



tasmanian conservation trust inc

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Letter to the Editor
The Mercury

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Fire management in forests

Els McIntosh (Mercury 28-8-10), claims that if logging in public native forests is stopped "the cost of controlling forest fires in State Forest will have to be entirely met by the taxpayer". Well Els, Forestry Tasmania and the State Forest they manage, are owned by the taxpayers of Tasmania so we already pay to control forest fires.

Dr Peter Volker (Mercury 31-8-10) claims that without the capacity to earn income by logging public native forests "perhaps the state will not need to bother with firefighting" and "Forest fires could be allowed to run their natural course".

I agree with Dr Volker and Els McIntosh that fire management is a very important issue but they should avoid being so alarmist about the outcome of more forests being reserved.

There are ways to earn an income from forests without logging them, such as attracting tourists and other visitors and as carbon sinks. If more forests are reserved, we need to work together to ensure the Government puts money which is earned from forests back into managing them.

If more State Forest is reserved then the Government must ensure the Parks and Wildlife Service has more resources for fire management – a goal which the TCT has advocated for many years. Also, as well as protecting fire sensitive areas from fire, the Parks and Wildlife Service must become more proactive with doing planned burns for ecological, asset protection and safety purposes.

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