

Media Release

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TCT calls for Australian Government assessment of the ‘Tarkine Tourist Road’ due to risks to nationally listed threatened species

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust has written to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Hon. Peter Garrett, calling on him to request the Premier David Bartlett refer the ‘Tarkine Tourist Road’ pursuant to section 70(1) of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act as an action likely to have a significant impact on matters of National Environmental Significance.

The proponent of this project still remains unclear as it will involve upgrading existing roads managed by Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, Forestry Tasmania, Circular Head Council and Waratah-Wynyard Council. Until the State Government decide who the proponent will be, the TCT has requested that Minister Garrett write to the Premier David Bartlett regarding it’s referral.

“The upgrading and sealing of 127 km of road, including construction of 5.4km of new road, has significant potential to increase the incidence of roadkill of at least two EPBC listed threatened species, the Tasmanian devil and spotted-tailed quoll in an area also being assessed for National Heritage values,” said TCT Acting Director, Peter McGlone.

“The north-west of Tasmania appears to have a lower incidence of the Tasmanian devil facial tumour disease and the populations in this area should not be put under additional pressure from elevated roadkill. It is vital that Minister Garrett requests the referral of this road so that the project can be properly assessed under provisions of the EPBC Act,” Mr McGlone added.

The TCT’s concern regarding the potential for increased roadkill is based on data collected by local Marrawah resident and TCT Vice-President, Geoff King, on roadkilled Tasmanian devils for four years before and six years since the sealing of a 12.8km length of the Arthur River Road in 2002-03. Spotted-tailed quoll numbers were recorded only after the sealing but these numbers are also of concern.

“The average number of devils killed per year before sealing of the Arthur River Road was 19 and after sealing it was 25. This appears to me to be significant for a nationally threatened species,” said Mr King.

In 2002, the proposal to upgrade and seal the Arthur River Road was similarly called in by the then Minister for the Environment David Kemp because of concern over elevated roadkill expressed by the TCT. The TCT were involved in the development of conditions on that project that resulted in significant mitigations measures being put in place to reduce roadkill.

Further information:

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