



Good Neighbour Charter

Foreword

I am pleased to present the Department's first Good Neighbour Charter.

This Charter has been developed in partnership between the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE), the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, the Tasmanian Fire Service, the Local Government Association of Tasmania and the Department of State Growth.

This document will guide future relations between DPIPWE and its neighbours, particularly in the agricultural sector. The Good Neighbour Charter encompasses:

- Planning issues: DPIPWE will continue to involve the community in the development of management plans and strategies to ensure that the interests and rights of the community are considered, and that DPIPWE plans are co-ordinated as far as possible with planning and management activities on other lands.
- Fire management: DPIPWE will co-operate with neighbours in the management of fire and fire risk to protect life, community assets, property, and the natural and cultural value of land.
- Invasive species: Through cooperative effort with neighbours, DPIPWE will seek to minimise presence and movement of introduced pest animals and weed species between properties.
- Management of native and domestic animals: DPIPWE will co-operate with landholders about options for managing native species and domestic animals.
- Stock management: DPIPWE will make reasonable efforts to identify the owners of stock that stray onto DPIPWE owned land.
- Habitat: DPIPWE will encourage neighbours to maintain or restore natural vegetation to provide additional habitat and wildlife corridors.
- Access: DPIPWE will develop agreed understandings with neighbours about access to each other's properties.
- Cultural values: DPIPWE will work cooperatively with neighbouring landholders to identify appropriate management processes for the protection of Aboriginal and European heritage.

The Charter is aimed at ensuring the framework is in place for constructive and co-operative dialogue between DPIPWE and its many adjacent landholders. This approach will lead to better outcomes in land management and assist resolution of differences if they arise.

The Charter does not intend to anticipate every situation that may arise, but rather establish the basis of DPIPWE's land management approach, which is about working together.



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With communication the key to the success of this Charter, DPIPWE's AgriGrowth Tasmania Division has also been identified as a central contact point for landholders if they wish to discuss land management issues with DPIPWE. AgriGrowth Tasmania can be contacted on (03) 6777 2233.



John Whittington
Secretary
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

Good Neighbour Charter

This Charter outlines the position of the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) in regard to its relationships with neighbouring landholders, particularly in relation to a variety of cross-boundary management issues.

BACKGROUND

DPIPWE is the primary land management agency in Tasmania, largely through the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS). This land includes national parks, World Heritage Areas, conservation areas, nature and state reserves. DPIPWE also manages Crown land, including land described as Future Potential Production Forest Land. This Charter refers to these collectively as “DPIPWE managed areas”.

DPIPWE managed areas are administered in accordance with principles set down in legislation. These principles provide for conservation and protection of natural and cultural values and in many cases also allow for a variety of uses, including recreation, grazing and other commercial activities.

The importance of communication and co-operation has been widely recognised in legislation and policies that guide park management. For example, the *Nature Conservation Act 2002 (NCA)* and the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* provide legislated requirements for the management of the State’s protected areas. A range of other legislation and strategic documents apply to associated cross-tenure land management matters, such as the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*, *Weed Management Act 1999*, *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*, *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* and *Crown Lands Act 1976*.

Working with community partners is explicitly recognised as one of the key dimensions of park management. Sustaining landscape values (environmental, economic and social) is reliant on maximising integration of land planning and management practices across the landscape. Ongoing involvement and co-operation with local communities and neighbours is fundamental.

Land managed by DPIPWE has a wide variety of neighbours, including rural landholders and primary producers, tourism resorts and guesthouses, industrial and commercial businesses, many different types of residential communities and various other



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government lands. The number of neighbours adjoining DPIPWE managed areas can range from one or two to many hundreds.

In recent years, some DPIPWE managed areas have become “islands” of remnant vegetation, with crops, houses or cleared grazing land adjacent to the boundary. This greatly increases the difficulty of managing natural systems and maintaining biodiversity.

The management of both DPIPWE managed areas and adjoining lands has the potential to cause positive and negative impacts across boundaries. Plants, animals, diseases and pathogens, fire, air and water move across and affect the landscape without regard for tenure boundaries and fence lines. Cultural heritage sites will in many cases have been created in accordance with redundant or different boundaries.

DPIPWE managers and neighbours must communicate and co-operate to ensure that positive impacts (such as the flow of clean water) are maximised, negative impacts are minimised, and that all efforts are made to protect heritage sites from damage.

The objectives of this Charter are to:

- promote co-operation and exchange of information between landholders and DPIPWE;
- establish guidelines for positive relationships between DPIPWE, neighbours and local communities, based on mutual respect, understanding and recognition of the rights and responsibilities of all landholders, and
- clearly outline the approach of DPIPWE to cross-boundary issues of shared concern, including; fire, wildlife, invasive species, threatened species, habitat management, and natural and cultural values.

The success of this Charter depends on the development and maintenance of good relationships between DPIPWE staff, neighbours and communities at a local level. In their dealings with neighbours, DPIPWE staff will abide by the guidelines in this Charter to the greatest possible extent, within the parameters of their statutory management obligations and practical constraints.

DEFINITIONS

DPIPWE managed areas means all lands managed by the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS), including national parks and a range of other public reserves managed under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*, *Nature Conservation Act 2002* and *Crown Lands Act 1976*, and Crown land, including land described as Future Potential Production Forest Land.

Local community is a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality.

Neighbour includes any person, corporation or association, as well as local, State and Commonwealth agencies that own, are responsible for, or live on land or waters adjacent to DPIPWE managed areas. Neighbours are not limited to the people who share common boundaries, if management issues require a wider participation.

Pest animals and Pest plants are non-native (introduced) species that are, or have the potential to become, established through escape from captivity, deliberate or accidental release and accidental or illegal importation.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- All landholders can benefit from maintaining a productive and sustainable environment. Greater understanding, information sharing and co-operation can help achieve this goal.
- Establishing and maintaining open, positive and respectful relationships with neighbours and local communities is a priority for DPIPWE staff.
- Land management practices are more effective if they are developed in consultation with neighbours and local communities, made available to neighbours and implemented co-operatively across the landscape.
- Issues and problems are generally best addressed at the local level, by local people working together.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Good relationships are the cornerstone of responsible and co-operative management. Development of these relationships requires trust, time and consistency from all parties and liaison with neighbours and local communities is recognised as an important component of DPIPWE staff duties. DPIPWE staff will take the initiative to establish and maintain open and positive relationships with neighbours and local communities, and will support the involvement of staff in local community initiatives, groups and networks.

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY INTERESTS

DPIPWE acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal people's continuing connection to the land. Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania within DPIPWE has established procedures to

facilitate Aboriginal community engagement and consultation. DPIPWE staff will work cooperatively with its neighbours to implement Aboriginal community engagement and consultation procedures to protect cultural sites and values that exist across boundaries.

INTEGRATED PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS

DPIPWE supports a whole of landscape approach to planning and management. DPIPWE will continue to involve the community in the development of management plans and strategies for DPIPWE managed areas, to ensure that the interests and rights of the community are considered, and that DPIPWE plans are co-ordinated as far as possible with planning and management activities on other lands.

Planning schemes dictate appropriate development in certain zones. In order to ensure that development is sensitive to adjacent land, including DPIPWE managed land, DPIPWE will undertake to have input into the planning scheme development process.

Local governments and developers of land adjacent to DPIPWE managed areas are in turn urged to consider DPIPWE interests in their planning, and to be mindful of potential interactions between new residents, natural systems and native wildlife.

Impacts of domestic animals on native wildlife and the potential for introduction of invasive species (e.g. invasive house plants, feral cats and exotic bird species) is also of concern in these situations. DPIPWE, in partnership with other levels of government, should continue to educate the community in relation to these risks.

To help promote strong linkages between DPIPWE land management activities and “whole of landscape” management, DPIPWE staff will participate in joint management programs and initiatives, such as Landcare, regional NRM activities and catchment management planning exercises, where possible.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

DPIPWE will co-operate with neighbours in the management of fire and fire risk across boundaries to protect life, community assets, other property and the natural and cultural values of both DPIPWE managed areas and adjacent lands. This will include co-ordination, co-operation and active participation with the Tasmania Fire Service and other land managers in matters such as the location, construction and maintenance of fire control lines, notification of intention to burn, access to property, training in fire management, undertaking fuel reduction burns, developing wildfire contingency plans and wildfire responses.



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DPIPWE is a key agency in the Tasmanian Government's Fuel Reduction Program, a cross-agency and cross-land tenure program implemented by the Fuel Reduction Unit housed in the Tasmania Fire Service. The key objective of the Fuel Reduction Program is to reduce the bushfire risk to Tasmanian communities, in particular:

- To target fuel reduction on areas that have the maximum risk reduction benefit to Tasmanian communities.
- To facilitate local level involvement in identifying target areas for fuel reduction.
- To build capacity in fuel reduction in both the public and private sectors.
- To improve public understanding of matters relating to fuel reduction.

In both the general operational business of DPIPWE and through the Fuel Reduction Program, DPIPWE staff will consult with neighbours before undertaking fire management in the area, and gain landowner permission to conduct strategic fuel reduction activities on privately owned land.

Neighbours of DPIPWE managed areas are urged to consult with DPIPWE staff before undertaking fuel reduction activities on land adjacent to DPIPWE managed land.

Neighbours are encouraged to consult with DPIPWE staff if considering building or other works that may alter the options for fire management in the area.

DPIPWE affords the protection of life and property the highest priority in all its fire management activities, including pre-emptive fuel reduction burning and wildfire suppression activities, such as the construction and maintenance of fire control lines. The protection of biodiversity and other natural and cultural values are also considered by DPIPWE in managing fire on the estate and across all land tenures where DPIPWE is involved in fuel reduction treatments.

DPIPWE is committed to safe, efficient and cost effective management and suppression of fires in Tasmania, through the Inter-Agency Fire Management Protocol with the Tasmanian Fire Service and Forestry Tasmania. DPIPWE is also committed to post-fire rehabilitation.

Managing fire risk is a shared responsibility, and neighbours also need to take responsibility for keeping dwellings and other infrastructure near DPIPWE managed areas in a condition that minimises fire risk.

MANAGING INVASIVE SPECIES

Pest plants and animals potentially impact on the productive capacity of rural lands and the ecological integrity of reserves. DPIPWWE acknowledges its responsibility for controlling introduced pest species on DPIPWWE managed areas. In conducting or participating in pest control activities, DPIPWWE will also take account of biodiversity protection and sustainability objectives. Through cooperative effort with neighbours DPIPWWE will seek to minimise presence and movement of introduced pest animals and weed species between properties. Cooperative and coordinated efforts will in many cases produce a better result for both parties.

Neighbours have a responsibility to confine domestic stock and manage pest species on their land, utilising various permitted control methods.

DPIPWWE has a state-wide pest management plan and will also develop local pest management plans for particular areas or pest species. DPIPWWE staff will contribute to the development and review of local government pest management plans. This includes providing support in the identification of environmentally sensitive areas and fostering linkages between regional pest management planning and local government pest management plans.

DPIPWWE and surrounding landholders will seek to co-operate in introduced pest animal and weed control programs, in conjunction with other government departments and local governments. DPIPWWE will give priority to co-operating with neighbours in the prevention and/or eradication of new outbreaks of introduced pest animal and weed species.

Where possible, DPIPWWE will consider granting approval to a neighbour to undertake on DPIPWWE managed land any pest control method permissible by law, if that method is an essential element of an introduced pest management program for the neighbouring property.

DPIPWWE will notify neighbours prior to undertaking any herbicide or pesticide program along an area boundary and will encourage neighbours to do likewise.

DPIPWWE will proactively manage its operations to minimise weed seed spread, under procedures outlined in the DPIPWWE Weed Management and Hygiene Guidelines and Washdown Guidelines and comply with any related protocols that exist across relevant government agencies.



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To prevent garden plants becoming pests, neighbours are urged to be aware of plants that have the potential for becoming environmental weeds and to avoid planting these species in gardens where seeds or other propagules could be spread into natural areas.

MANAGING NATIVE ANIMALS

The presence of improved pasture and crops adjacent to reserved land can result in unnaturally high densities of some species of native wildlife that can have an adverse impact both on conservation values on the reserved land and production values on neighbouring land.

Where native animals are causing demonstrable impact on vegetation, stock, fences, crops or pastures, DPIPWE staff will co-operate with relevant landholders regarding available management options, including the option of issuing Crop Protection Permits and the development of Game Management Plans.

STOCK MANAGEMENT AND FENCING

Stock grazing may occur on certain classes of land (in some classes of public reserves), under a lease or other authority. However, the presence of stray and unmanaged stock can cause serious impacts on DPIPWE managed areas, especially in cases where grazing is not compatible with the tenure's primary purpose of management (for example, national parks).

When stock stray onto DPIPWE managed areas, DPIPWE staff will make reasonable efforts to determine the owner/s of the animals. Neighbours will be requested to remove their stock from the area as soon as possible. If this is not feasible, DPIPWE may arrange for removal of the stock, which may be handed over to local government pounds in some circumstances.

DPIPWE will also consider the practicality of removing stock and its obligations for managing biodiversity, conserving ecological integrity and controlling pests when making such determinations.

If ownership cannot be determined and stock is difficult to remove, and their continued presence is deemed to be detrimental to the natural and/or cultural values of the DPIPWE land, stock may be destroyed.

MANAGING DOMESTIC ANIMALS

Domestic animals, including cats and dogs, can have serious impacts on native wildlife. Neighbours are urged to prevent domestic animals from straying onto DPIPWE managed lands. When unauthorised domestic animals are found on DPIPWE managed areas, DPIPWE staff may notify local authorities to remove the animal or may seize the animal in accordance with legislative provisions.

If ownership cannot be determined and the domestic animal is difficult to control and remove, and their continued presence is deemed to be detrimental to the natural and/or cultural values of the DPIPWE land, the animal may be destroyed.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Habitat on private lands is vital for the long-term protection and maintenance of natural and cultural heritage. It also helps maintain the natural processes that underpin both production and conservation. DPIPWE staff will encourage neighbours to maintain or restore natural vegetation to provide additional habitat and wildlife corridors (for example, to link parks to areas of remnant vegetation, or protect essential habitat for threatened species).

Where private land contains areas of significant conservation value, the participation of landowners in private land conservation programs such as Land for Wildlife, conservation covenants, and private reserves will be encouraged.

CULTURAL VALUES

Tasmania has a rich heritage, with an enormous number of sites, artefacts and landscapes present across the State, pertaining both to the Aboriginal community and the history since European settlement. Landholders should take all reasonable and practical steps to prevent harm to areas of historical cultural heritage on their property, and in the case of Aboriginal heritage sites, are legally obliged to protect them from disturbance and damage. Where these sites exist across boundaries and may be affected by activities on neighbouring lands, DPIPWE will work cooperatively with neighbouring landholders and (if the site relates to Aboriginal heritage) implement consultation procedures established by Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania to identify appropriate management processes.

ACCESS

DPIPWE staff seeking access to a neighbouring property will request permission from the relevant landholder prior to accessing the property, or develop an agreed understanding of access requirements. Neighbours who require access to DPIPWE managed lands, other than the usual public access, should discuss their requirements with the relevant DPIPWE staff.

APPROVED BY:



John Whittington
Secretary
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

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Disclaimer

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