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## **TCT Submission - 2010-2011 State Budget Community Consultation**

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) is pleased to be invited to make a submission to the process of developing the 2010-2011 State Budget. We have prepared the submission in accordance with your Department's September 2009 *Community Consultation Submission Guidelines: Peak Community Organisations*.

### **1. Executive Summary**

#### **1.1. Establishment of a Parks and Reserves Authority [\$28.05M in year one and \$23.65M each year for three years.]**

The TCT's recommendations in relation to the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) are essentially the same as put forward in last year's submission and our in-person presentation to the 2008 Budget Sub-Committee Roundtable. Details of our proposals are contained in our attachments. Additional comments, regarding rationalisation of built assets, services and reserves, are made in the body of this submission (see section 4.1).

The TCT recommends the establishment of the Parks and Wildlife Service 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 and increase the budgeted expenditure by **\$28.05 million in year one and \$23.65 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.

The TCT recommends three critical changes to the PWS:

- **1.1.1. A significant increase in budget allocation from the State Government.** Attachment 1: 'TCT submission – 2009-2010 State Budget Community Consultation', outlines general arguments for additional funding, priorities for these funds (including some innovative ideas) and an estimate of the scale of budget increase required. Attachment 2: An article from the TCT newsletter, 'Its time to stop starving the Parks and Wildlife Service', based on our in-person presentation to last years State Budget Roundtable, outlines in greater detail the dire state of the PWS budget relevant to its responsibilities and provides a comparison with Parks Victoria.

- **1.1.2. Creation of a Parks and Wildlife Authority.** Attachment 3: TCT letter to Minister Michelle O’Byrne ‘Justification for a Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service Authority’, provides a detailed justification for this change.
- **1.1.3. Professionalisation of staff.** Attachment 1 and Attachment 3 explain the need for greater professionalism in the PWS staff. Attachment 3 explains why professionalisation is a requirement or precondition for creation of a Parks and Wildlife Authority.

To account for increasing costs and incremental increase in management demands, we propose an across the board 10% increase in the additional budget requested last year.

## **1.2. Expansion of Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment capacity in key areas** **[\$11.9 million additional in year one, \$10.5M million per year additional for three years]**

It is a high priority to expand DPIPWE’s capacity in the areas of threatened species management, conservation covenants, weed and feral animal management, control of browsing animals and sustainable irrigation development. DPIPWE is currently making good progress in most of these areas but we believe there is an urgent need for additional resources for specific existing programs and for some new initiatives. Directing additional funds into these areas will further help to fulfil DPIPWE’s prime role of providing professional services to the rural community.

While we are proposing considerable additional budget allocation to DPIPWE, we have directed it carefully, into areas we believe will facilitate sustainable development, reduce the costs involved in running agricultural and fishing industries and provide new or expanded income sources for rural land owners.

Most of our recommendations relate to taking early and preventative action, especially in regard to invasive species and browsing animals, which will save agricultural industries, the broader community and State Government much higher management costs in the future, as well as having environmental benefits. We also propose new or expanded programs to conserve threatened species habitats and other areas with high biodiversity value on private land, which will provide income for rural communities while reducing conflicts, legal actions and uncertainty.

Additional staff will need to be employed within the Threatened Species Section to run the ‘Project Prioritisation Protocol’, however we believe this approach has proven in New Zealand to greatly increase cost effectiveness of threatened species programs and will, in all likelihood, save DPIPWE and other state agencies significantly in the long-term. The proposal to expand threatened species recovery plan development and implementation will deliver more cost efficient threatened species conservation by using a comprehensive and integrated whole-of-government planning process. The ‘web based threatened species advise tool’ would ensure quicker and more accurate development assessments, resulting in better outcomes for threatened species and fewer delays and less uncertainty

for business and the community. Funding for a DPIPWE based ‘threatened species community support officer’ will build the capacity of community groups and land owners to manage threatened species and over the long-term will make these people less reliant on departmental advice and assistance.

Our proposals in relation irrigation development and marine protected areas are designed to facilitate sustainable development of natural resources while ensuring protection of key biodiversity values.

### 1.2.1. Private Land Conservation Program

[\$1.0M additional per year for four years]

- **Conservation Covenant Fund** – The State Government to provide base level funding, to be topped up with income from off-set payments made as a condition of develop approvals, for DPIPWE to establish a Conservation Covenant Fund to provide incentives to private land owners to enter into perpetual Conservation Covenants or for purchase, covenant and re-sale of properties with high conservation value.

### 1.2.2. Sustainable irrigation development

[\$0.6M additional for first year and \$0.5M for three years there after]

- **Development of Water Management Plans** for all catchments and regions that are subject to Drought-proofing Tasmania irrigation projects.
- **Biodiversity assessments** prior to finalising irrigation priorities.
- Establish a ‘Publicly Funded Irrigation Development Consultative Committee’ to **review irrigation priorities and develop a state-wide strategy.**

### 1.2.3. Threatened species management

[\$2.4 additional per year for four years]

- **Recovery planning and on-ground management** – Creation of a separate unit and provision of additional funding, to improve and expand DPIPWE’s development and implementation of threatened species recovery plans with an emphasis in delivery of effective on-ground management.
- **Prioritisation system** – DPIPWE’s Threatened Species Section be empowered to establish the ‘Project Prioritisation Protocol’ as the prime method for prioritising and planning the Division’s threatened species work to ensure greater delivery of priority actions and increased cost efficiency.
- **Web based threatened species advice tool** – Provision of funding for the Threatened Species Section to develop a web based threatened species advice tool, based on the Forest Practices Authority’s Forest Practices Advisor, to ensure more efficient use of threatened species data by all levels of government, industry and the community.
- **Threatened species community support officer** – Expand the Threatened Species Section’s capacity to support land owners and community groups to protect and manage threatened species.

### 1.2.3. **Browsing animal control**

[\$1M additional per year for four years.]

- **Alternatives to 1080 Program** – We ask the State Government to end the use of 1080 as a control for native species in Tasmania and commit to providing funding to replace/continue the ‘Alternatives to 1080 Program’ to deliver non-lethal control options.

### 1.2.5. **Invasive species management**

[\$3.9M additional in year one, \$3.2M per year additional for three years.]

- **Cat management legislation** – Additional resources to facilitate implementation of the Cat Management Bill currently progressing through the State Parliament.
- **General feral animal management program** – Create a new unit within DPIPWWE responsible for implementing a broad Feral Animal Control and Eradication Program.
- **Fox Eradication Program** – Increase funding for the Fox Eradication Program to maximise the probability of successful eradication of foxes from Tasmania.
- **WHA invasive species management** – Completion of the Western Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Invasive Species Strategy as a matter of urgency and provision of resources for its implementation.

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

(\$2.0M additional per year for four years).

- **Expanded capacity for rapid response actions** to eliminate new introductions into Tasmania.
- **Expanded monitoring and surveillance programs** to increase the chance of early detection of new introductions into Tasmania.
- **A plants ‘permitted list’** be introduced that forbids inter-state movement of plant material unless a positive finding has been made that the risk of weed invasiveness is acceptably low.
- **Establish a widely available weed hygiene training and monitoring program.**
- **Research to identify the likely impacts of climate change** in relation to potential new weed species.

### 1.2.7. **Wildlife protection**

[\$0.2M additional for four years.]

- **Reduced persecution of protected wildlife** – Increase in funding to enable a satisfactory level of monitoring, education and enforcement to reduce the incidence of persecution of protected wildlife. [\$0.2M additional for four years.]

### **1.3. Progressing Tasmania’s Marine Protected Area’s Strategy, Tasmanian Planning Commission, Department of Justice**

[\$2M additional (\$0.5M additional per year for four years)]

- Implementation of the Marine Protected Areas Strategy by providing resources to complete an MPA inquiry covering all remaining Tasmanian marine bioregions.

## **2. Prioritisation of Recommendations**

In section 4 of our submission, we have made three sets of recommendations regarding different agencies of the State Government:

- 4.1: Parks and Wildlife Service Division, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE).
- 4.2: Resource Management and Conservation Division, Biosecurity and Product Security Division, Water and Marine Resources Division and Policy and Projects Group of DPIPWE.
- 4.3: Tasmanian Planning Commission, Department of Justice.

Within each of these three sections the specific recommendations are listed in priority order but the sections are not prioritised.

## **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.

Given its limited level of resources, the TCT operates mainly in response to the initiatives of others, dealing with issues as and when they arise – such as myriad applications for planning approvals and development of management plans for parks and reserves. The

staff are constantly being asked for advice and information by community groups and individuals on these and many other issues. A significant part of the workload involves representing conservation interests on a large number of committees established by various government agencies and, to a lesser extent, councils, NRM Groups and community groups.

Over many years the TCT has administered the finances and project officers for numerous short-term but strategically important on-ground projects with some recent examples being the Community Action for Derwent Penguins project funded by the Envirofund project, the Swift Parrot Nest Identification Project funded by the Threatened Species Network Grants and the Derwent Community Wetlands Project funded by the Envirofund. Some of these projects are TCT initiatives but we also provide administrative support for other groups' projects.

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

- Protection of biodiversity through improved management of native vegetation, ending or mitigating sustainable 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.

## **4. General Issues**

### **4.1. Parks and Wildlife Service Division**

#### **Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment**

**[\$28.05 million additional expenditure in year one, \$23.65 million additional per year for three years – includes \$1M transfer from other DPIPWE Divisions.]**

The TCT's recommendations in relation to the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) are essentially the same as put forward in last year's submission and our in-person presentation to the Budget Sub-Committee Roundtable. Attachments 1-3 describe in detail the TCT's concerns regarding the PWS, our vision and strategy for its future and budget implications of these. In these documents we recommend three critical changes to the PWS:

- **4.1.1. A significant increase in budget allocation from the State Government:** Attachment 1: ‘TCT submission – 2009-2010 State Budget Community Consultation’, outlines general arguments for additional funding, priorities for these funds (including some innovative ideas) and an estimate of the scale of budget increase required. Attachment 2: An article from the TCT newsletter ‘Its time to stop starving the Parks and Wildlife Service’, based on our in-person presentation to last years State Budget Roundtable, outlines in greater detail the dire state of the PWS budget relevant to its responsibilities and provides a comparison with Parks Victoria.
- **4.1.2. Creation of a Parks and Wildlife Authority:** Attachment 3: TCT letter to Minister Michelle O’Byrne ‘Justification for a Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service Authority’, provides a detailed justification for this change.
- **4.1.3. Professionalisation of staff:** Attachment 1 and Attachment 3 explain the need for greater professionalism in the PWS staff. Attachment 3 explains why professionalisation is a requirement or precondition for creation of a Parks and Wildlife Authority. In simple terms, greater independence that comes with being a public authority demands higher standards of qualifications, skills and training and better oversight of activities and staff performance to ensure the best possible scientifically based management methods and outcomes are achieved.

To account for increasing costs and incremental increase in management demands, we propose an across the board 10% increase in the additional budget requested last year.

#### **Rationalising built assets, services and reserves**

The TCT has also recently 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. 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 such as increased park entry fees, these will not deliver in the short to medium term the large and on-going increase in resources the PWS requires. Because we have not had an opportunity to discuss these issues with the Minister for PWS, we have not provided details of our suggestions in this submission. We intend to meet with the Minister very soon and depending on the outcome of these discussions we may provide additional information regarding rationalising built assets, services and reserves.

**4.2. Resource Management and Conservation Division, Biosecurity and Product Security Division, Water and Marine Resources Division and Policy and Projects Group  
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment  
[\$11.9M additional in year one, \$10.5M million per year additional for three years]**

It is a high priority to expand DPIPWE's capacity in the areas of threatened species management, conservation covenants, weed and feral animal management, control of browsing animals and sustainable irrigation development. DPIPWE is currently making good progress in most of these areas but we believe there is an urgent need for additional resources for specific existing programs and for some new initiatives. Directing additional funds into these areas will further help to fulfil DPIPWE's prime role of providing professional services to the rural community.

While we are proposing considerable additional budget allocation to DPIPWE, we have directed it carefully, into areas we believe will facilitate sustainable development, reduce the costs involved in running agricultural and fishing industries and provide new or expanded income sources for rural land owners.

Most of our recommendations relate to taking early and preventative action, especially in regard to invasive species and browsing animals, which will save agricultural industries, the broader community and State Government much higher management costs in the future, as well as having environmental benefits. We also propose new or expanded programs to conserve threatened species habitats and other areas with high biodiversity value on private land, which will provide income for rural communities while reducing conflicts, legal actions and uncertainty.

Additional staff will need to be employed within the Threatened Species Section to run the 'Project Prioritisation Protocol', however we believe this approach has proven in New Zealand to greatly increase cost effectiveness of threatened species programs and will, in all likelihood, save DPIPWE and other state agencies significantly in the long-term. The proposal to expand threatened species recovery plan development and implementation will deliver more cost efficient threatened species conservation by using a comprehensive and integrated whole-of-government planning process. The 'web based threatened species advise tool' would ensure quicker and more accurate development assessments, resulting in better outcomes for threatened species and fewer delays and less uncertainty for business and the community. Funding for a DPIPWE based 'threatened species community support officer' will build the capacity of community groups and land owners to manage threatened species and over the long-term will make these people less reliant on departmental advise and assistance.

Our proposals in relation irrigation development and marine protected areas are designed to facilitate sustainable development of natural resources while ensuring protection of key biodiversity values.

**4.2.1. Private Land Conservation Program**  
**Resource Management and Conservation Division**  
 [\$1.0M additional per year for four years]

The TCT acknowledges that much of Tasmania's biodiversity can only be conserved on private land and private landowners perform a vital function in conserving biodiversity and this has both public and private benefits.

DPIPWE's Private Land Conservation Program (PLCP) aims to contribute to Tasmania and Australia's Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) Reserve System by promoting and facilitating voluntary, but potentially binding, Conservation Covenants between the Tasmanian Government and landowners to protect important natural values on their properties. Natural values of interest include under-reserved vegetation communities, freshwater values, threatened species and geoconservation areas.

The PLCP has a small monitoring and stewardship team actively involved in providing a range of post-covenanting services to landowners. The program's two stewardship officers make initial contact with new covenant owners, assist with developing and reviewing management plans and provide general management advice to landowners. The program also has two biological monitoring officers who conduct a range of biological monitoring activities in private reserves designed to measure change over time, to refine management strategies.

In the past Australian Government funding has been crucial to the delivery of conservation covenants, through provision of additional staff in DPIPWE and partner organisations and, most importantly, to provide financial incentives to land owners to enter covenants. Currently the PLCP operates on a low level of state government funding and works primarily in collaboration with the Tasmanian Land Conservancy. Both organisations currently have very limited funding for provision of incentives or for land purchase.

Inconsistency in program delivery and availability of funding for incentives is a significant limiting factor in attempting to achieve conservation outcomes on private land and leads to many lost opportunities for conservation and land owner frustration. Without incentive programs, some land owners who have been prevented from developing their land, e.g. through Forest Practices Authority refusing applications for logging or clearing operations to protect threatened species habitat, may have little option but to attempt legal proceedings to obtain compensation from the State Government. The TCT understands that several very large claims are likely to be made by private land owners in the coming months and many more are expected. The State Government is unlikely to have the required funding to compensate the land owners fully and they will probably be given approval to log threatened species habitat unless further legal actions are taken against

them. Clearly a better outcome for land owners and threatened species would be to negotiate an incentive payment that leads to protection of the habitat and delivers the land owner a fair return without resort to legal action, which can be risky, expensive and time consuming.

- The TCT proposes the State Government fund DPIPW to establish a **Conservation Covenant Fund**, which provides incentives to private land owners to voluntarily enter into perpetual Conservation Covenants or for purchase, covenant and re-sale of properties – to conserve threatened species habitats and other areas of high conservation value. The State Government would provide base level funding each year but funds would also be sourced from off-set payments made as conditions in development approvals by councils and state and Australian Government agencies. A proportion of the funds would be set aside for the PLCP to assist with development of management plans, provide on-going advice and carry out monitoring. DPIPW should investigate the option of establishing the fund under a similar model to the Victorian Trust for Nature. [\$1.0M additional per year for four years]

#### **4.2.2. Sustainable irrigation development Water and Marine Resources Division**

[\$0.6M additional for first year and \$0.5M for three years there after]

The TCT's key concerns regarding water management have been the environmental impacts from the proposed Drought-proofing Tasmania projects, ensuring statutory Water Management Plans are developed in all priority catchments (starting with those where major irrigation projects are proposed) and re-instating normal assessment and approval processes in relation to dams and other water development projects.

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 agricultural sector, including helping them adapt to climate change, and are good value for money for taxpayers.

We recommend the Tasmanian Government establish a broadly based 'Publicly Funded Irrigation Development Consultative Committee' empowered to review of the Drought-proofing Tasmania Program and establish a state-wide irrigation strategy to determine the priority irrigation projects which are to receive State and/or Australian Government funding. The strategy would ensure that projects 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 require that Water Management Plans are in place prior to approvals being sought. We also recommend the Tasmanian Government 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 reversing changes made in 2007 to the Threatened Species Protection Act and Forest Practices Regulations in relation to the dam approvals process.

Additional resources are needed for the:

- **4.2.2.1. Development of Water Management Plans** for all catchments and regions that are subject to Drought-proofing Tasmania irrigation projects and to speed-up those already in development to allow them to be finalised prior to applications being made for major irrigation projects. [\$0.3M additional per year for four years]
- **4.2.2.2. Biodiversity assessments** (in addition to assessments done through the water management planning process) prior to finalising irrigation priorities under the irrigation strategy and for on-going research of the likely impacts of climate change on water resources and aquatic ecosystems and species. [\$0.1M additional per year for four years]
- **4.2.2.3. Establish a ‘Publicly Funded Irrigation Development Consultative Committee’ to review the Drought-proofing Tasmania Program, develop a state-wide strategy for irrigation projects** which are funded substantially by State and/or Australian Government funding and provide on-going over-sight of the strategy implementation [\$0.2M additional for first year and then \$0.1M per year for three years.]

#### **4.2.3. Threatened Species Management Resource Management and Conservation Division, (Threatened Species Section)**

[\$2.4 additional per year for four years]

##### **4.2.3.1. Threatened Species Recovery Planning and On-ground Management**

Since the introduction of the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1999*, the TCT has been urging DPIPWE and its predecessors to improve and expand its development and implementation of threatened species recovery plans with an emphasis on delivery of effective on-ground management. Over recent years there has been a noticeable decline in DPIPWE’s role in threatened species recovery planning and on-ground management. It now seems that DPIPWE has totally abandoned threatened species management and instead confines its role to collection, storage and distribution of information (we acknowledge this is a crucial role for DPIPWE). The *DPIW Annual Report 2009* makes no mention of threatened species recovery plan implementation or other on-ground management actions, except for the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program (which is resourced entirely through Australian Government funding).

- The TCT recommends a unit be established within the Threatened Species Section of DPIPWE, reporting directly to the Secretary, that is responsible for conducting the whole-of-government inter-agency negotiations and discussions with stakeholders necessary not only to establish and coordinate the recovery teams to develop recovery plans for listed species (and groups of species) but also to actually implement those tasks agreed upon by the relevant stakeholders

in adopting such plans [\$2M additional per year for four years (to cover costs not only of introducing new administrative procedures but also supporting agencies, landholders and others in actually taking action to implement recovery plans)].

Before dramatically expanding the Division's threatened species planning function, it would be vital to ensure it does not distract from the more urgent on-ground work needed to manage species and populations at high risk of extinction. We believe that the 'Project Prioritisation Protocol' could also be utilised to prioritise the planning requirements for threatened species as well as on-ground management.

#### **4.2.3.2. Threatened Species Project Prioritisation Protocol**

The TCT strongly supports the Threatened Species Section's current trial of the New Zealand Department of Conservation's 'Project Prioritisation Protocol' and believes it has the potential to be the prime method for prioritising and planning the Division's threatened species work (including prioritising recovery planning and recovery plan implementation). The new unit we proposed under the previous section, to develop and implement threatened species recovery plans, should take responsibility for the 'Project Prioritisation Protocol'. We have urged the government to support this trial and fund the use of this prioritisation system on the long-term.

- DPIPWE's Threatened Species Section be empowered to establish the 'Project Prioritisation Protocol' as the prime method for prioritising and planning the Division's threatened species work to ensure greater delivery of priority actions and increased cost efficiency. [Cost included in the previous section.]

#### **4.2.3.3. Completion of listing statements and 'web based threatened species advisory tool'**

We understand the Threatened Species Section applied unsuccessfully to the Caring For Our Country Program for funding to develop a web based advise system based on the Forest Practices Authority's Forest Practices Advisor.

- The TCT agrees the Forest Practices Authority's approach is a very good model and recommends provision of additional funding to the Threatened Species Section over several years to develop a 'web based threatened species advisory tool' that is up-to-date, scientifically accurate and accessible to and usable by a the wide range of people from government, local government, industry and community. [\$0.2M additional per year for four years.]

#### **4.2.3.4. Assisting local government**

Since the introduction of the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1999* the TCT has advocated the need for additional resources to ensure local government had the appropriate information and technical assistance required for them to integrate threatened species protection into their planing functions. This would ensure quicker and more accurate development assessments, resulting in better outcomes for threatened species and fewer delays and less uncertainty for business and the community. The primary way

of addressing this would be through the web based threatened species advisory tool discussed above. [Cost included in the previous section.]

#### **4.2.3.5. Expanded capacity to support land owners and community groups to protect and manage threatened species**

Additional resources are required to allow the Threatened Species Section to provide management advice and assistance to private land owners and community groups, to empower them to protect threatened species on their land.

- A dedicated ‘threatened species community support officer’ should be funded to provide advice and support for community groups and land owners to conserve threatened species, particularly the Threatened Plant Action Group and Understorey Network. [\$0.2m additional per year for four years.]

#### **4.2.4. Browsing animal control and continuation of the ‘Alternatives to 1080 Program’ Resource Management and Conservation Division (Wildlife Management Branch)**

[\$1M additional per year for four years.]

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 must continue the Alternatives to 1080 Program to build on these successes but it must be re-funded solely to develop non-lethal control measures.

The TCT recommends the continuation of the Alternatives to 1080 Program and we believe this can be done with minimal additional costs if it were integrated into the complimentary Property Based Wildlife Management Plan Program run collaboratively by DPIPWE, the regional NRM groups and Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association.

We ask the State Government to:

- **Take action to immediately end the use of 1080 poison** as a control for native species in Tasmania and ensure it is not replaced by any other poison.
- **Commit the State Government to non-lethal alternatives** where possible and that lethal controls such as coordinated culling, shooting and trapping be used only as a last resort.

- **Commit to providing funding to continue the ‘Alternative to 1080 Program’** that focuses on providing on-going research and delivery of non-lethal options (particularly for plantation and extensive grazing operations) and a roll out of a low-cost fencing program for commercial farmers and private land owners [\$1M additional per year].

#### **4.2.5. Invasive species management**

[ \$3.9M additional in year one, \$3.4M per year additional for three years]

##### **4.2.5.1. Implementation of the Proposed Cat Management Legislation and Strategy Policy and Projects Group and RSPCA**

[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]

In anticipation of the passage of the State Government’s Cat Management Bill through the Parliament, significant additional resources are required for its implementation. As previously recommended to Minister Llewellyn, we believe that most of the key cat control functions that are recommended should be fulfilled by the RSPCA and therefore most resources need to be directed to them.

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 homes 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 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 Policy and Projects Group of DPIPWE to:

- Establish and resource a committee of stakeholders to oversee 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 Resource Management and Conservation Division of DPIPWE and NGOs to:

- Expand its scientific expertise to monitor cat numbers and impacts state-wide including providing 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.]

**4.2.5.2. General ‘feral animal management program’  
Resource Management and Conservation Division (Wildlife Management Branch)**

[\$1M additional per year for four years]

Feral animal management in Tasmania has always been somewhat ad hoc, normally targeting individual species at specific locations (usually off-shore islands) and often dependent on Australian Government funding that fails to enable completion of the projects. Very little effort has been made to engage the community and private land owners to assist actively in management of feral animal species.

The TCT proposes the State Government establish a broad ‘feral animal control and eradication program’ targeting a range of the feral animal species featured in the publication *Feral Animals of Tasmania* (see Attachment 4). This is 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 program should follow the prioritisation process used in *Feral Animals of Tasmania*, with the highest priority being to prevent new feral species establishing or eradicating those that have recently been introduced and are not widely distributed. The program should also be planned in consultation with the community and where possible the community should be empowered to play an active role in monitoring, reporting and controlling feral animal species. 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.

- The TCT proposes the establishment of a new unit within DPIPW with responsibility for establishing and running a broad feral animal control and eradication program. [\$1M additional per year for four years]

**4.2.5.3. Fox eradication  
Resource Management and Conservation Division (Wildlife Management Branch)**

[\$1.0M additional per year for four years]

The TCT is a strong supporter of the State Government’s Fox Eradication Program (FEP) and believes that the program must have an immediate increase in funding to ensure successful eradication of foxes from Tasmania. The FEP has endorsed most of the recommendations of the independent review by the New Zealand company Landcare Research and is in the process of developing plans to implement these new strategies. The TCT has received thorough briefings on these proposed new strategies. We are firmly of the view these new strategies have the potential to eradicate foxes but

inadequate resourcing is slowing down their implementation and may reduce the thoroughness of the actions taken to eradicate foxes.

- We ask the State Government to increase the funding for the Fox Eradication Program to maximise the probability of successful eradication of foxes from Tasmania. [\$1M additional per year for four years].

#### **4.2.5.4. WHA feral animal management**

##### **Resource Management and Conservation Division (Wildlife Management Branch)**

[\$0.2M additional per year for four years]

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

- We ask the Tasmanian Government to support the completion of the WHA Invasive Species Strategy as a matter of urgency and to provide resources toward its implementation. [\$0.2M additional per year for four years]

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

##### **Biosecurity and Product Integrity Division and Resource Management and Conservation Division (Weed Management Section)**

[\$2.0M additional per year for four years]

The TCT proposes additional resources be provided to improve the State's capacity for preventative action in relation to weeds. This will compliment the generous Australian Government funding that the State already accesses but is subject to funding gaps as programs and governments change at the national level.

Additional resources are needed to improve border security strategies and should include:

- **4.2.6.1. Expanded capacity for rapid response actions** to eliminate new introductions into Tasmania. [\$0.5M additional per year for four years]
- **4.2.6.2. Expanded monitoring and surveillance programs** to increase the chance of early detection of new introductions into Tasmania. [\$0.5M additional per year for four years]
- **4.2.6.3. A plants 'permitted list'** be introduced that forbids inter-state movement of plant material unless a positive finding has been made that the risk of weed invasiveness is acceptably low. [\$0.5M additional per year for four years]
- **4.2.6.4. Establish a widely available weed hygiene training and monitoring program** in high risk areas and work places. [\$0.3M additional per year for four years]
- **4.2.6.5. Research to identify the likely impacts of climate change** in relation to potential new species that could be transmitted and established in Tasmania (through natural or human processes). [\$0.2M additional per year for four years]

**4.2.7. Reducing persecution of protected wildlife  
Resource Management and Conservation Division (Wildlife Management  
Branch)**

[\$0.2M additional for four years]

The TCT wants DPIPW to provide a higher level of monitoring, education and enforcement to reduce the incidence of persecution of wholly protected wildlife and partly protected wildlife taken without proper authority.

- We ask the Tasmanian Government to support an increase in funding for the Wildlife Management Branch to enable a satisfactory level of monitoring, education and enforcement to reduce the incidence of persecution of protected wildlife. [\$0.2M additional for four years]

**4.3. Establishment of a comprehensive marine protected  
area system**

**Tasmanian Planning Commission, Dept of Justice**

[\$0.5M additional per year for four years]

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 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 [\$0.5M additional per year for four years].

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1: 'TCT submission – 2009-2010 State Budget Community Consultation', previously sent to Department of Treasury and Finance and copied to Minister Michelle O'Byrne.
- Attachment 2: An article from the TCT newsletter 'Its time to stop starving the Parks and Wildlife Service', based on our in-person presentation to the Budget Sub-committee of the State Cabinet on 25 November 2008 and also copied to Minister Michelle O'Byrne.
- Attachment 3: TCT letter to Minister Michelle O'Byrne 'Justification for a Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service Authority'.
- Attachment 4: 'Feral Animals of Tasmania'.