



Tasmanian Wilderness
Guides Association

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2 February 2026

Public Works Committee
Parliament House
Hobart, Tasmania, 7000
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Submission regarding the Next Iconic Walk-Tyndalls Range,

The Tasmanian Wilderness Guides Association (TWGA) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission for the consideration of the Public Works Committee regarding Tasmania's 'Next Iconic Walk' in the Tyndalls Range.

The TWGA is a member based, registered incorporated association formed in 2019 to provide a united voice for Tasmania's outdoor guiding community. Our mission is to advocate on behalf of our members in relation to our employment, careers and working conditions, have a say in shaping a sustainable tourism industry in Tasmania and help cultivate a sense of custodianship in the wild places in which we work.

We are a recognised stakeholder by Parks and Wildlife Services, and have made a couple of submissions to PWS already, as well as regular meetings in which we have raised potential issues associated with the 'Next Iconic Walk'. While there would be some benefits to Tasmania's tourism industry overall, our members have expressed the following concerns regarding the Next Iconic Walk project.

-The proposal may not be economically viable given potentially low occupancy rates in the winter/shoulder months and high construction and maintenance costs. The feasibility study conducted in 2021 is outdated and needs to be re-costed. Given the Three Capes Track is barely breaking even, there is serious doubt about the next iconic walk bringing the economic benefits promised. Furthermore, the cost of undertaking the walk will also place it out of financial reach of a large chunk of the Tasmanian community.

-The money needed to build this proposal would be better invested on the maintenance of already existing high use tracks/ recreational areas much in need of repair. Spreading these funds out would reap great benefits to Tasmania overall and multiple regional areas, rather than concentrating the benefit to one area only.

- There are significant environmental concerns, in particular the increased visitation to the sensitive Tyndalls Plateau as a result of the next iconic walk raising the profile of this area.

-There is a significant risk of spreading the root rot disease, *phythophtora cinnamomi* to new areas, both during the construction and operational phase. This risk cannot be eliminated, despite all measures proposed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The newly constructed track will create potential access to the Tyndalls Plateau and Mt Geike from the eastern side for more experienced walkers, in particular along Farquhar's ridge, where off track walkers could be going through a *phythophtora* zone from the base to the top of the range, creating a high risk of the phythophtora spreading to plant communities that are world heritage value (but not formally recognised as such with an appropriate level of protection).

-The extensive infrastructure proposed is unnecessary and over the top. 51 ha of total footprint is about two and a half football fields worth of native vegetation that will be cleared to enable the existence of this new infrastructure. This is not counting the trampling impacts during construction. The TWGA deems this to be an unacceptable impact.

-The proposed hydro scheme to service the huts will include a pipeline that travels through Fagus and King Billy Pine communities, with the Environmental Impact Statement claiming that some impact may be unavoidable. This is simply not good enough. These plant communities are unique and need to be treated with more respect. A proposal that includes any impact on these communities can not be considered as an environmentally sensitive proposal.

- There is a concern for the safety of walkers who may not be adequately prepared for the west coast climate.

- There are no group campsites proposed. The lack of group campsites means there is minimal opportunity for educational groups or guided trips, minimising employment opportunities for outdoor guides.

Overall, the TWGA deems this project not in alignment with the values of the outdoor community of Lutruwita/Tasmania.

The stance of TWGA is that the potential negative impacts of this proposal far outweigh the potential benefits and therefore we cannot support the idea of this 'Next Iconic Walk' proceeding to the construction phase.

If there is an opportunity during the public meeting on the 10th of February in Queenstown, I would like the following question to be answered by the proponent.

What measures will be taken by Parks and Wildlife Services to eliminate the chance of the root rot disease, *phythophtora cinnamomi* being carried to the top of the sensitive Tyndall Plateau on bushwalker's boots, should experienced walkers use Farquhar's ridge as an access route from the newly constructed 'next iconic walk' track over the coming decades?

We would like to thank you for reading and considering our submission.

Yours Sincerely,

 

Andy Szollosi

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**President,
Tasmanian Wilderness Guides Association.**