



**tasmanian conservation trust inc**

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**TCT Submission - 2012-2013 State Budget Community Consultation**

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) is pleased to be invited to make a submission to the process of developing the 2012-2013 State Budget. We have prepared the submission in accordance with your Department's November 2011 '2012-13 Budget Community Consultation Submission Guidelines'.

Yours sincerely,

Peter McGlone  
Director

# Tasmanian Conservation Trust Submission - 2012-2013 State Budget Community Consultation

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most of our budget proposals from the last few years remain undelivered and we still strongly support the need for all of them to be implemented and funded.

We realize that the current budget situation is very bad. In response to this we recommend that our most costly budget proposals should be postponed and we are only seeking funding for them in the subsequent three years i.e. 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16.

We have selected a series of high priority but modest budget proposals to be funded in the first year 2012-13.

### **In summary, the TCT's proposals for funding for the budget year 2012-13 are:**

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment:

- Wildlife Consultation Committee and Wildlife Rehabilitators Code of Practice
- Funding to enable the implementation of the Cat Management Act and for associated strategies and programs
- Continuation and expansion of the Browsing Animal Management Program
- Establish minimum standards for shooters participating in culling of browsing animals for crop protection purposes.

Parks and Wildlife Service:

- Creation of a Parks and Reserves Authority.
- Assessment of the level and type of resources which are required for management and protection of the current and expected reserve system.
- A strategy to identify alternative means of resources for management and protection of the parks and reserves system and reducing resource requirements.

Department of Justice:

- Progressing Tasmania's Marine Protected Area's Strategy

If Treasury expects NGOs to identify means for financing budget proposals through identifying wastage and inefficiencies or by identifying proposals which have higher priority it must ensure DPIPW's core statutory responsibilities and resource requirements are defined.

We recommend, as per our recommendation regarding documenting the resourcing requirements of the Parks and Reserves System, that external consultants be contracted by Treasury to do a similar assessment of the resource requirements all other Divisions of DPIPW.

## 2. PRIORITISATION

In section 4 the TCT has made recommendations regarding three government agencies: Parks and Wildlife Service, other divisions of DPIPWE and the Department of Justice. Our recommendations for each agency are listed in priority order but recommendations for one agency are not prioritised over those for other agencies.

## 3. ORGANISATIONS ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust was formed in 1968 and has for many years performed the role of Tasmania's peak conservation organisation. The TCT has a broad range of individuals, groups and businesses within its membership and is governed by a Council elected from the membership. The TCT is a non-political organisation and is committed to working with government, industry, other non-government organisations and the community to achieve genuine, on-ground conservation outcomes whenever possible.

The TCT is Tasmania's only state-wide conservation organisation with a mandate to work on the full range of environmental issues, urban and rural, terrestrial and marine. It operates in a range of ways, aiming to influence policy at all levels of government but also participating in strategically important hands-on projects as well. Central to its philosophy is that it formally engages with government and industry on conservation issues, participates in management processes and provides independent and informed advice.

Priorities as set out in the TCT's Strategic Plan for 2007-2009 which are still current are:

- Protection of biodiversity through improved management of native vegetation, ending or mitigating unsustainable impacts on native animals (particularly in regard to the use of 1080 poison) and directing programs for protection of threatened species and communities.
- Through a collaborative approach, increase the amount of private land managed for conservation.
- Participate in sustainable waste management projects.
- Track, coordinate and/or complement a climate change campaign in Tasmania.
- Work towards sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.
- Assess and comment upon activities and proposals likely to have significant impact on the coastal and marine environment.
- Protect existing reserves and support the expansion of the CAR reserve system to address existing shortfalls.
- Assess and comment on significant water management issues.

### **Represent the conservation movement**

For decades the TCT has been recognized by governments, industry and the community as a peak or umbrella conservation group. The TCT is routinely invited to represent the conservation movement on a range of 'high level' state and Australian government statutory and other key advisory committees and is asked to respond to virtually every environment-related policy, draft legislation and management plans for water, fisheries and reserves.

The TCT represents the conservation movement on 25 high-level State and Australian Government advisory committees (covering fisheries, fish farming, marine environment, threatened species, feral animals, roadkill, browsing animals, reserve management, coastal management), as well as participating in 5 national non-government environmental alliances.

The TCT attempts to represent the interests of the entire conservation movement, whether TCT members or not. As such we provide feedback directly to known interested groups and indirectly to the entire movement through the media, our website, newsletter, email bulletins and public events.

The TCT participates in regular meetings with the state ministers for environment and resources, opposition party spokespersons and key departmental officials. As well as formal committees, the other key areas of government consultation and public campaigning are improved wildlife protection, input to the state budget and DPIPWE corporate plan, cat management, planning, marine protected areas, irrigation development, water planning, funding of parks and reserves system and park management.

### **Resource centre**

The TCT has also operated as a resource centre for community action and is regarded as the primary point of contact by many smaller community environmental organizations and individuals, NRM regional groups, industry groups and local governments, whether they are members or not.

The TCT is represented on 10 community and NRM project steering committees and 6 non-government marine related committees. We work closely with NRM regional bodies, industry and community groups to implement Caring for our Country (CFoC) and other projects.

### **On-ground projects**

Over many years the TCT has administered the finances and project officers for numerous short-term, yet strategically important, on-ground projects with some recent examples being the:

- Australian Government Envirofund: Community Action for Derwent Penguins
- Threatened Species Network, A Program of WWF Australia: Swift Parrot Nest Identification Project
- Australian Government Envirofund: Derwent Community Wetlands Project
- Caring for our Country Community Coastcare: Engaging the Tasmanian Community – building skills and knowledge for marine protected areas
- Caring for our Country Community Coastcare: Port Davey Marine Reserve –Prevention of marine pests/Preservation of values
- Australian Government, Caring for our Country: Tasmanian Island Care Reborn – an interactive community web resource
- Australian Government Community Action Grants: Outer Furneaux Island Boxthorn Control – Maintenance: the key to long-term success
- Tasmanian Weed Alert Network: Tasmanian Community Fund

### **Highlights of achievements in recent years:**

- Significant improvements to the proposed Dans Hill nickel mine, including the protection of half of the known populations of Tasmania's most threatened plant species *Tetratheca gunnii*.

- We have been the sole group lobbying for reservation of 77,500 ha of Crown land recommended under the Crown Land Assessment and Classification program to protect myriad threatened species habitats, threatened vegetation types and other values. We single-handedly won the support of all three political parties at the 2010 state election and recently the first 9000 hectares of reserves have been proclaimed with the remainder expected by end of 2011.
- During the 2010 state election the TCT was the only group willing to pressure all three political parties to release environmental policies on all important issues. We take some credit for the previous Labor Government's decision to provide \$10 million additional funding for the Parks and Wildlife Service.
- The TCT was principally responsible for convincing the state government to proceed with the Cat Management Act 2009 and many of the approaches to cat management which has been adopted.
- Since 2009 the TCT has re-established the Tasmanian Weed Alert Network which has recruited 85 volunteers looking for and reporting serious new weed incursions in Tasmania.
- TCT was co-nominator of Tasmania Lowland Native Grasslands which was successfully listed in 2009 on the EPBC Act as a critically endangered ecological community and which triggered the Midlands Water Scheme EPBC strategic assessment.
- Since 2007 the TCT has been the only group making constructive input into the revision of the biodiversity provisions of the Tasmanian Forest Practices System (now suspended) and continues to lobby for its completion.
- Over the last three years we have continued to coordinate and administer a volunteer program to control boxthorn in the Furneaux Islands which has controlled mature boxthorn on 12 islands.
- TCT has been the only leading conservation group advocating for threatened species and biodiversity outcomes through the Forests Statement of Principles process.
- After the end of the Alternatives to 1080 program we assisted in getting the program continued and won a commitment from the state government to continue to reduce the amount of 1080 poison.
- After many years of in-action, the TCT has helped rejuvenate general public interest and action to address the wildlife roadkill issue.

## 4. GENERAL INFORMATION

Most of our budget proposals from the last few years remain undelivered and we still strongly support the need for all of them to be implemented and funded.

We realize that the current budget situation is very bad. In response to this we recommend that our most costly budget proposals should be postponed and we are only seeking funding for them in the subsequent three years i.e. 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16.

We have selected a series of high priority but modest budget proposals to be funded in the first year 2012-13 and most of these are also to be funded in subsequent years.

Our submission is structured as follows:

- 4.A. State budget recommendations for 2012-13 and beyond
  - New proposals
  - Repeated proposals from previous state budget submissions
  - Revised or amended proposals from previous state budget submissions
- 4.B. State budget recommendations for 2013-14, 2014-15, 2014-15
  - Repeated proposals from previous state budget submissions
- 4.C. Financing of our proposals

### 4.A. State budget recommendations for 2012-13 and beyond (note: some proposals are funded for more than one year)

#### 4.A.1. New proposals

##### **RECOMMENDATION 1:**

##### **Wildlife Consultation Committee and Wildlife Rehabilitators Code of Practice**

The TCT would like to see the establishment of a Wildlife Consultation Committee (WCC). It is envisioned that the committee will be comprised of experienced wildlife rehabilitators, vets, officers of the Nature Protection Branch, PWS and reputable wildlife park operators.

The aim of the WCC would be to offer the community advice and support in relation to wildlife issues, in particular wildlife rehabilitation. The Committee would also work towards constructing a Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation.

The TCT believes that a Code of Practice be developed to guide all individuals in the care of wildlife in Tasmania as well as creating a Wildlife Consultation Committee.

**Responsible Department:** TCT.

**Funding requested:**

Running of the Wildlife Consultation Committee: \$50,000 per annum, on going.  
Construction of the Wildlife Rehabilitators Code of Practice: \$75,000 per annum for two years. This would cover the costs of hiring a professional writer, legal costs and printing costs.

**Justification**

At present, the only Committee advising on wildlife issues is the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. Tasmania needs an independent committee which is dedicated solely to issues concerning wildlife rehabilitation.

Tasmania is home to a number of species of wildlife that are found no where else; the Tasmanian devil, Eastern quoll, Tasmanian pademelon and Tasmanian bettong are just a few. Tasmania is also known as the 'roadkill state'. An estimated 293,000 animals are killed on Tasmanian roads each year which is an average of around 32 animals every hour. Many orphaned and injured wildlife are the result roadkill. Orphaned and injured wildlife are also the result of shooting and dog and cat attacks.

At present in Tasmania, there are a number of organizations and individuals who undertake the task of rehabilitating injured and orphaned wildlife. It is apparent that these organizations and individuals use different methods to care for wildlife and some of these methods result in the suffering and death of wildlife. This results from a lack of education and/or experience on the part of the rehabilitator. In addition, practices which have been considered acceptable in the past are being reassessed and modified according to new research and changing attitudes. It is for these reasons that the TCT believes that a Code of Practice be developed to guide all individuals in the care of wildlife in Tasmania.

Most states and territories have a rehabilitator's code of ethics: NT, WA, QLD, NSW, Vic.:

- WA: Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia 2008 (Department of Environment and Conservation)
- NT: Code of Practice for the Welfare of Orphaned, Sick and Injured Wildlife (Wildcare Inc. NT)
- Vic: Code of Practice for the Welfare of Wildlife During Rehabilitation (Department of Primary Industries).
- NSW: Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Protected Fauna (Office of Environment & Heritage)
- QLD: Code of Practice – Care of orphaned, sick or injured protected animals by wildlife care volunteers (Environmental Protection Agency)

Western Australia has a particularly good Code of Practice: Minimum Standards for wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia ; <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/view/full/3576/341/> It resulted from a Wildlife Consultation Group comprised of experienced wildlife rehabilitators, wildlife vets, officers of the Nature Protection Branch, reputable wildlife park operators and experts from the Perth Zoo. The Minimum Standards are based on accepted veterinary practices, personal observations, common sense, good judgment and many thousands of hours of dedicated commitment. The

purpose of the Minimal Standards is to ensure the welfare of native animals in all stages of the wildlife rehabilitation process and maximize the potential to return native animals back to the wild.

Wildlife carers in WA are encouraged to register as a volunteer wildlife carer/rehabilitator and they will be covered by insurance for personal accident and public liability. Steps to be registered as a wildlife rehabilitator are that:

- a) the individual needs to attend a DEC approved wildlife rehabilitation course,
- b) work with a mentor or rehabilitation centre, understand and accept the policies and how the systems works, and network with other like minded people.
- c) A wildlife officer assesses their capability and facility. Wildlife officers have a check list, which includes questions regarding euthanasia, husbandry, release which must be completed and sent in with WO recommendation.

Registered wildlife rehabilitators are provided with an Identity card which provides proof of identity when accessing airports, government properties or challenged by members of the public when going about their wildlife rehabilitation.

Annual grants of up to \$1500 are available to individuals who have two years rehabilitation experience.

Once a WCC and Code are in place the TCT would like to see similar provisions made for volunteer wildlife rehabilitators in Tasmania.

### **Recommendation in detail**

The purpose of the Code of Practice is to ensure the welfare of native animals in all stages of the wildlife rehabilitation process and maximize the effectiveness of rehabilitation and the potential to return native animals to the wild.

The Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Tasmania should be adhered to by wildlife rehabilitators and Wildlife Park operators (when rehabilitating wildlife). The Wildlife Rehabilitator's Code of Practice should cover issues such as:

- Recording and reporting requirements (coding standards, veterinary policy, feasibility and fate, acceptable euthanasia methods, non-acceptable euthanasia methods, disposal of carcass and animal waste products)
- Human health risks (control of disease transmission from animals to humans and animals to animals.
- Release considerations (where to release, when to release, type of release selection of release site, transportation of animals)
- Housing requirements based on stage of care (intensive care, acclimatisation, pre-release, nutritional acclimatization, environmental acclimatisation)
- Basic requirements for housing during rehabilitation (general indoor and outdoor housing)
- Detailed avian housing requirements

- Detailed Reptile and amphibian housing requirements
- Detailed Mammal housing requirements

#### **4.A.2. Repeated proposals from previous TCT state budget submissions**

##### **RECOMMENDATION 2:**

##### **Funding to enable the implementation of the Cat Management Act and for associated strategies and programs**

**Responsible Department:** DPIPWE and RSPCA

##### **Funding requested:**

DPIPWE: \$0.4M additional in year one, \$0.2M per year additional for three years.

RSPCA: \$1.3M additional in year one, \$0.8M per year additional for three years.

##### **Justification:**

The Cat Management Act passed through both houses of the State Parliament in November 2009 but the state government is yet to set a commencement date and therefore the act has not come into force. In anticipation of the Act commencing in July 2012, the TCT recommends significant additional resources for its implementation and for complementary actions such as educational programs and subsidized de-sexing.

The core functions of the Act can be funded very cheaply – estimated at only a few hundred thousand dollars – however much more (in the order of \$1.7 million in the first year and declining in subsequent years) is required to maximum the benefits from the Act.

While it is difficult to quantify the exact number of feral and stray cats and the impacts they have, it does appear from anecdotal information and monitoring by DPIPWE that the numbers are increasing. What is known for certain is that many well intentioned people in the community want to take action to address this problem.

Delaying the commencement of this Act is preventing many farmers, local councils, community organisations and others in the community from taking effective action, voluntarily and independent of government, to control feral and stray cats. A small investment by the government into administering the Act will pay off enormously with many hundreds, if not thousands, of people controlling cats in their local area free of charge.

Delaying the Act also prevents the introduction of compulsory de-sexing of all domestic cats and therefore increases the number of unwanted and abandoned cats many of which are either euthanased at the Cat Centre and RSPCA animal shelters or go feral and add to the environmental problem.

While on the long term the introduction of the Act will result in desexing becoming compulsory and reducing the number of unwanted litters, there will probably be a short term problem of more cats being handed in to cat shelters as people do not want to comply with the new laws to contain, desex

and micro-chip their pet cats. This may be a serious problem for cat shelters immediately following the introduction of the Act but it is expected to subside after a few years.

The TCT understands that the regulations, educational materials and administrative procedures within DPIPWE are all complete or well advanced and there is now no reason beyond financing for the hold up the Act's commencement.

As proposed to former Minister David Llewellyn, we believe that most of the key cat control functions that are recommended in the Act should be fulfilled by the RSPCA and therefore most resources need to be directed to them. The reason for this is that management of animals including cats is the RSPCA's prime purpose and we believe they would be more effective and significantly more cost efficient than DPIPWE.

**Recommendation in detail:**

Additional resources to be provided to the RSPCA to:

- Establish and maintain a state-wide cat breeder register and licensing system for authorized officers (\$0.2M additional in year one, \$0.1M additional for three years).
- Fund a subsidised cat de-sexing and micro-chipping program (covering part of the total cost) during the four years recommended prior to these measures becoming compulsory (\$0.3M per year for four years).
- Dramatically increase cat housing facilities to cater for the likely increase in cats being abandoned or handed to RSPCA and other cat shelters, immediately following introduction of the Act, and to dispose of them through adoptions or euthanasia (\$0.5M additional in year one, \$0.2M additional for three years).
- Establish and run a four-year educational program to encourage full community acceptance of and compliance with the new cat control legislation. [\$0.3M additional in year one, \$0.2M additional for three years.].

Additional resources should also be provided to the DPIPWE to:

- Establish and resource a committee of stakeholders to oversee the implementation of the cat management legislation and strategy. [\$0.2M additional in year one, \$0.1M additional for three years.]

Resources also need to be provided to the DPIPWE and NGOs to:

- Expand its scientific expertise to monitor cat numbers and impacts state-wide including the provision of technical support and assistance to community cat control programs. In addition to this, create a specific community facilitator position (hosted by an NGO) to initiate and help establish community cat control programs. [\$0.2M additional in year one, \$0.1M additional for three years.]

**RECOMMENDATION 3:****Continuation and expansion of the Browsing Animal Management Program**

**Responsible Department:** DPIPWE, Resource Management and Conservation Division

**Funding requested:** \$1M additional per year for four years.

**Justification:**

The TCT wants an immediate end to the use of 1080 poison 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 supports the general approach being taken with the DPIPWE Browsing Animal Management Program (BAMP) and congratulates the state government and department on being able to find the funding in last years budget to commence this program.

The BAMP is implementing the outcomes of the Alternatives to 1080 Program by distributing and promoting integrated browsing management advice using the Alternatives to 1080 Program's planning toolkit, extension activities and field days. The program is assisting farmers with developing and implementing wildlife management strategies to reduce browsing damage and also raise awareness of the cost impact of browsing wildlife to farmers and the options available for management.

We also note that, in a letter to the TCT dated 30 September 2011) the Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Brian Wightman, has made a commitment to reducing the use of 1080 poison for the control of native browsing animals in line with the Tasmanian Together target of zero 1080 used by 2015. We will continue to monitor the amount used and encourage the government to meet goal.

However we are disappointed that the current budget allocation for the BAMP, of just \$225,000 per year for two years, is grossly inadequate to address the current need in the community. A greater concern is that this funding is not guaranteed beyond the budget year 2012-13 and this would leave the program unfunded for more than two years prior to the anticipated phase out of 1080 poison. We believe that withdrawing all government support and assistance for land owners may prevent the government from meeting its Tasmania Together target. To the contrary, there may be a significant increase in demand for 1080 poison which would undo all the magnificent work by current and previous ministers to reduce the amount of 1080 used.

**Recommendations in detail:**

We ask the State Government to:

- **Take action to end the use of 1080 poison** as a control for native species in Tasmania and ensure it is not replaced by any other poison. In the event that this is not immediately possible that the state government should guarantee that the target of zero 1080 use by 2015 will be delivered and that interim targets are set (where both the total weight of 1080 used and the numbers of properties using it decrease

each year), bring about a staged reduction in the lead-up to the final 2015 cessation.

- **Commit the State Government to non-lethal alternatives** where possible and that lethal controls such as shooting and trapping be used only as a last resort. This would involve establishing strict protocols for shooting similar to those which exist currently for 1080 poison (see recommendation below) and supporting land owners more via subsidized fencing.
- **Commit to providing funding to continue and expand the Browsing Animal Control Program** that focuses on providing on-going research and extension services to assistance landowners to deliver non-lethal options [\$0.5M additional per year] and a roll out of a low-cost fencing assistance program for commercial farmers and private land owners [\$0.5 M additional per year]. Offer dollar for dollar fencing rebates for farmers who are committed to not using 1080 poison to control browsing wildlife.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4:**

**Set minimum standards for shooters participating in culling of browsing animals for crop protection purposes.**

**Responsible Department:** DPIPWE, Resource Management and Conservation Division

**Funding requested:** \$0.1M additional per year for four years.

#### **Justification:**

According to the Tasmanian State of the Environment Report 2009, the number of animals killed under crop protection permits for the year 2006-07 was around 1,656,894. Plantation owners and farmers often employ commercial shooters. In Tasmania, any shooter who has a gun license is able to call themselves a professional. This results in inexperienced shooters being employed to carry out major culls of wildlife for crop protection. Often these shooters are not used to the conditions they are shooting in and do not have the skills to make a clean shot resulting in animals being wounded and left to die a slow and painful death. Many more shooters probably have the relevant skills and aptitude but fail to apply them as they strive to reduce time and costs and there is very little supervision of their activities.

The TCT has received numerous reports from the general public about the inhumane way wildlife has been shot by 'professional shooters'. One example can be seen here: <http://mogul.netai.net/> and we have attached extracts (Attachment 1).

#### **Recommendation in detail:**

All shooters must have passed the browsing animal control component of the Animal Control course offered by Polytechnic and pass a test of their accuracy and ability to euthanasia pouch young quickly and effectively. Once shooters have passed these tests they must pass regular refresher courses as well. These requirements must apply to all shooters participating in culling of browsing animals for crop protection purposes, including commercial shooters and those participating voluntarily.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:  
Progressing Tasmania's Marine Protected Area's Strategy**

**Responsible Department:** Tasmanian Planning Commission, Department of Justice

**Funding requested:** \$2M additional (\$0.5M additional per year for four years)

**Justification:**

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 MPAs 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.

**Recommendations in detail:**

We ask the Tasmanian Government to implement its own Marine Protected Areas Strategy and commit to MPA inquiries for all remaining Tasmanian marine bioregions and provision of funding for these inquiries. The recommended funding levels are based on the cost of the Bruny Bioregion MPA inquiry.

**4.A.3. Revised or amended proposals from previous state budget submissions**

**RECOMMENDATION 6:**

- **Creation of a Parks and Reserves Authority.**
- **An assessment of the level and type of resources which are required for management and protection of the current and expected reserve system.**
- **A strategy to identify alternative means of resourcing a parks and reserves system and reducing resource requirements.**

**Responsible Department:** Legislative review DPIPWE. Resource assessments and strategies: independent consultants.

**Funding requested:** \$2.5m over two years.

**Justification:**

The level of resources and administrative structures that currently exist within the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) are insufficient to deliver on policy commitments, reserve management plans, Tasmania Together benchmarks, RFA milestones (for a world-class Parks and Reserves System) and community and visitor expectations.

For many years the PWS has failed to meet any of its key Tasmanian Together targets for protection of natural heritage:

- TT target 3.2: PWS, as with most other land management agencies, has failed to prevent establishment and spread of new pests species.
- TT target 4.1: PWS funding for management of reserves has not increased while the percentage of land in reserves has been increasing (admittedly below the TT targets).
- TT target 4.2: PWS has been a long way off its target for the percentage of protected land covered by approved management plans.
- Note: A target is yet to be set for TT standard 2.3 "The proportion of area of reserves subject to a system of reserve management audit".

While the Tasmanian Government has in recent years invested in additional PWS resources for visitor infrastructure, as a part of the government's investment in increased tourism infrastructure (particularly large information centres in national parks), many of the core areas of PWS responsibility remain greatly under-resourced.

The longer some of these issues go unaddressed or under-resourced the greater the eventual costs will be. Conversely, quick and decisive action by the State Government will likely prevent more serious problems developing and save the state money.

Attachment Two is an article from the TCT newsletter 'Its time to stop starving the Parks and Wildlife Service' which outlines in greater detail the dire state of the PWS budget relevant to its responsibilities and provides a comparison with Parks Victoria.

Attachment Three is a TCT letter to former minister Michelle O'Byrne 'Justification for a Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service Authority', which provides a detailed justification for this change.

**Recommendations in detail:**

An independent Parks and Reserves Authority needs to be established with a legislated long-term mandate to protect and promote conservation of natural and cultural values for which areas of public land were reserved and should not be subject to the vagaries of policy priorities of passing governments and vested interests. The authority needs to oversee ongoing development of the reserve system pursuant to the national and state objectives, targets and commitments.

Additional resources for land management are needed in all parks and reserves, especially to deal with a serious backlog of work with regard to management of tracks, weeds, feral animals (especially on islands), fire management and visitor services, especially outside major national parks.

A major program of professional development and recruitment needs to be put in place for the Ranger service to:

- massively expand on the existing number of rangers (with a heavy emphasis on increasing the total number of qualified rangers who are working in the field and who have the full range of requisite skills i.e. hands-on land management capabilities, technical knowledge and administrative and legal skills);
- provide expanded training opportunities to improve the skills of all staff;
- establish a graduate program to attract recently qualified people into the PWS to assist with the recruitment program and to help address the significant age and gender imbalance and low level of qualified rangers in the PWS; and
- to provide competitive career opportunities befitting such an institution.

Additional resources are required to allow the PWS to develop the requisite internal scientific and planning expertise, or to adequately budget for contracting such services, (the Tasmanian PWS is the only one in the country without its own scientific staff) to facilitate development and implementation of management plans in relation to existing reserves.

Further specific budget items are included in the 2010-11 budget submission which is attached to this submission (Attachment 4).

The TCT has previously provided advice to the PWS suggesting ways of rationalising built assets, services and reserves in order to cut costs and focus resource allocation in priority areas and potentially increasing resources from other sources such as increased park entry fees and investment from non-government organisations. However, the primary focus for addressing the resourcing needs of the PWS should be increasing the annual allocation from State Treasury. While we believe a great deal would be gained from rationalising assets, services and reserves, and potentially increasing resources from other sources, these will not deliver in the short to medium term the large and on-going increase in resources the PWS requires.

The TCT has previously recommended an increase in the annual funding for the PWS of up to \$28 million to implement the above proposals but we realize that this is not likely to be successful in the 2012-13 state budget. We still believe that a funding increase of this scale is justified and perhaps much more is needed.

In these bad financial times and with the possibility of significant additions to the reserve system, pushing the total area of the state reserved to 50% or more, it is an ideal time to review the legislation and institutional structures which apply to reserve management in Tasmania, determine the resourcing requirements of the reserve system and identify alternative means of financing these and reducing resource requirements.

We recommend that most of this budget increase be postponed until the budget year 2013-14 but that funding for some key components should commence in the up-coming budget year 2012-13. For the budget years 2012-13 and 2013-14 we recommend that the state government provide funding for:

- A legislative review leading to the creation of a new stand-alone Parks and Reserves Authority: funding to enable a review of existing legislation and production of a discussion paper proposing preferred structure of a PRA, public consultation on the discussion paper and implementation of new legislation.
- An investigation to determine the level and type of resources (including the number, capacity and type of staff) which is required for management and protection of the current and expected reserve system.
- Development of a strategy to identify potential alternative means of resourcing/financing a Parks and Reserves system e.g. investment by non-government organizations and increasing park entry fees and means of reducing resource requirements, including through rationalization of built assets, services and reserves.

#### **4.B. State budget recommendations for 2013-14, 2014-15, 2014-15**

##### **4.B.1. Recommendations from TCT's 2010-11 State Budget submission**

See Attachment 4 for detailed explanations and costings.

##### **Parks and Reserves System**

**[\$28.05M in year one and \$23.65M each year for three years.]**

- A significant increase in budget allocation from the State Government.
- Implementation of a Parks and Wildlife Authority.
- Implementation of a staff professional development program.

##### **Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (non-Parks and Wildlife Service Divisions)**

[ \$11.9 million additional in year one, \$10.5M million per year additional for three years]

##### **Sustainable irrigation development**

- Development of Water Management Plans
- Biodiversity assessments
- Establish a 'Publicly Funded Irrigation Development Consultative Committee' to review irrigation priorities and develop a state-wide strategy.

##### **Threatened species management**

- Recovery planning and on-ground management
- Threatened Species 'Project Prioritisation Protocol'
- Web based threatened species advice tool
- Threatened species community support officer

##### **Invasive species management**

- General feral animal management program
- Fox Eradication Program
- WHA invasive species management

##### **Expansion of Biosecurity and Weed Management Programs**

- Expanded capacity for rapid response actions

- Expanded monitoring and surveillance programs
- A plants 'permitted list'
- Establish a widely available weed hygiene training and monitoring program.
- Research to identify the likely impacts of climate change

### **Wildlife protection - Reduced persecution of protected wildlife**

#### **4.B.2. Recommendations from TCT's 2011-12 State Budget submission**

See Attachment 5 for detailed explanations and costings.

Funding requirements in relation to implementation of the Forests Statement of Principles Agreement and the TCT's recommendations  
Private land biodiversity (funding sought but not costed)

- Private land incentive program
- Property management plans and support for independent certification
- Forest Practices Code review
- Land clearance legislation

Provision of funding to re-instate the highly successful and popular Living Environment Program, which was instigated by the previous minister Judy Jackson and ran for three years until 2008.

#### **4.C. Financing of our proposals**

Following the TCT's presentation at the 2010-2011 Budget Community Consultation Roundtable held on 26 November 2009, the Secretary of the Department of Treasury and Finance requested further information regarding how our budget proposals could be funded, and in particular where they might be funded through reducing inefficiencies and wastage.

We have attached the TCT's letter to the Secretary of the Department of Treasury and Finance, 'Financing of TCT's proposals for the 2010-11 State Budget' (Attachment 6) and ask that this be consider as part of our submission on the 2012-13 State Budget. While we made some general suggestions for financing our proposals, we were greatly restricted in attempting to identify inefficiencies and wastage because of the very limited information that is publicly available.

The TCT intended to provide further input in regard to cost cutting and prioritizing in a submission to the DPIPWE Draft Corporate Plan 2011-13 however this proved almost impossible due to the inadequacy of the publicly available information. DPIPWE could not even document the statutory requirements and resources needed to perform these, let alone documenting other requires of government policies, strategies and the like.

If Treasury expects NGOs to identify means of financing budget proposals through identifying wastage and inefficiencies it must ensure the DPIPWE document core statutory functions of each agency and outlines resourcing requirements.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend, as per our recommendation regarding documenting the resourcing requirements of the Parks and Reserves System, that external consultants be contracted by Treasury to do similar assessment of all other Divisions of DPIPWE.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1:

- Examples of animals shot by 'professionals': extract from the website <http://mogul.netai.net/>

Attachment 2:

- Article from the TCT newsletter 'Its time to stop starving the Parks and Wildlife Service'.

Attachment 3:

- TCT letter to former minister Michelle O'Byrne 'Justification for a Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service Authority'.

Attachment 4:

- 'TCT submission – 2010-2011 State Budget Community Consultation' 6 November 2009.

Attachment 5:

- 'TCT submission – 2011-2012 State Budget Community Consultation' 25 November 2010.

Attachment 6:

- TCT's letter to the Secretary of the Department of Treasury and Finance, 'Financing of TCT's proposals for the 2010-11 State Budget', 3 February 2010.