number of prescriptions in relation to managing impacts on Aboriginal heritage, requiring the managing authority to:

- provide maximum protection to those specific sites found within the areas inscribed on the Register of the National Estate
- protect Aboriginal sites within the National Estate listing or areas declared under the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*
- close vehicle routes over sites protected under the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975* and identify alternative routes in consultation with the Aboriginal community and relevant consultative groups
- prepare a program for the relocation of vehicle routes over sites other than those protected by order under the *Aboriginal Relics Act*.

Despite numerous statements to the effect that off-road tracks needed to be assessed and off-road recreational vehicle use regulated urgently, to address ongoing damage to Aboriginal sites and coastal values, no formal policy has been adopted to date.

In April 2010, the government released the *Draft Arthur–Pieman Conservation Area Sustainable Recreational Vehicle Access Report*.<sup>21</sup> The report recognised that many sites within the APCA have been extensively damaged, and many others have yet to be subject to detailed surveys to assess their cultural heritage significance. The draft report described the APCA as an area 'of international significance, displaying a richness of cultural heritage and a relative lack of disturbance that is extremely rare'.

Having regard to these heritage values, and the social values ascribed to off-road vehicle use, the draft report outlined the government's intention for each of the 94 identified vehicle tracks in the reserve. The proposal included closing some existing tracks on the basis of identified impacts. However, it also recommended maintaining some tracks despite clear evidence of damage to registered midden sites, such as the track between Temma and Greenes Creek.<sup>22</sup>

The government received numerous submissions in response to the draft report, both supportive and critical of the proposals in relation to the track network. The submissions also highlighted information

Aftermath of 4WDs in the Southport Conservation Area.



gaps and advocated for further assessment of reserve values. PWS has advised:

*Those responses are currently being analysed. They will be evaluated along with the geoconservation, flora and fauna assessment, an Aboriginal heritage survey and a local social values report.*<sup>23</sup>

A decision will be made soon on how best to manage sustainable access to the reserve, including the future use of different tracks.

Though the draft Sustainable Vehicle Access Policy is still being developed and the new track network has yet to be finalised, permits continue to be issued for off-road vehicles. This is concerning, given the clear evidence of the damaging effect of many tracks on heritage values.

### **Is Parks and Wildlife Service meeting its management obligations in the APCA?**

PWS has an unenviable role in pursuing its numerous, competing objectives to achieve sustainable outcomes. However, this does not justify the failure to finalise a new management system for sustainable recreational vehicle use in the reserve. Concerns about the impact of off-road vehicles have been debated since at least 1991, yet no clear policy has been adopted.

Lack of clear guidance for resolving the competing objectives in the Management Plan is compounded in the APCA by the confusing role of the Management Committee and the Off-Road Vehicle Consultative Group. These committees include stakeholders with inherently contradictory interests, and 'dominance by a coalition of vested commercial and recreational interests that oppose PWS prescriptions for stronger regulation of their high impact activities.'<sup>24</sup> The requirement for consensus amongst such a diverse, and often polarised, group has stagnated decisions.

Consistent with the approach set out in the Code, PWS should acknowledge that 'in multiple-use decision making, some interests and values are indeed more important than others and that not all resource issues can be win-win situations.'<sup>25</sup> The Code provides support for the protection of cultural and natural values as the fundamental objective to be pursued in managing reserves. This is also consistent with the explicit obligations under the Management Plan to provide 'maximum protection' to recognised Aboriginal sites.

Following the decision in Bannister Quest, while the views of stakeholders with an interest in maintaining recreational opportunities in the APCA are relevant and should be considered, they should not dominate and cannot override the principal responsibility to pursue the objectives of the Management Plan. Given the irreversible nature of the recorded impacts, the significance of the landscape to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and the protection

of threatened flora and fauna and fragile coastal landforms must be the primary focus of conservation management in the APCA.

Tasmanian legislation currently authorises some off-road vehicle use in conservation areas. However, this activity should not be allowed where its impacts clearly conflict with the fundamental management obligations to protect natural values and preserve areas of Aboriginal heritage. There is ample evidence of extensive damage being caused to sites of international significance in the APCA, and the need for stronger regulation of these impacts. PWS has an obligation to do more to implement.

### **Conclusion**

The multiple-use approach to managing the APCA is failing to provide adequate protection for cultural and natural heritage, with clear evidence that off-road vehicle use is causing extensive damage to cultural sites, disturbance of breeding habitat and vegetation impacts.

Recreational activities occurring in a conservation area must be consistent with the purpose of the area and management decisions, including allocation of enforcement resources, should be based on restricting activities that pose a significant risk to protected natural and cultural values. Where there is evidence that high-impact activities such as off-road vehicle use are irreversibly compromising Aboriginal sites and coastal values, the managing authority must reconsider whether allowing the activity is consistent with its management obligations.

Balancing the local community's strong desire for continued access for recreational driving with conservation objectives remains one of the most significant management issues for the APCA. Political difficulties associated with regulating the use of off-road vehicles are further compounded by the practical difficulties associated with monitoring and enforcement in a large, remote area.

In order to give effect to the Management Plan and satisfy its obligations, PWS should act quickly to:

- immediately implement all closures recommended in the draft Sustainable Recreational Vehicle Policy and close tracks that have already been identified as compromising cultural values (such as the Temma to Greenes Creek track). This is consistent with the default provisions outlined in the APCA Management Plan
- complete Aboriginal heritage surveys in accordance with the Burra Charter, to identify any other tracks that are damaging significant natural or cultural values, and appropriate management responses;
- amend the APCA Management Plan to more clearly articulate priority values and a hierarchy of management objectives

- review the structure of the APCA Management Committee to clarify the role of committee members
- actively enforce the off-road permit system to deter future breaches. There are clear, practical difficulties with enforcing off-road vehicle policies in an area as vast and remote as the APCA; however, adequate resources must be allocated to monitoring, investigating complaints and taking enforcement action
- consider a moratorium on new 4WD track permits until the Sustainable Recreational Vehicle Policy is finalised, and impose strict limits on the number of permits issued in future years.

Jess Feehely  
Principal Lawyer  
Environmental Defenders Office (Tas) Inc

#### Footnotes

1. Section 30(1) of the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*. PWS is also required to have regard to the objectives of the Resource Management and Planning System when performing its management functions, including promoting sustainable development and facilitating economic development consistent with that objective (see s.5 and Schedule 2 of the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*). However, to the extent that these general objectives conflict with the objectives set out in a management plan, the management plan will prevail.
2. Conservation areas were formerly declared under Part III of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970*, using identical reserve categories and criteria to the current legislation.
3. See Schedule 1 of the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*.
4. See Schedule 1 of the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.
5. Doyle, T. 2001. *Green Power: The Environment Movement in Australia*. UNSW Press, Sydney, quoted in Jones, E. 2007. 'Three Management Challenges for Protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in a Tasmanian Multiple-Use Conservation Area'. *Australian Geographer* 38(1). March 2007. pp93-112 at 98.
6. Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Tasmania and Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment. 2003. *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice*, Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts, Hobart, p11.
7. *Tasmanian Reserves Management Code of Practice*, p69.
8. *National Parks and Reserved Lands Regulations 2009*, r.18(2).
9. *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*, s.8(1).
10. *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*, s.14(1)(a).
11. *National Parks and Reserved Lands Regulations 2009*, s.4(3)(a).
12. See, for example, *Bannister Quest Pty Ltd v Australian Fisheries Management Authority* (1997) FCA 819; *Re National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority; Ex Parte McGregor & Anor* (2001) WASCA 368.
13. *Bannister Quest Pty Ltd v Australian Fisheries Management Authority* (1997) FCA 819.
14. See *Bridgetown - Greenbushes Friends of the Forest Inc v Executive Director of Conservation and Land Management* (1997) 18 WAR 102, *Re National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority; Ex Parte McGregor & Anor* (2001) WASCA 368 at [149].
15. Public Land Use Commission. 1995. *Inquiry into Tasmanian Crown Land Classifications. Referred to in the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan 2000* at p2.
16. *Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan 2000*, p55.
17. Resource Planning and Development Commission. 2001. *Inquiry into the finalisation of the Draft Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan 2000 - Final Recommendations Report*. p77.
18. Section 6.4, *Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan 2000*, p57.
19. Section 6.4, *Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan 2000*, p57.
20. Section 6.4, *Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan 2000*, p58.
21. Parks and Wildlife Service. 2010. *Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Sustainable Recreational Vehicle Access - Draft Report*. Available at [www.parks.tas.gov.au/file.aspx?id=19887](http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/file.aspx?id=19887) (accessed 1 March 2011).
22. Reports prepared by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council identified a number of midden sites that are directly affected by existing tracks.
23. Sustainable Access Project information available at [www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=20602](http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=20602) (accessed 1 March 2011). PWS are currently conducting a study into the social values of the reserve (see 'Social Values Study for the Arthur-Pieman', media release of 23 February 2011).
24. Jones, E. 2007. 'Three Management Challenges for Protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in a Tasmanian Multiple-Use Conservation Area'. *Australian Geographer* 38(1). March 2007. pp93-112 at 105.
25. Jones, E. 2007. 'Three Management Challenges for Protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in a Tasmanian Multiple-Use Conservation Area'. *Australian Geographer* 38(1). March 2007. pp93-112 at p 106.

## TCT POLICY ON SHOOTING OF NATIVE ANIMALS

A number of people have asked recently whether the TCT supports the shooting of 'problem' native browsing animals (primarily brushtail possum, Bennett's wallaby and rufus wallaby or the Tasmanian pademelon) as a replacement for poisoning with 1080.

The TCT attempts to promote all its policies through the media, but 10-second sound bites on radio or television and poorly edited quotes in newspapers are a very bad way to communicate often complex policy positions. These enquiries have prompted us to clarify our policies on a number of contentious issues related to wildlife. This article specifically addresses the TCT's position on shooting native animals, or more specifically shooting as a means of culling problem native browsing animals. In the next edition we will explain why the TCT opposes all recreational hunting of native animals, i.e. native ducks, quail, shearwater and wallabies.

The TCT's wildlife policy positions were spelt out clearly in the document 'Summary of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust's Policy Suggestions for the 2010 State Election and Beyond' which was given to the three main political parties prior to the 2010 State Election and is available on the TCT website.

The short answer is that the TCT does not support the control of browsing native animals through shooting, poisoning or any other lethal means. We advocate the use of the most humane non-lethal methods, accepting that even fencing has some animal welfare concerns and must be improved. The TCT believes that all landowners must accept some level of impact from browsing animals as a normal part of running a farming, grazing or forestry operation in Tasmania. We also accept that in relatively rare situations (perhaps only a few percent of the area of productive land) there is such a high impact from browsing animals and a low probability of effective control that it is fundamentally unsustainable to carry out commercial operations in these areas in competition with native browsing animals.

We believe that all poisoning of browsing native animals with 1080 must stop immediately and that this would not cause a significant financial hardship for farmers, graziers and forestry companies, given the availability of other control methods. We also oppose 1080 being replaced by any other poison.

The TCT has been and continues to be a strong advocate of the use of 1080 poison for the control of European red foxes in Tasmania. Baiting with 1080 is probably the most effective technique currently available. The Tasmanian Government's Fox Eradication Program has effective strategies in place to ensure 1080 poison targets foxes and to reduce the likelihood of non-target species being affected. As long as the program continues to implement such strategies we will endorse the use of 1080 poison for the control of foxes.

The problems with shooting are that:

- shooting is a lethal control;
- it causes significant animal suffering;
- it cannot be justified because it does not serve a basic human need and
- other non-lethal alternatives exist where browsing animals cause significant commercial impact.

Even if every shooter shot animals perfectly accurately and no animal suffered pain during death (which clearly is not and can never be the case) the killing of on average one million wallabies and possums per year is wrong. It is wrong to kill animals when it could be avoided.



Bennett's wallaby. Photo: Jon DeLaine

We acknowledge that considerable ongoing research will need to continue before the alternatives are considered effective and cost-efficient by farming and forestry industries in all situations, but we are confident this is possible. In fact, clinging on to 1080 poison and an over-reliance on shooting is preventing sufficient investment in and commitment to making non-lethal methods more effective.

Animals have a right to exist irrespective of our use of them and native animals have a right to live their natural lives in the wild. Killing of native animals can only be justified if our lives are threatened or if there is no other food source. Clearly wallabies and possums living on farms or in forests are not a threat to us but on the road we need to put our lives before theirs. In the 19th century, and perhaps up until World War II in some parts of the state, many poorer Tasmanians probably could justify killing native animals for food but this is not the case any more. The reason that the vast majority of wallabies and possums are killed each year in Tasmania is because of the impacts on pasture, crops and plantations and not for food i.e. they are killed under culling permits.

A total of 1,007,985 wallabies were shot under crop protection permits in 2008–09.

We acknowledge that shooting techniques and technology can be improved and shooters' behaviour changed to improve the percentage of animals that is killed instantaneously, but shooting will inevitably cause some level of injury and suffering. Even with the best of intentions, mistakes will happen and we believe this is unacceptable.



Brushtail Possum. Photo: Jon DeLaine

The TCT wants a total ban on shooting and other lethal forms of killing of wildlife but the \$64,000 question is 'how do we convince the state government that the farming, grazing and forestry industries can survive without shooting browsing animals?'

The state government could implement a totally non-lethal browsing animal policy: it would need to be implemented in steps, but should start with a clear commitment to the principle of ending lethal control. The TCT's message to the state government is that it must:

- end all forms of poisoning of native browsing animals immediately
- fund programs to assist rural industries to implement non-lethal controls (we have advocated subsidised fencing schemes for many years)
- fund ongoing research programs to improve the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of existing non-lethal control methods and develop new ones
- until non-lethal programs are proven to be effective and efficient for all industries and all circumstances, regulate culling by shooting more strictly to ensure it is used only where landowners:
  - demonstrate they have a real and significant problem (similar protocols exist for access to 1080)
  - demonstrate that existing non-lethal options have not worked or will not work
  - monitor to determine if shooting is having the desired effect in protecting plantations seedlings, pasture or crops.

#### Numbers of wallabies shot per year in Tasmania

A total of 1,007,985 wallabies were shot under crop protection permits in 2008–09. This is only 8.6% higher than the average number of 928,226 wallabies shot each year under crop protection permits over an 11-year period (1996–97 to 2006–07) as reported in the Tasmanian State of the Environment Report released last year (<http://soer.justice.tas.gov.au/2009/indicator/111/index.php>).

A comparison with the most recent years reported in the SOE report show a significant decrease in numbers of wallabies being shot: down from 1,364,970 in 2006–07 and 1,074,904 in 2005–06.

While these are extraordinary numbers, it is interesting to note that there has NOT been a significant increase in shooting during a period when there has been an undeniable and dramatic decrease in the amount of 1080 being used.

This may be due to farmers and forestry companies replacing 1080 with non-lethal control methods rather than increasing the numbers they shoot. We know that some farmers are having success with fencing and this would decrease the amount of shooting they do. Gunns Ltd, who recently ceased the use of 1080, has been decreasing its usage of the poison over many years and reverting to alternatives such as seedling protectors, hardier seedling varieties and different planting times.

The state government must also provide technical assistance to ensure the maximum benefit, in terms of reduced impact on crops, pasture and plantations, is gained by the least amount of shooting, both in terms of numbers of animals and cost of shooting. It currently provides only a low level of support in this regard.

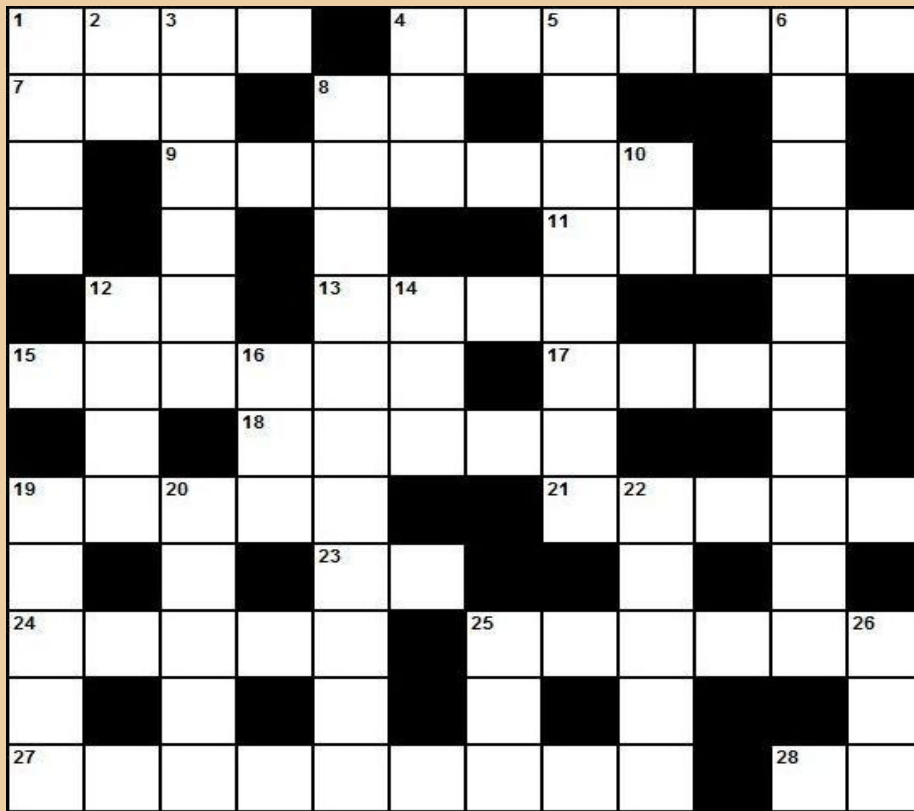
Such an approach cannot work unless the state government clearly promotes shooting as only a temporary solution to browsing animal problems, and an unfortunate and regrettable fact of life until it can be replaced.

It should be working with landowners to reduce reliance on shooting, setting targets for reduction each year until levels reach zero over a reasonable timeframe. Of course this will require the state government to maintain an adequate level of funding for programs to develop and deliver non-lethal alternatives.

The state government must also encourage an acceptance of a level of loss to browsing animals as a normal part of running a farming, grazing or forestry operation in Tasmania.

In this way it should be possible to gradually reduce the number of native animals that are shot. An end to shooting will take many years but with the right level of commitment and funding from the state government it is possible.

*Peter McGlone*



solutions to crossword #3



CLUES

\* denotes solutions to be found in previous issue of the **tasmanian conservationist** (issue 321)

Across

- 1. Large waterbird; three Australian species, all rarely sighted in Tasmania
- 4. Blood-anticoagulant secreted by leeches (Subclass Hirudinea in the Annelids)
- 7. Scottish mountain
- 8. German affirmative
- 9. Floating wreckage or cargo
- 11. Capital of Senegal
- 12. Female title
- 13. Waterbird; eight species in Tasmania
- 15. Ship components or cargo jettisoned overboard
- 17. Cold coffee
- 18. Up to the time of
- 19. \*TCT Director, \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ McGlone
- 21. Wreckage or cargo lying on bottom of ocean (archaic)
- 23. Unconscious part of the psyche
- 24. St Petersburg (Leningrad) ballet company named after leader of Leningrad Communist Party assassinated in 1934
- 25. \*Underwater landscape created by *Centrostephanus rogersii* in the absence of predation by large rock lobsters (see also 27 across)
- 27. \**Centrostephanus rogersii* is this kind of sea creature (3, 6)

Down

- 1. Wild goat
- 2. Exist
- 3. Invade or overrun (as a weed might)
- 4. Cap
- 5. \*At least 293,000 Tasmanian native animals end up as this each year
- 6. \*Network and planned website promoting values and management of Tasmanian islands
- 8. \*Site of ancient Aboriginal heritage site and proposed Brighton Bypass road development (6, 5)
- 10. Often an infant's first word
- 12. Shallow lake
- 14. Former Tasmanian dairy company formed in 1981; acquired by Bonlac in 1998 then Fonterra in 2003
- 16. Institute civil proceedings against
- 19. Small northern-hemisphere mammals in same order (Lagomorpha) as rabbits
- 20. Earth
- 22. Seventh-largest Scottish island
- 25. Scrooge's exclamation
- 26. Prefix meaning new

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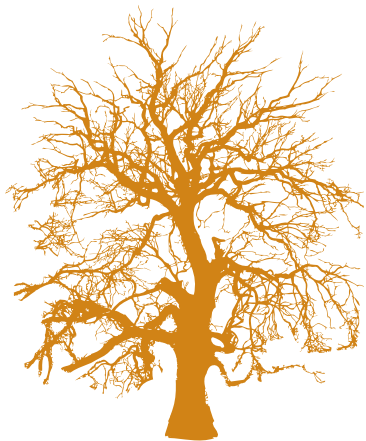
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