

SECOND READING SPEECH
NATIONAL PARKS AND RESERVES MANAGEMENT
AMENDMENT (PARKS AND RESERVES AUTHORITY)
BILL 2013

Mr Speaker, I move that the Bill now be read a second time.

The objective of this Bill is to form a new Parks and Reserves Authority to guide the future management of Tasmania's world class reserve system.

Tasmania has a reserve system that is the envy of many countries around the world with the economic, natural, cultural and recreational values they contain.

Our reserve system provides many things to many people, from recreational activities, to conserving rich natural and cultural values, to providing tourism opportunities as well as other private and commercial activities, such as mineral exploration and mining.

Mr Speaker, the establishment of a new Parks and Reserves Authority will ensure that we have a system in place that best serves the future management of all these areas and their values to all sectors in Tasmania.

It will enable the Government to clearly articulate its vision for the reserve system through mechanisms such as Ministerial Statements of Expectation.

It will enable the Tasmanian community to contribute its many views on the future sustainable use and protection of our national parks and reserves.

The Bill establishes a statutory Parks and Reserves Authority as part of the State's Resource Management and Planning System, the objectives of which are set out in Schedule 2 of the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

The statutory Parks and Reserves Authority is established to further the objectives for management of reserved land specified in Schedule 1 of the Principal Act.

Therefore, the new Authority will play a key role in the management, protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural values of Tasmania's reserve estate.

The Authority will also play a key role in managing the social and economic values for which reserves have been established, by establishing the strategic direction for the reserve estate in accordance with Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of the Principal Act.

The Authority will be made up of a new Parks and Reserves Board and a Chief Executive. The Board will replace the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, as established under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

The Board will consist of the Chief Executive and seven members appointed by the Governor on the nomination of the Minister.

The persons nominated for membership of the Board are to include, but are not limited to, persons who, in the opinion of the Minister, have skills and experience in board governance, management of natural and cultural values, reserve management, and management of reserve use including commercial and recreational use. To ensure that the Board has the skills and experience to fulfil its functions will require the majority of members to have the skills identified in the Bill.

Mr Speaker, it is my intention that one of these appointed members be an Aboriginal person, given the strong and significant Aboriginal connections to many of these areas.

The Director of National Parks and Wildlife will be repealed under this Bill and the Chief Executive, Parks and Reserves Authority established. The Chief Executive will be a statutory officer holder appointed by the Governor, with responsibility for implementation of the Parks and Reserves Strategic Plan and Management Plans. The Chief Executive will be accountable to the Minister for the day-to-day management of reserves, with the necessary powers to appoint rangers and enforce the Act.

Whilst the Chief Executive is a Board member, he or she will not be able to be appointed Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson and, in their role as Chief Executive, they will exercise the statutory powers and functions of the Chief Executive as outlined in this Bill.

A key function of the Parks and Reserves Board will be to advise on the strategic direction for parks and other reserved lands, including development of a draft Parks and Reserves Strategic Plan, as well as development of draft Management Plans, both of which will be developed in consultation with the community. The Bill makes provision for regulations to be made in relation to the process to be undertaken in the preparation of the draft Strategic Plan.

The Parks and Reserves Strategic Plan is intended to provide high-level guidance and direction on future reserve management in Tasmania.

The Plan will be a vehicle to set out a broad and strategic approach by Government, informed by advice from the Board and input from the Tasmanian community, to the objectives for management of reserved land set out in Schedule 1 of the Principal Act. The draft Strategic Plan prepared by the Board is to be submitted to the Minister for approval.

The Board will also be responsible for developing draft Management Plans, utilising appropriate expertise both within and external to the Department, and publicly exhibiting and receiving representations from community members on any draft Management Plans it develops. Draft Management Plans will continue to be submitted by the Minister to the

Governor for approval under this Bill. The Minister can seek and have regard to advice from the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

The Board will be responsible for undertaking monitoring, review and evaluation of the Strategic Plan and Management Plans, and will report to the Minister on the implementation of the Strategic Plan and other functions. The Board will also advise the Minister on policy issues and other strategic matters. Further, the Board is able to establish committees, which may include persons who are not members of the Board, to advise it on any matter relating to its functions.

Mr Speaker, the Bill provides a framework for communication between the Minister and the Board. The Minister is to consult with the Board in the preparation of Ministerial Statements of Expectation relating to the Minister's objectives on matters relating to the Board's functions including in relation to the scope of the Parks and Reserves Strategic Plan and Management Plans, timeframes and objectives with respect to such Plans and adequate measures for review. A Statement of Expectation cannot prevent the Board from performing any of its statutory functions under the Act. The Board is to make all Statements of Expectation publicly available. The Board will also make reports on its monitoring, review and evaluation of the Strategic Plan and Management Plans publicly available.

The statutory requirement for Ministerial Statements of Expectation demonstrates the Government's strong commitment to ensure that the proposed model and the work of the Parks and Reserves Authority are transparent.

The new Authority will go through the normal budget process to provide an appropriate budget to fulfil its functions.

The Bill establishes the Minister as the managing authority for all reserved land, unless the Governor by order declares another entity to be the reserve manager.

The Minister as managing authority is a key reform under the Act as it increases public accountability in the management of our reserved lands which will comprise approximately 46% of our State after the Tasmanian Forestry Agreement process. However, as has been noted, the day-to-day management of our reserved lands will rest with the Chief Executive.

The Minister will also remain responsible for issuance of business licences, leases and licences. The issuance of such leases or licences is to be consistent with the Parks and Reserves Strategic Plan and in accordance with the Act, including existing requirements for consistency with the management objectives for the reserve class and any applicable Management Plans.

The Bill also makes amendments to other Tasmanian legislation as a consequence of the establishment of the Parks and Reserves Authority. Legislation that currently refers to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife requires consequential amendments to reflect the new governance arrangements under this Bill. The consequential amendments provided for in this Bill do not change the functions from

those that currently exist in Tasmanian legislation for the Director of National Parks and Wildlife.

This Bill simply makes consequential amendments to other Tasmanian laws to bring them into line with the new Parks and Reserves Authority Board and Chief Executive.

Mr Speaker, I am proud to present the Bill to the House, as it will ensure that Tasmania has appropriate governance in place for its reserve system.

Mr Speaker, the Government fully supports the introduction of this Bill.

I commend this Bill to the House.