



2010 TASMANIAN ELECTION

TNPA POLICY
for the
TASMANIAN RESERVED LAND SYSTEM

Tasmanian National Parks Association

2/2/10



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for the

TASMANIAN RESERVED LAND SYSTEM

Final Version 2/2/10

Policy Aim

Responsible long-term management of Tasmania's natural and cultural resources, including for the preservation of significant natural and cultural values, which will place Tasmania in the forefront of environmental conservation and sustainable management.

Introduction

Almost 40% of Tasmania is land which has been reserved primarily for its conservation value. Much of this is very high conservation quality land. This conservation estate is a critical resource for present day and future Tasmanians in a variety of ways; and these extensive conservation reserves, rare at a global level, are of untold value for our planet.

Tasmania has a trust to manage this conservation estate responsibly, to ensure it can be handed on in the same or better condition to future generations. Doing nothing will not achieve this – doing nothing is neglect which leads to deterioration and loss. Inappropriate use and overuse will also cause irreparable damage of the conservation estate, and destroy the very values for which the reserves were created. Active conservation management is therefore essential to maintain the health of Tasmania's conservation estate.

In recent years the ability to actively manage Tasmania's conservation estate has been significantly compromised by decreased resources for management, by political decisions that have failed to acknowledge the importance and sensitivity of the conservation estate, and by poor governance.

The following policy goals, while acknowledging current State resourcing issues and other pressures, are aimed at redressing the currently disastrous state of reserved land management in Tasmania, and at putting it back on track!

**Core Election Policy Goals for the Tasmanian
Reserved Land System**

1. Reaffirm that the primary objective of reserved land in Tasmania is the conservation and protection of significant natural and cultural values.
2. Restore the legislated position of Director of the PWS to an expertise and merit based position as head of the agency, which does not have conflicting extra-agency responsibilities.
3. Ensure that the PWS is the responsibility of a single Minister, and one that has no conflicting portfolio responsibilities (eg, natural resource utilisation or tourism).
4. Create a stand-alone Department of Environment that encompasses all environment protection related portfolio areas (where scientific support is available to the PWS), and which does not include resource exploitative functions.
5. Commit to providing adequate, secure and ongoing recurrent funding to the PWS, to a minimum of \$30 million per annum in the short term recognising current government financial constraints, to allow the PWS to maintain its core land management responsibilities and existing infrastructure and to allow a workable field staff level.
6. Prepare and implement a state level Policy on Environmentally Sustainable Tourism.
7. Commit to values protection and sustainable tourism by not proceeding with the proposed Three Capes Track development.
8. Ensure the PWS, prepare an overarching plan of conservation management for the Tarkine as a priority and prior to any developments and new uses; and commit to values protection by not proceeding with the proposed Tarkine Road.
9. Add new areas to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area as per the 2008 recommendations of the ENGOs (refer Law (2009) *Western Tasmania – A Place of Outstanding Universal Value*).
10. Adopt at least the national and international targets for marine reserve areas and functions, including the adoption of no take areas for ecological and species protection.
11. Respect reserve management plans and objectives, in particular with respect to existing zoning and the policy to locate tourist accommodation outside protected areas.

12. Commit to regular auditing of reserve management by an independent body/agency (for example a scientific advisory body set up under the Planning Commission).
 13. Establish a new and environment-focused evaluation approach for proposed developments and/or concessions within protected areas that includes –
 - articulation and genuine consideration of options (including no development)
 - a triple bottom line evaluation with primary consideration given to the natural and cultural values of the relevant reserve/s, and
 - environmental impact assessment as a separate and prior stage to development planning and leasing/permitting (see also *Planning and Evaluation*).
 14. Introduce a system for the management of commercial developments and leases in protected areas that includes –
 - cost recovery from leases and other commercial agreements that reflects the loss of natural and cultural values and amenity to the general public, and additional costs to the PWS for management;
 - fixed term leases, with on-selling to be subject to review and merit based assessment.
 - a bond to be paid by commercial operators to cover costs of potential rehabilitation in the case of non-compliance or business failure.
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ADDENDUM

DETAILED POLICY OBJECTIVES

FOR SPECIFIC POLICY AREAS

Reserve Creation

- Reaffirm that the primary objective of reserved land in Tasmania is the conservation and protection of significant natural and cultural values.

Governance & Structure

- Restore the legislated position of Director of the PWS to an expertise and merit based position as head of the agency, which does not have conflicting extra-agency responsibilities.
- Ensure that the PWS is the responsibility of a single Minister, and one that has no conflicting portfolio responsibilities (eg, natural resource utilisation or tourism).
- Create a stand-alone Department of Environment that encompasses all environment related portfolio areas, and does not include conflicting resource portfolio areas; where scientific support is available to the PWS.
- Require the PWS to develop a policy on accepting private and corporate donations that maintains the independence of the PWS as the management agency for reserved land in Tasmania, but allows the PWS to have control over how the gifts are spent.
- Ensure Tasmanian legislation reflects the international obligations for management of World Heritage Areas under the World Heritage Convention by amending the legislation for National Parks and Reserves to reflect the international obligations for management of World Heritage Areas under the World Heritage Convention (i.e. to identify, protect, conserve, present, transmit to future generations and, if appropriate, rehabilitate the World Heritage values of the property),
- Ensure that Tasmanian legislation explicitly recognises the existence of, and the need to protect, the wilderness values associated with the Tasmanian reserved estate, as is already the case in other States (Victoria, NSW and SA).

Reserve Creation

- Adopt at least the national and international targets for marine reserve areas and functions, including the adoption of no take areas for ecological and species protection.
- Commit to increasing the terrestrial reserve estate to include reservation of as yet poorly protected natural and cultural values (in recognition of the deficiencies of the previous reserve assessment processes, in particular the Regional Forest Agreement).

- Add new areas to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area as per the 2008 recommendations of the ENGOs (and as per Law (2009) *Western Tasmania – A Place of Outstanding Universal Value*).

Reserve Planning & Evaluation

- Commit to “world’s best practice” in reserve planning.
- Commit to open, transparent and consultative management planning and policy development.
- Restructure the development assessment process so that environmental impact assessments are carried out as a separate and prior phase to the formulation of development plans in relation to all new use and development proposals in reserved areas.
- Commit to a re-examination of the current zoning within our National Parks, with consideration to be given to developing values based zoning (as the current user-based zoning framework is inappropriate for conservation areas particularly those areas with outstanding universal natural and cultural values such as Tasmania’s western wilderness Parks).

Reserve Management

- Respect reserve management plans and objectives.
- Ensure the PWS prepare an overarching plan of conservation management for the Tarkine as a priority and prior to any developments and new uses.
- Recognise the importance of buffer zones and neighbouring land management to reserved land management through the development of neighbour agreements to improve conservation, management and presentation (in particular with Councils and Forestry Tasmania).
- Establish a comprehensive values and management monitoring system.
- Commit to regular auditing of reserve management by an independent body/agency (for example a scientific advisory body set up under the new Planning Commission).
- Commit to a review and remodelling of community and scientific consultative approaches to ensure fair and effective input from these critical stakeholder groups.
- Ensure management provides for equitable access to national parks for all socio-economic groups, recognising the traditional role of national parks.

Sustainable Management

- Prepare and implement a State Policy on Environmentally Sustainable Tourism.
- Ensure strategic, regionally based and environmentally sustainable tourism planning with genuine input from all interested parties.

- Ensure the PWS develop a set of standards for sustainable visitor experiences in reserves.
- Commit to values protection in the Tarkine by not proceeding with the Tarkine Road.
- Commit to values protection on the Tasman Peninsula by not proceeding with the Three Capes Track development. Instead explore development of an integrated Tasman Peninsula tourism strategy that uses existing natural, cultural and recreational opportunities sustainably with a key focus to promote day walks, and if an overnight walk is desired develop a hut-free Two Capes Walk based essentially on the existing Tasman Coastal Trail.

Commercial Use of Reserves

- Ensure commercial use respects existing management plans.
- Reaffirm and commit to the policy that private sector accommodation development be located outside protected areas.
- Commit to not considering commercial developments within reserves that do not meet the requirements of management plans.
- Establish a new and environmental focused evaluation for proposed developments and/or concessions within reserves that include –
 - articulation and genuine consideration of options (including no development)
 - a triple bottom line evaluation with primary consideration given to the natural and cultural values of the relevant reserve/s, and
 - environmental impact assessment as separate and prior stage to development planning and leasing/permitting (see also *Planning and Evaluation*).
- Ensure all major developments to be assessed by an external independent body with appropriate scientific expertise (see *State Planning and Assessment Context*, below)
- Ensure development proposals are accompanied by detailed Business Plans that include long term estimates (including growth requirements if applicable), to be approved/not be approved in the initial assessment and approvals process
- Review commercial arrangements to ensure that the PWS is adequately resourced (through income from the concessions) to properly monitor and assess the operation of concessions with respect to compliance with relevant management plans, lease agreements and other relevant environmental guidelines and requirements.
- Commit to making leases (except for specific financial arrangements) accessible to the public to provide public confidence in the management of the public estate.
- Ensure monitoring and assessment requirements for commercial developments are set out in leases or related documents, which should also set out procedures and penalties for non-compliance; and that these are publicly accessible.

- Institute a system for commercial operators to pay a bond to cover costs of potential rehabilitation in the case of non-compliance or business failure.
- Ensure the granting of permits for commercial tours within protected areas does not occur until the carrying capacity of the protected area/s to be used has been established.

Resourcing

- Accept as a State government responsibility the funding of the core functions of the state reserved land management agency as part of managing Tasmania (and its territories, eg, Macquarie Island) and providing for future generations of Tasmanians
- Increase the core funding for the PWS to allow the Service to meet its obligations with respect to the core functions of ongoing values assessment; on-ground management, maintenance of existing infrastructure; reserved land planning; special management (eg, fire management, systems development); monitoring; and training.
- Increase recurrent funding to the PWS to allow the Service to meet increased responsibilities as the size of the reserved estate is increased.
- Provide adequate, secure and ongoing funding for the repair and maintenance of the network of bushwalking tracks within Tasmanian reserves, initially by providing recurrent funding to the PWS of at least \$1 million per annum for this purpose, in acknowledgement of i) the importance of bushwalking to both the State recreational and tourism industry, ii) the need to sustainability manage the impacts of these activities on the environmental and conservation values within reserves, and iii) as the largest single asset managed by the PWS (and extending over 3000 kms).
- Recognise the enormous value that volunteers make to the maintenance of Tasmania's conservation estate, through funding and other support and recognition.

State Planning & Assessment Context

- Recognise the integrated nature of the Resource Management & Planning System and the balance of the elements, which are critical to delivering sound environmental outcomes, in future reviews and changes.
- Recognise and maintain the core environmental planning and management functions (largely enshrined in the Resource Management & Planning System) of 1) strategic planning and policy development, 2) strategic independent review, 3) independent appeal (including third party appeal), and 4. monitoring and auditing.
- Establish an advisory panel to provide expert technical & scientific advice on strategic statewide matters and issues of state level importance to support the work of the Planning Commission.
- Support all environmental planning with adequate resourcing.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
ON WHICH THE POLICY IS BASED

- Holistic regard must be given to natural places to identify their values.
- Acknowledgement at all levels that ‘existence values’ and ‘natural process values’ are at least as significant as ‘instrumental values’ (eg, use values). Where values may be in conflict with one another, primacy must rest with those uses that do not harm existence or natural process values.
- Recognition that, the importance of conserving diversity notwithstanding, the retention of ‘representative’ samples of some natural phenomena is insufficient and that ‘outstanding’ examples also require protection; and that preservation of significant, representative cultural heritage also warrants consideration.
- Policy for the management of natural values to be framed on the basis of the natural processes and natural rates of change that exist under the environmental conditions found today. It is not appropriate to compromise natural environments by making management decisions based on conditions that may have existed in the distant past.
- Recreation activities which do not depend upon, support and uphold the natural conservation values contained within conservation reserves, in particular National Parks, are inappropriate and should not be considered or approved.
- The precautionary principle and best practice management should be applied to all management, in particular recreational activities, within Tasmanian reserves.