



tasmanian conservation trust inc

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Proposed Bay of Fires national park

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust believes it is premature and inappropriate to seek public input regarding the boundaries for the proposed Bay of Fires national park as Aboriginal concerns and existing management problems should have been dealt with first. The TCT does not oppose a national park and still sees it as one option for the area.

The TCT strongly encourages the State Government to put on hold its plans to develop a Bay of Fires national park and re-start negotiations with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to determine if they want part or all of the Bay of Fires area transferred to their ownership and whether this might be consistent with the creation of a national park. The Government should also ask the Aboriginal community what management arrangements they would consider.

There are many threats to the natural and cultural values of the Bay of Fires including uncontrolled off-road vehicle use, poorly planned camping areas, coastal shacks, fires, weeds, dogs and tourism developments. Prior to considering a national park the Government must work out which 'traditional practices' will be banned and which will be allowed. With other national parks these decisions were not made before their declaration and pre-existing problems have never been satisfactorily dealt with. Prior to proposing boundaries of a national park, the Government should commence consultation with recreational users, Break O'Day Council, local and state conservation groups and Aboriginal groups regarding these important management issues.

We have written to the Premier detailing our concerns and have attached a copy of our letter.

Specific comments on the boundaries of the proposed Bay of Fires national park

These comments should not be taken as endorsement of the process or unconditional support for the goal of a Bay of Fires national park.

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The information made available on the DPIPWE web site is very brief and is not sufficient for the public to make a considered response to such an important matter.

There is no information provided explaining the overall process which the State Government intends to follow for developing a national park.

There are no stated terms of reference for the consultation process.

The very brief information made available on the DPIPWE web site fails to explain why the Ansons Bay Conservation Area and Doctors Peak Forest Reserve were excluded from the proposed national park. This failure to explain why certain areas are proposed and others excluded is totally unacceptable and serves only to suggest the proposed boundaries are influenced by vested interests and political agendas rather than being scientifically based.

If our concerns identified above can be satisfactorily dealt with and another public consultation process is considered, we urge the State Government to explain the reasons why areas are proposed as a national park or other reserve categories.

The proposed national park would involve two totally disjunct areas, the existing Bay of Fires Conservation Area and the existing Mount Pearson State Reserve. This is quite unusual, presents obvious management problems and sets a bad precedent.

The coastal part of the existing Bay of Fires Conservation Area running south from Ansons Bay includes some very narrow areas. In some cases the Conservation Area only extends to high tide mark or very close to it. There are known management problems associated with these areas including stock access and weeds. We wonder how such areas would qualify for a national park status?

Yours sincerely,

Peter McGlone
Director

Attachment:

- TCT letter to The Hon. David Bartlett MP, Premier, 'Consultation with Aboriginal Community over Bay of Fires National Park Proposal', 5 June 2009.