



Legislative Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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PARKS SERVICE NOT MEETING STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service is not meeting its existing obligations under State legislation because of a severe lack of funding, a Legislative Council inquiry has found.

The Report of the Council's Government Administration Committee "B" inquiry into the Operation and Administration of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) was tabled in the Legislative Council today.

The Inquiry Chair, Tania Rattray MLC, said the PWS was receiving only about two-thirds of the State Government funding it needs to meet its Management Objectives under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

"The PWS is currently funded at approximately \$10 per hectare for its core management responsibilities, when the evidence suggests that \$16 per hectare is a more appropriate level," Ms Rattray said.

"This obviously means that Tasmania's national parks and reserves are not being properly cared for and the situation will become even more serious if an additional 500,000 hectares of forestry land are added to its responsibilities without substantially increased funding."

Ms Rattray said the handover of additional forestry land to the PWS would also significantly increase the risk of major wildfires in the State's national parks and reserves.

"The PWS has limited experience in managing fire in dense forest and it will have significantly fewer resources to deal with any fires in these areas and, as a consequence, other land areas under its control," she said.

"The Committee was particularly concerned at evidence it received that the State's fire fighting capability is compromised by the reduction in capacity of the members of the tri-agency Protocol – the Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Tasmania and the Tasmanian Fire Service.

"Unless there is a significant increase in funding for the PWS, whether or not it eventually takes control of additional forestry land, Tasmania's national parks and reserves and their infrastructure are heading for a major decline and this will have a damaging impact on tourism and fire-fighting capabilities."

ends

FURTHER INFORMATION: Tania Rattray MLC on 0427 523 412