

# TCT Input to Environment Policies for the 2010 State Election

## Submission made to the leaders of the Tasmanian Labor Party, Tasmanian Liberal Party and Tasmanian Greens

NOTE: The shaded recommendations do not appear in the TCT's Submission on the State Budget 2010-2011.

### 1. Marine reserves

The need for marine protected areas (MPA) in Tasmanian waters has never been greater. Environmental problems such as increasing numbers of *Centrostephanus* urchin barrens, declining giant kelp forests, overfishing, along with the need for representative reference areas to assess the impacts of fishing activities and climate change, provide good justification for a representative system of no-take MPAs in Tasmanian waters. While some of our fisheries are comparatively well managed, fisheries management alone is not sufficient to ensure conservation of marine biodiversity and protection of fish stock. Most of Tasmania's marine bioregions have not been subject to a comprehensive assessment as required under the Marine Protected Areas Strategy and currently have no MPAs, or the existing reserves are inadequate.

A number of target species, such as striped and bastard trumpeter are in serious trouble, and stocks of these species would likely benefit from marine protected areas or some other form of area management. MPAs are an obvious mechanism to ensure rock lobster egg production is maintained at adequate levels around the State. Research indicates that recruitment for this species has become perilously low and proposed increases in catch have become impossible to implement.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support MPA inquiries for all Tasmanian marine bioregions and provision of funding for these inquiries.

#### Attachments:

- *Inquiry into the Establishment of Marine Protected Areas within the Bruny Bioregion hearing on submissions to the Draft Recommendations Report, Tasmanian Conservation Trust Submission on the Natural Values of the Bruny Bioregion and Fishery considerations.* While this submission addresses the Bruny Bioregion specifically, many of the arguments we include supporting MPAs apply to all bioregions of Tasmania. It also includes a comprehensive set of images of the marine life found in the Bruny Bioregion.
- *Scalegfish Management Plan Review 2008-09, April 2009.* This submission gives examples of the TCT's concerns regarding fisheries management. It is clear that there are serious concerns about the Tasmanian scalegfish fishery and, in particular, about banded morwong, striped trumpeter and bastard trumpeter.

## 2. Water management

The TCT's key concerns regarding water management have been the Drought-proofing Tasmania Program and ensuring statutory Water Management Plans are developed in all priority catchments. Our detailed views on the Drought-proofing Tasmania projects are contained in our correspondence to the relevant Tasmanian and Australian government ministers.

It is important to emphasize that the TCT is not opposed to well-planned irrigation development. While we are greatly concerned about much of the Drought-proofing Tasmania Program, we remain hopeful that with more time, appropriate science and careful planning, the Tasmanian Government can progress irrigation projects that are sustainable, have enduring benefits for the farmers, including helping them adapt to climate change, and are good value for money for taxpayers.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support a review of the Drought-proofing Tasmania Program to ensure that projects being proposed are environmentally sustainable, address the key priorities of the farming community, take into account the likely effects of climate change, including incorporating the Tasmanian Sustainable Yields research, and that Water Management Plans are in place prior to approvals being sought.
- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to commit to providing the Tasmanian public with a meaningful public consultation process in relation to major irrigation proposals. This would include reinstating in full third party rights of appeal under the *Water Management Act 1999* and not attempting any further restrictions to such rights. Also, all dam work permit applications that may result in destruction of threatened species and clearing of threatened vegetation communities are required to be assessed by an independent and appropriately qualified group of scientists, rather than by the Assessment Committee for Dam Construction (ACDC). The ACDC must also be bound by the recommendations of the scientific advisory committee.

## 3. Reserve management/resourcing of the Parks and Wildlife Service

The TCT has long called for the establishment of the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) as an independent statutory authority with a mandate to maintain the Parks and Reserves System in Tasmania as a world-class natural, recreational and economic asset. In our submission to the State Government budget for 2009-2010, we requested an increase in budgeted expenditure by \$25.5 million in year one and \$21.5 million each year thereafter to meet reserve management and staff training and recruitment needs (as well as the provision of visitor services), and thus enable it to finally achieve its Tasmania Together targets.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support the TCT's requested increase in funding for the PWS and for the establishment of the PWS as an independent statutory authority.

The TCT understands that the PWS is currently developing a 10-year plan to help guide its long-term prioritisation and budgeting. We fully endorse this long overdue development and have put forward budget recommendations with this in mind. The TCT has provided preliminary input to the 10-year plan and has attached this information.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support the development of 10-year plan for the PWS and provide input when the opportunity is presented.

Attachments:

- *TCT Submission - 2009-2010 State Budget Community Consultation, November 2008;*
- *Presentation to the State Cabinet Sub-committee, 25 November 2008.*
- *Letter to the Executive Director, Parks and Wildlife Service, Parks and Wildlife Service Ten Year Plan, 3 September 2009.*

#### **4. Completion of the Crown Land Assessment and Classification Inquiry**

The TCT was largely instrumental in initiating the Tasmanian Government's Crown Land Assessment and Classification Project (CLAC) that ran from 2004 to 2006. This process assessed more than 100,000 hectares of Crown land including unallocated Crown land and land reserved as Public Reserves under the Crown Lands Act. This process resulted in numerous parcels of land being sold or handed over to local governments and state government agencies. By far the majority of the land assessed was recommended for reservation and is proposed to be managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service.

It is stated on the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) website that 'In total, the area of land recommended to reserve under the Nature Conservation Act 2002 is approximately 78,000 hectares.' It goes on to say on the DPIW web site that 'Cabinet has now endorsed reservation in all twenty-nine municipalities. However, Cabinet has deferred implementation of the recommendations to create these reserves, pending resolution of funding issues.'

It has been more than five years since the CLAC process commenced and three years since it was completed and the TCT is greatly concerned to see that the vast majority (72%) of the land subject to this process, including the areas with the highest conservation values, is still unreserved and not protected.

While we have been sympathetic to the demands of the Parks and Wildlife Service for additional funds for management of these proposed new reserves, we believe the delay has been too long. We now support the immediate declaration of these proposed reserves to ensure their legal protection and

urge the Parks and Wildlife Service to seek additional resources for their management as a part of their normal budget requests.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support the immediate implementation of the recommendation by the CLAC for 78,008 hectares of land to be reserved under the Nature Conservation Act.

## 5. Threatened Species

The March 2009 Auditor-General Special Report No. 78 *Management of Threatened Species* is an important review of the Resource Management and Conservation Division's effectiveness in managing threatened species and should be used by the State Government to institute wide ranging reforms of this area of government business.

The TCT broadly supports the Auditor-General's Report recommendations and has urged the State Government to endorse them and take immediate action to commence implementation of them. We have asked that the Government's response clearly sets out how and when it will implement these recommendations, including addressing resourcing requirements.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support the recommendations of the Auditor-General's report and commit to action to commence implementation of them.

Attachment:

- In May 2009 the TCT wrote to the Minister for Primary Industries and Water David Llewellyn providing responses to each of the 19 recommendations and a copy of these recommendations is attached.

## 6. Forest practices

The Forest Practices Authority (FPA) has commissioned an independent review of the biodiversity provisions of the Forest Practices Code. The review was undertaken by an independent expert panel chaired by Dr Mick Brown. The report will be considered by the Forest Practices Advisory Council and the board of the FPA as part of the ongoing review and improvement of the Code. The FPA expects to formally call for submissions on the revision of the Forest Practices Code (including the biodiversity provisions) during 2009/2010.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support the independent Forest Practices Code review process.

## 7. Feral animals

### 7.1. General feral animal program

Enclosed is a complimentary copy of *Feral Animals of Tasmania*, an innovative new publication designed to improve community knowledge and understanding of feral animals, and to encourage the community to become involved in reporting and managing them. The TCT is developing a proposal to

put to the State Government to establish a broader feral animal control/eradication program targeting a range of the feral animal species featured in this publication. A feral animal program should follow the prioritisation process used in this publication with the highest priority being to prevent new feral species establishing or eradicating those that have recently been introduced and are not widely distributed. We will provide additional details when our proposal to the State Government is finalised. Some of the feral species we anticipate the program targeting will be pig, goat, cat, Indian myna, rainbow lorikeet, carp, oriental weatherloach, gambusia, long-necked turtle.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support the establishment of a state feral animal control/eradication program.

Attachment:

- *Feral Animals of Tasmania.*

### **7.2. Cat control**

The State Government released the *Cat Management In Tasmania Taking The Initiative* discussion paper for public comment in August 2008 and the TCT made a submission broadly endorsing the government's proposed direction. In December 2008 the State Cabinet approved David Llewellyn's proposal to commence drafting cat control legislation (including a phase-in of compulsory microchipping and de-sexing) and this process is now under way with the goal of introducing a bill into State Parliament towards the end of 2009. The legislation includes most of the provisions the TCT believes are required. One of the strongest points we made in our submission on the State Government's discussion paper was the need to compliment the legislation with a well-funded education campaign and provide financial incentives for de-sexing and microchipping of cats.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support the introduction of Tasmanian cat control legislation (in particular a phase-in of compulsory de-sexing and microchipping of domestic cats), funding of an education campaign targeting domestic cat owners and a program of financial incentives for de-sexing and microchipping of cats.

Attachment:

- *Submission on Cat Management in Tasmania Taking the Initiative.*

### **7.3. Fox eradication**

The TCT is a strong supporter of the State Government's Fox Eradication Program and believes that the program must be maintained and possibly have its budget increased to ensure all possible actions are taken to eradicate foxes from Tasmania. An independent review by the New Zealand company Landcare Research is currently underway and this will likely recommend a range of new approaches and ways to improve the effectiveness of existing approaches.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support the continued funding of the Fox Eradication Program at least at existing levels and, depending on the outcome of the current review, look to supporting an increase in funding and an investigation of new or improved eradication methods.

#### **7.4. WHA feral animal management**

There is an urgent need for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area managers to complete the long-mooted WHA Invasive Species Strategy and for additional resources to be provided by the State Government to ensure it is implemented.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support the completion of the WHA Invasive Species Strategy as a matter of urgency and to provide resources toward its implementation.

Attachment:

- *Briefing paper for the World Heritage Area Consultative Committee Meeting, Cradle Mountain, 27-28 February 2009: Superb Lyrebird and Fallow Deer – potential hazards to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.*

### **8. Wildlife management**

The TCT is developing a more detailed and comprehensive wildlife policy and will provide a copy of this shortly.

#### **8.1. Culling of browsing animals (wallabies and possums) using 1080 and other methods of lethal control**

The TCT wants an end to use of 1080 as a control for native species and it must not be replaced by any other poison. Lethal controls must be avoided where possible and non-lethal alternatives supported and encouraged by the State Government.

The TCT are impressed with the progress being made toward improving non-lethal control of browsing animals, such as resistant seedling varieties, repellents and seedling stockings for use by the forestry industry, and production of fencing guidelines to assist farmers in particular. Many farmers have found fencing to be an effective answer to browsing animals and Forestry Tasmania and private forestry companies operating on State Forest are also surviving without the option of 1080.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support an end to use of 1080 as a control for native species and ensure it is not replaced by any other poison.
- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support non-lethal alternatives where possible and that lethal controls such as shooting and trapping be used only as a last resort. We seek support for funding a program to replace the 'Alternatives to 1080 Program' that focuses on providing on-going research and delivery of non-lethal

options (focusing on plantation and extensive grazing industries) and a roll-out of a fencing program for farmers.

### **8.2. Roadkill**

The TCT's primary concern in regard to roadkill of wildlife is to see effective strategies implemented to reduce roadkill at hotspots (which may include a high incidence of common species or threatened and other priority wildlife species) and a general improvement in driver behaviour that leads to reduced roadkill.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support effective strategies to reduce roadkill at hotspots including reduced speed limits and a general improvement in driver behaviour that leads to reduced roadkill.

### **8.3. Hunting and gill netting**

The TCT wants an end to all recreational hunting open seasons and recreational gill netting because of the unavoidable animal cruelty and killing animals in the name of recreation or sport is abhorrent and unjustifiable (it promotes a culture of killing and disrespect for wildlife and animals generally). Gill netting is also putting significant pressure on fish populations.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support an end to recreational hunting open seasons for the following native species:
  - Wild duck (black duck, grey teal, chestnut teal, mountain duck, wood duck);
  - Short-tailed shearwater;
  - Bennett's and rufus wallabies;
  - Brown quail.
- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support an end to recreational gill netting.

### **8.4. Persecution of wholly protected wildlife**

The TCT wants better monitoring, promotion of wildlife laws and resourcing for enforcement to reduce the incidence of persecution of wholly protected wildlife and partly protected wildlife without proper authority.

- We ask the Tasmanian Labor, Liberal and Greens parties to support an increase in funding to enable a satisfactory level of monitoring, education and enforcement to reduce the incidence of persecution of wholly protected wildlife.
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