

Macquarie mess

SEVERE erosion and landslips on Macquarie Island caused by an explosion of feral rabbits destroying vegetation are creating huge problems for wildlife and hazards for tourists.

A recent mudslide buried and killed many king penguins and their chicks. The endangered grey-headed albatross population is suffering because the only colony on the island has been severely damaged by rabbits. Wandering albatross, black-browed albatross, grey petrels, soft-plumaged petrels and fairy prions, all endangered, are also affected.

Tasmania's Tourism Parks and Heritage Minister Paula Wriedt hasn't lifted a finger. She has apparently decided not to even take to Cabinet a request for funding vital to get an eradication plan off the ground, although this is Tasmanian territory.

Instead, in a classic example of spin over substance, it has come to my ears that the Minister will try to make good news out of finally signing the eradication plan which has been stalled on her desk for months. Without state funds and the moral high ground to then leverage significant extra funds necessary from the Federal Government, her autograph on the eradication plan will be an empty gesture.

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