

Submission made through the Colong website facility

Submitted on Friday, February 27, 2015 - 23:39

Submitted values are:

The Director of National Parks and Wildlife

GPO Box 44

HOBART TAS 7001

Submission regarding the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area draft Management Plan (TWWHAdMP)

This is a formal submission made on behalf of the Management Committee of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. The Society has about 800 members and has particular involvement with the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area in which there are substantial areas of wilderness. It follows that the Society has concerns about the preservation of wilderness, and any attempts to weaken the high levels of protection needed for the retention of a wilderness' attributes.

From a personal viewpoint, the author of this response spent several years working for the then Tasmanian Department of Mines. As a result of this and subsequent visits to Tasmania, the author has an awareness of the magnificent values of the Tasmanian Wilderness and their need for the highest levels of protection.

The Society and the present author believe that the TWWHAdMP is moving in the wrong direction. This is not the time to compromise World Heritage and Wilderness values for commercial outcomes. Indeed, at a time when so much is expediently measured in terms of its short-term dollar value, Tasmanian Wilderness, which is internationally unparalleled, is either immeasurable in such gauche terms, or must be assigned infinite value.

The unique environmental values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) must be protected and never diluted by ensuring that:

- * the Tasmanian Government holds true to wilderness concepts and develops a Wilderness Act similar to those used in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia;

- * Tasmanian Wilderness values, which were a priority in the 1992 and 1999 management plans, must have top priority in the 2015-2020 Management Plan - they must be maintained, protected and enhanced - this is not the time to diminish the concept and importance of Wilderness;

* the Wilderness Zone be retained in totality - under no circumstances should Wilderness be compromised by the addition of built tourist accommodation and the proliferation of aircraft landing areas;

* visitor facilities and infrastructure within the TWWHA remain in public ownership, have low environmental impact and are sited within the existing visitor zones located toward the boundaries of the property;

* plans to allow 16 new landing sites for commercial float planes and helicopters, together with the inevitable commercial tourism facilities, be scrapped in their entirety - aircraft noise pollution of the Wilderness' natural quiet is totally rejected;

* any logging within World Heritage listed forests must be prohibited - this will ensure protection of these outstanding forests and concurrently ensure that the role of the World Heritage Convention in maintaining natural heritage is not flouted; and,

* consistent with the above, all Regional Reserves, Conservation Areas, Future Potential Production Forests and Permanent Timber Production Zones within the TWWHA be protected from logging and mining by being immediately upgraded to National Park status.

The proposed TWWHAdMP is a recipe for commercialization that will detract from the values which bring international visitors to this pristine part of Tasmania. It is of course argued that there must be equivalence of opportunity for visitors of all ages and varying degrees of mobility to be able to access this pristine country. Why should this wonderful area only be accessible to those who are reasonably fit and prepared to forgo the extravagances of luxury tours? The answers are simple:

The 'facilities' which enable such a wide spectrum of visitors (particularly the well-heeled instant gratification types) destroy the region's unique beauty by detracting from the values which true wilderness offers.

The notion that everyone has a right to visit everything, irrespective of health status and age, is untenable. Apart from compromising the destination's values, does anyone seriously believe that health, age and financial constraints should not apply to ascending Mt Everest, visiting the Antarctic, descending into oceanic trenches, and space tourism? Yes, these are extreme examples, but they serve to demonstrate that constraints do and should apply. And the more one moves from the mass-tourism market to exploiting natural values, the stronger the argument becomes for minimising a

visitor's footprints.

The Society appreciates the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Brian Marshall.

For the BMCS Management Committee.