



THE LAUNCESTON WALKING CLUB INC.

“See Tasmania First”

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LAUNCESTON WALKING CLUB

SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT TWWHA TOURISM MASTER PLAN 2020

The Launceston Walking Club (LWC) was established in 1946 and is an affiliated Club of the peak organization, Bushwalking Tasmania (BWT).

Most of the issues raised in the DTTMP could have been addressed by the TWWHA Management Plan 2016 (2016 Plan).

A TWWHA Management Plan, not necessarily the 2016 one, would have been quite capable of guiding future public tourism development in the TWWHA.

In our opinion, the premise of a DTTMP is to supplement private commercial tourism ventures in the TWWHA. We do not support private commercial development in the TWWHA, but we do support private commercial tourism development in peripheral areas outside the TWWHA provided it does not impinge on TWWHA values.

The LWC made a submission to the Draft TWWHA Management Plan 2014 (2014 Draft Plan) which made our position quite clear.

We reiterate our policy hereunder :

1. The LWC objects to any new private commercial accommodation for the exclusive use of clients, including private ‘wilderness lodges’ or any other private permanent structures including permanent standing camps or private exclusive use walker huts on the South Coast Track , Overland Track, Frenchmans Cap, Walls of Jerusalem, nor any other track or area in the TWWHA.

Exceptions are maintenance, upgrade and replacement for existing private commercial walkers’ huts on the Overland Track.

We stated that any major public PWS projects be restricted to the Visitor Services Zone. Any new PWS huts would be for public use.

2. We stated that *'current restrictions on landing aircraft be tightened'*

The reverse happened. The final 2016 Plan provided for up to five landing sites in the Self Reliant Zone of the TWWHA.

We object to any tourist access by helicopter anywhere in the TWWHA, except for the transport of supplies and building material for the existing private commercial huts.

CREDIBILITY OF THE DTTMP

The DTTMP has been pre-empted by the EOI process, with developers scrambling to get their foot in the door of the TWWHA.

Indeed one of them has been approved, the controversial Lake Malbena permanent fishing 'camp' with attendant helicopter pad. This project has no social license and has been the subject of intense debate and protest. It is still in the process of litigation by conservation organisations.

Ironically the location for the 'standing camp' is on Halls Island in the middle of Lake Malbena, once frequently occupied and named by bushwalking pioneer Reginald Hall, who incidentally was an Honorary Member of the LWC and one time Patron of the LWC, and who in the 1930's named the Walls of Jerusalem and most of the associated mountains, lakes and tarns in the area.

USE OF PERIPHERAL AREAS

We consider that perhaps there is a need for a tourism master plan for areas adjacent to and in the vicinity of the TWWHA, including Conservation Areas, Crown and private land and approaches to the TWWHA including Gateway Towns.

There is /will be applications from private developers for projects adjacent to the TWWHA especially the northern entrance to Cradle Mt-L. St Clair NP. There is already a recent application for a commercial development called the Discovery Holiday Park Cradle Mountain Expansion near the entrance to the TWWHA. We understand that it is in a Conservation Area.

There needs to be more use made of peripheral areas adjoining TWWHA, ie, tracks on private land where the owners could have walks, or investors could buy private land to have their walks which would take pressure off popular walks in NP's. New Zealand has Banks Peninsula and Kaikoura Coast Track and others which are paid walks on private land supported by local landholders.

A good example in NSW is the Green Gully Trail adjoining the Oxley Wild Rivers NP. This is a selfguided walk on a booked trail. At \$150pp for a 6 day walk with 5 rustic but good huts with beds, mattresses and all cooking gear. NSW, QLD and NT Parks have a good selection of tracks, good relatively cheap campsites at trailheads (free in NT, \$4 a night in QLD, a little more in northern NSW).

JOURNEY BASED EXPERIENCE AND ACTIVITY NODES Section 3.7

There are many other alternatives to Cradle Mt for visitors, to take pressure off the over promoted and over-utilised Cradle Mt. For example the journey along the Gordon River Road to Strathgordon. The existing infrastructure is underutilised and short walking tracks to peaks along the road are neglected. The two 'Great Short Walks' from the road are degraded. Sections of the Mt Sprent track is badly eroded.

There is a need to provide short easy and medium grade walks especially to viewpoints to optimise the views of the Frankland and Western Arthur Ranges. There are opportunities to incorporate the World Heritage tall eucalypt forests of the Styx Valley, where there are short walking tracks to examples of the tallest hardwood trees in the world.

Rather than spend large amounts of money on new projects to attract the wealthy helicopter set, we would like to see use of existing infrastructure along the Gordon Road, with upgraded facilities and short walk options. **AND PROMOTE THIS JOURNEY.**

Local businesses and accommodation at Maydena and the Pedder Wilderness Lodge at Strathgordon would benefit from the increased visitation.

There should be more emphasis in the DTTMP to encourage local tourism and provision of affordable options at the access points of the TWWHA.

DEFINITION OF VISITORS

Page 4 of DTTMP defines everyone except Tasmanian Aboriginals (TA) as ‘visitors’. This includes overseas and interstate tourists and Tasmanians, apart from TA.

The DTTMP *‘accepts that bushwalkers and other recreational users have reflected on their connection being much deeper than that of a ‘visitor’.* But no action was made in the DTTMP to reflect that view.

Being classed as a visitor, lumped in with international and interstate tourists is an affront to our Club, and has great implications for our members and other Tasmanian bushwalkers.

If historical and traditional users such as Tasmanian bushwalkers are classified as generic visitors, then *will* they have their access privileges protected any more than any other visitor. Parks regulations in the future could threaten our right to roam in remote areas of the TWWHA.

Most visitors to TWWHA are not bushwalkers but at most will do the Overland Track and at least do only short walks not far from Visitor Centres and not far from the Lyell Highway or other roads traversing the TWWHA.

Many members of the LWC, go on extended off track walks up to 12 days duration in the TWWHA, traversing some of the most rugged terrain, experiencing blizzards, navigating in thick mist and in an area with one of the highest rainfall and wind speeds in Australia.

Those who experience such a place are immersed in the landscape and rely on their experience and survival skills. **These people ARE NOT VISITORS.**

Even though we do not live in the TWWHA, we are Tasmanians’ – we live here. Bushwalkers may not live in the TWWHA, but have maintained continuous use since Henry Judd first visited Lake Pedder in 1871, and more particularly since the establishment of Tasmanian Walking Clubs.

TA, like bushwalkers, also do not live in the TWWHA but they are Tasmanians' with a strong spiritual connection to not only the TWWHA, but to Tasmania and we recognize their ancestral heritage of upwards of 40,000 years.

It is unfair to treat non TA in the same category as interstate and international "visitors", even though our historic bushwalking heritage is a mere few decades.

Aboriginal cultural heritage, for example Kuta Kina Cave, was one of the criteria for World Heritage, and was a major catalyst in the success of the Gordon below Franklin campaign.

Many of our members spend many volunteer hours weeding, track upgrading, hut maintenance, eg. Melaleuca huts, etc. as part of Wildcare and BWT. From time to time LWC also carries out maintenance of the Scott- Kilvert Memorial Hut, which was built, in partnership with Riverside High School P & F Association, by LWC volunteers in 1966.

Like TA, we are not 'visitors' in the context of this DTTMP.

CULTURAL AND HERITAGE VALUES

Many recreational users consider their recreation to be traditional, and certain cultures have developed. Bushwalking had its infancy in the 19th Century and became more popular from early in the 20th Century, with the establishment of the Hobart Walking Club in 1929 and has developed into a culture.

Since its inception in 1946 the LWC has pioneered many climbing routes of many well- known peaks including Federation Peak in the late 1940's and the first ascent of Geryon South in the early 1950's, and explored walking routes and tracks in the most remote parts of the TWWHA. Much of the nomenclature of the TWWHA is credited to Tasmanian bushwalkers.

There may be options to convert some of the nomenclature to aboriginal language names, and LWC would support this.

Only by walking in remote, wild, untracked natural areas can one experience wilderness and after a few hours walking into these areas the feeling and inspiration starts to take effect.

Our Club has a strong cultural and historic heritage association with Cradle Mountain, especially since the Ewan Scott and David Kilvert tragedy in 1965, and of LWC involvement in the building of the Scott-Kilvert Memorial Hut in 1966. On the 50th Anniversary of the completion of the Hut, in 2016, LWC members and the families of Scott and Kilvert conducted a Memorial event at the Dove Lake carpark, followed by a pilgrimage to the Hut for those who were still able to do the 2-3 hour walk in.

We have a strong cultural and traditional link to the TWWHA, especially the Cradle Mt area.

DTTMP only mostly addresses TA culture, even though the definition of cultural significance (values) that the DTTMP claims to use (p88) is one of "aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations". Clearly, these are values that aren't unique to Aboriginal culture. The work and experiences of artists, historians, scientists, hut builders and recreational users etc should be recognized and emphasized.

People of Tasmanian Aboriginal descent have not had continuous connection with the land in the TWWHA. Perhaps very few TA have walked off-track, and perhaps not many even on track in the TWWHA, but we all should acknowledge that we stand on the traditional lands of TA past and present. We are sure all or most of our Members have a great respect for TA culture as we hope TA respects the culture and heritage of bushwalkers and other traditional users of TWWHA.

Other traditional users need recognition. The descendants of the 20th Century hut builders for example, Dick Reed whose descendants still walk to Junction and Meston huts and others, to show respect and remember their grandfather/ great grandfather. Many of Dick Reed's descendants live on the periphery of the TWWHA. ***Are they visitors?***

Are members of the Mountain Huts Association who restore and maintain the historic huts of the Central Plateau, 'visitors'?

STORYTELLING STRATEGY Section 5.1

The DTTMP mentions TA stories which are very important.

There is also a story to tell of the early bushwalkers and climbers, mountain cattlemen, trappers, snarers, hut builders, miners, prospectors, fishermen etc, and of the community campaigns to protect the Southwest and Western Tasmania including the failed campaign to 'Save Lake Pedder' and the successful campaign to prevent the Gordon below Franklin Dam. These are all interesting stories that need to be conveyed to tourists by informative interpretation.

There is a need for more emphasis of this part of the history of TWWHA, and the need for these and many other stories to be told, not just TA stories.

INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSERVATION STORY

Section 3.7 Journey Based Experiences – Gordon River Rd and Styx Valley, briefly mentions the role of conservationists to stop the Gordon below Franklin dam and protect the Tall Trees Reserve. There should be recognition of the long struggle to get the original World Heritage declaration in 1982 and the peripheral extensions over the next 30 years that has resulted in the TWWHA.

For the past 60 years walking clubs have been involved in trying to protect the Western Tasmanian Wilderness and buffer zones, including failed efforts to Save Lake Pedder, to stopping a limestone mine near Precipitous Bluff and to banning grazing on the Central Plateau in the 1970's. In 1976, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society (TWS) was born out of walking clubs, especially the LWC when Bob Brown and other walkers were members and some of the old survivors are still members of LWC. The ensuing 35 year community campaign spearheaded by TWS prevented large areas of the current TWWHA from being laid waste by HEC dam building, mining, and industrial scale logging and wood-chipping. The end result is the magnificent TWWHA.


It is imperative that this story be told by interpretation at relevant places in the WHA - along the Gordon River Road, the Styx Valley, Lyell Highway and at major access points. Mention should be

made of the visionaries of the Tasmanian conservation movement and government, such as Bob Brown, Doug Lowe (whose State Government submitted the original nomination for the World Heritage List) , Bob Hawke, Dick Jones, Olegus Truchanus, Peter Dombrovskis, Jessie Luckman and thousands of other people who have campaigned and lobbied to get this TWWHA. Without them, there would be no TWWHA.

AERIAL ACCESS

1. The helicopter landing access issue has been around for 25 years. Time after time the community protested and managed to defeat a number of proposals. It was clear then that there was no 'social license' for aerial access for tourists in the TWWHA. ***We believe there is still no 'social license'.***

2. Section 3.4 of the DTTMP -Melaleuca Secondary Activity Node states '*Planning for Melaleuca is to focus on improving the visitor experience rather than attracting additional visitors. Melaleuca is to be retained as a high-quality, low visitor-number experience.*'

However, Section 3.3.3 of the TWWHA Management Plan 2016 suggests that the '*Landing Area at Melaleuca may be extended to within 30 metres of Moth and Melaleuca Creeks.*' Clearly you can see that both Plans contradict one another. 

Why extend the runway at Melaleuca if, as stated, the aim of any node development there, is not to increase visitor numbers but to improve visitor experience? Extension will allow larger planes to land, excess visitors and crowding and congestion not in keeping with this remote area.

3. Section 3.8 of DTTMP – Remote Experiences pertaining to the Overland Track quotes - '*preserving the Track's wild character while maintaining the challenging walking visitor experience.*' And '*the potential to detrimentally undermine the current experience, whether directly or indirectly, needs to be a consideration in tourism.*'

The remote experience in the above quotes are threatened by the apparent lack of regulation on the frequency of commercial aircraft overflights, particularly helicopter flights over the northern part of Cradle Mt- L. St. Clair National Park . Aircraft noise is very detrimental to 'the remote experience '.

END NOTE

The Launceston Walking Club has a heritage of responsibly exploring areas of the TWWHA and expects to be represented in decision making through Bushwalking Tasmania.

We are concerned that environmental priorities and outcomes in the TWWHA Management Plan 2016 will be subservient to economic imperatives of private commercial tourism development via the TTMP.

Brian O'Byrne

LWC Secretary