



Tasmanian Trail Association Inc.

412 Pass Road, Cambridge, Tas 7170
email secretary@tasmaniantrail.com.au
Phone 0419 370 528

7 January 2013

The Secretary
Tasmanian Forests Agreement Select Committee
Parliament of Tasmania
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Sir

Submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee on the Tasmanian Forest Agreement.

The Tasmanian Trail is a multi-use recreational trail extending from Devonport to Dover for use by horse riders, mountain bike riders and walkers. Up until recently the focus was on providing a linear trail from Devonport to Dover but it has been recognized that there is a need to widen the concept to develop links and loops from population centres not only to enhance the experience for users but to also create the opportunity for communities to benefit from servicing those who choose to use the Trail.

To this end the Tasmanian Trail Association Inc. has changed it's constitution to add additional aims to: -

"To establish, promote, manage and provide trails from the main trail to connect with communities located in the near vicinity."

"To establish and maintain positive links with communities through which the Tasmanian Trail passes and to assist in the patronage of related businesses."

The vision is to develop hubs where users can base themselves and enjoy several treks but also continue to move along the main linear route as they desire.

The Association has also established regional branches that will become the main managers of the Trail in concert with the Tasmanian Tracks and Trails Strategy.

There has been some difficulty in ascertaining what effect the proposals under the Tasmanian Forest Agreement would have on this concept and we wish to place before you some principles that may result in our goals being realised. We believe that to continue to reserve land with restrictive prescriptions similar to National Parks will eventually stymie development in all its forms to the detriment of Tasmania's future. It will reduce the ability to provide a range of facilities and if additional land is to be reserved, decisions should be focused on the reason for the Forest Agreement; to protect the forest, not to prevent or restrict use.

The very poor plan of the proposed reserves that we have been able to access indicates that the present linear Tasmanian Trail route may be affected and could result in the facility being cut completely in two places. One is where it climbs over the Great Western Tiers and the other is where it crosses the Wellington Range. In both these cases it would be extremely difficult to find alternative routes. In addition, the Association has been working with the community in the Huon to extend the Trail from Dover to Southport and the reserve proposal south of Port Esperance may prevent this addition if prescriptions are restrictive.

The Association's desire to extend the Trail concept could very well be prevented in other areas where new reserves are being proposed. Unfortunately, we do not have definite routes in mind at present as the changes in the Association's aims have only recently been made. We would not like to see our future investigations on where possible routes may go being frustrated because horses or mountain bikes are prohibited. This restriction could be detrimental to the small Tasmanian communities that have and may in the future want to embrace the Tasmanian Trail.

We also would like to highlight the situation where there is no government agency that gives primary consideration to recreational use of public land. It would appear that the Parks and Wildlife Service is the responsible body but its primary consideration is conservation and in fact ceased to support the Tasmanian Trail a few years ago presumably as it was not seen as a core responsibility. Forestry Tasmania has been a valuable supporter of multiple use forest areas under its jurisdiction including the Tasmanian Trail. Erosion of this support would undoubtedly see the Trail's demise. It would be disastrous for the Trail if no consideration is given to recreational values in the Forest Agreement process.

Therefore we submit: -

- That in the event of new reserves being created the Legislative Council give consideration to the nature of the reservation being proposed, to ensure the ethos of multiple use reserves. Horse riding and mountain bike riding should not be excluded.
- That if reservations are imposed, which include use restrictions, at least existing recreational uses be protected "as of right".

Yours faithfully

John Shoobridge
President

