The Politics of Parks

A History of Tasmania’s National Parks 1885-2005

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Debbie Quarmby
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the history of Tasmania’s national parks and protected areas from 1885-2005, analysing the interests, and the organisations and individuals representing them, which have influenced outcomes. Significant organisations representing different and sometimes competing interests have been community based groups, chiefly the naturalist and scientific bodies, bushwalking clubs and environmental organisations; tourism associations, industry interests, notably forestry, mining and hydro-electricity, federal, local and state governments and government agencies, notably the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The thesis argues that the establishment and development of Tasmania’s national parks and protected areas have been shaped by the negotiations, accommodations, conflicts and shifting relative power among these competing interests.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries consensus of interest among Tasmania’s social and political elite facilitated the declaration of Tasmania’s first scenery reserves and national parks. Conflicts of interest between preserving land in its natural state and industrial development grew apparent from the 1920s however, and Tasmanian governments managed park expansion through politics of compromise in which national parks accommodated industry demands. The environment movement that emerged in the 1960s protested national parks’ ‘residual’ status and with federal government support defeated the State government’s plan to build a dam within an area proposed for a Wild Rivers National Park. Following environmentalists’ success in over-riding State government processes to expand the State’s national park estate and World Heritage Area in the early 1980s; the State government strengthened its direct control over the National Parks and Wildlife Service and focused its attention on national parks’ tourism role. Aspects of tourism in national parks are, however, incompatible with the preservation of environmental and wilderness values, which resulted in further political conflict between government-supported tourism interests and the national parks movement.

This thesis complements earlier research on Tasmanian national park history by Mosley, Castles, Shackel, Mendel and Cubit by extending analysis of that history to the twenty-first century, examining the role of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in that history since the agency’s inception in 1971, and addressing both environmental and social perspectives of national park history. It concludes that by the twenty-first century Tasmanian national park policy required a framework of social values associated with national parks in which to situate environmental protection as national parks’ primary purpose.
The Politics of Parks
A History of Tasmania’s National Parks
1885 - 2005

Chapter 1
Introduction

A large proportion of Tasmania - approximately 2,477,314 hectares, or 36.38% of the State, is set aside in formal reserves. Over half of this area - 1,431,305 hectares, which constitutes 21.06% of the State, is in national parks, relatively large reserves which are managed for both conservation and recreation purposes. As a result of efforts spanning nearly one and a half centuries Tasmania has the largest proportion of land protected in national parks and other types of formal reserve generically grouped as ‘national parks and reserves’ or ‘national parks and protected areas’ of all the Australian states. There has been relatively little written, however, about why and how Tasmania’s impressive national park estate came to be, and about the roles governments, government agencies, park activists and other interest groups have performed in shaping and maintaining the State’s national parks system.

National parks have, since their inception, served a number of purposes, mainly recreation and nature conservation. But there is an inherent contradiction between human use of parks and the preservation of nature within them, a contradiction that has resulted in political conflict both in Tasmania and elsewhere, notably other Australian states and North America, and the contradiction that is the cause of conflict has yet to be resolved. There are no published works that provide a comprehensive account of the history of Tasmania’s national parks although a range of texts provide insights into the context of that history and some address aspects of the history itself.
Environmental and National Park Histories

Histories of Tasmania’s national parks include social, political and, especially since the 1960s, environmental aspects. Stephen Dovers wrote that environmental history ‘seeks to discover and explain the past of European Australia - a past that has created vast environmental problems for itself’. Dovers cites three levels of environmental history: understanding nature itself; understanding the socio-economic realm as it interacts with the environment, and understanding the values, laws or myths that shape these interactions. The validity of Dovers’ ‘first level’ is open to question, as it can be argued that nature can be understood only within the context of the meanings people place upon it. Yet, however valid, a belief that the answers to natural resource issues lie entirely within the areas of expertise of scientists trained in the physical and natural sciences, to be complimented or contested by knowledge held only by economists, has exerted a strong influence. It has contributed to what John Mulvaney has identified as a reticence in the humanities disciplines, including history and philosophy, to provide ‘objective data and informed, logical comment’ to discourse on environmental issues, where debate has been ‘restricted unduly to the fields of science or economics’. This reticence has only recently begun to disappear.

This thesis, which is approached from the perspective of a humanities discipline, is situated within the latter two of the three levels of environmental history defined by Dovers, particularly the third. It focuses on stakeholders’ views of the objectives of national parks, the social values underlying these objectives and the varying levels of support different objectives have received from Tasmania’s changing social, economic and political climate.

Kevin Frawley concluded, from his literature survey of 1988, that the history of the national park concept was an under-researched field in Australia. Though recent postgraduate theses have extended the relevant research there is little published work which focuses on the histories of Australia’s national park systems, and the writings from which this history derives its theoretical basis extend, by necessity, beyond Australian national park histories. Some of the works originate from the United States of America (USA) where much research and writing on national park history has been produced. Some Australian
environmental histories, such as Geoffrey Bolton’s *Spoils and Spoilers*, Drew Hutton and Libby Connors’ *A History of the Australian Environment Movement* and John Dargavel’s *Fashioning Australia’s Forests*, inform Tasmanian national park history through their reference to changing community attitudes and conservation campaigns. Recent social movement literature including Verity Burgmann’s two works *Power and Protest: Movements for Change in Australian Society* and *Power, Profit and Protest, Australian Social Movements and Globalization*, and Andrew Rowell’s *Green Backlash: Global Subversion of the Environmental Movement* also provide insights into the social and political dynamics of Tasmanian national park history, which is the focus of this thesis. More general Australian and Tasmanian histories tend to overlook national park history though one exception, Lloyd Robson’s *A History of Tasmania Volume 2: Colony and State from 1856 to the 1980s*, provides a short but detailed account of connections between Tasmania’s early national parks movement, tourism and efforts to provide for the protection of fauna.

Most of the directly pertinent research on Tasmanian national park history is contained in postgraduate theses, including: ‘Aspects of the Geography of Recreation in Tasmania’ by Geoff Mosley; Bruce Davis’ ‘National Park Administration in Australia: a Critical Assessment’, in which Davis paid particular attention to the Tasmanian situation; Gerald Castles’ ‘Handcuffed Volunteers’, which examined Tasmania’s Scenery Preservation Board; and Philip Shackel’s ‘A Study in the Growth of Public Interest’, which traces conservationists’ challenge to exploitative approaches to progress. More recent theses include Ronald Sutton’s ‘Tourism in National Parks: Managing a Paradoxical Mandate’, which discussed the difficulties faced by national park managers in having to provide for both conservation and tourism; Simon Cubit’s ‘Conserving Cultural Values in Australian National Parks and Reserves, with Particular Reference to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area’, which examines the place and the management of European cultural heritage in Tasmania’s national parks and protected areas, and Louise Mendel’s thesis ‘Scenery to Wilderness’. Mendel examined motives for the establishment of national parks, linked her observations of motives with physical elements captured in the reserve system and concluded that the dominant motives behind the creation
of Tasmania’s national parks shifted from scenery and nature conservation, tourism and recreation in the periods to 1970, towards wilderness and a more systematic approach to nature conservation after 1971. While these theses have addressed various aspects of Tasmanian national park history, none has examined the history of the State’s national park agency beyond the 1960s, or contemporary political conflicts over national park policy, as this thesis does.

Geoff Mosley’s work was the earliest significant analytical account of the Tasmanian reserve system. In his PhD thesis (1963) he traced the early history of national parks and examines their role as a recreational resource. Mosley identified the Tasmanian government and public interest groups as chief players. The government’s motive for involvement has, he argued, been tourist revenue, while public interest groups, such as bushwalking, angling and environmental groups, have been motivated by a mixture of recreational and conservation goals. Mosley saw the national park movement as originating primarily with nature lovers concerned about the depletion of natural resources and strengthened by the support of tourist promoters and civic minded individuals who realised the values of such reserves for public enjoyment. Its aim of expanding the reserve system was, he argued, supported by the State government when it came to recognise the economic importance of tourism and sought to protect the industry’s most valuable, and most vulnerable, assets - the State’s scenic and historic attractions. While generally agreeing with this analysis, I will argue that the impetus for national parks did not depend on nature lovers concerned about resource depletion but that tourist promoters and social reformers also contributed to the establishment of a public park system in Tasmania.

Mosley’s work defined the goals of the early national park movement and the role of government in providing financial support for, and a bureaucratic structure to administer, the park system. He also identified two major inherent conflicts in the parks system - conflicts that remained central to the national park story. The first of these conflicts involves national parks’ dual functions of providing for both conservation and recreation. The second relates to public interest groups’ expectation of government to provide funds for parks’ public recreation and nature conservation functions - functions that do not offer the kind of financial
return that encourages government support. As Mosley’s thesis was written in the early 1960s it could not follow the development of the issues he identified through the ensuing years, a period made significant by the increasing political influence of the environmental movement and the government’s replacement of the Scenery Preservation Board with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service in 1971. This thesis examines the nature of conflicts that arose from national parks’ ‘paradoxical mandate’, and national park funding, through to the turn of the century.

Mosley produced a number of published papers from his research. In one, ‘The Tasmanian National Park System’, published in the Hobart Walking Club’s magazine *Tasmanian Tramp* in 1966, he succinctly identified challenges confronting national park administration in the 1960s and limitations which the Tasmanian government’s park administrative structure faced in meeting those demands. Mosley’s assessment proved prophetic as it foreshadowed replacement of the government’s Scenery Preservation Board with a full-time National Parks and Wildlife Agency five years later. Mosley wrote that:

> During the past few years the main Australian park user societies have become increasingly aware of the deficiencies of the State park systems, and there is a widespread feeling that rationalisation is long overdue. It is argued that there is room for improvement in all aspects of park selection and management which should be based on a better knowledge of user requirements and park resources. It naturally follows that before the State park agencies can become more active in research and planning they will need more money, more trained staff, and greater independence.

... in spite of the limited technical and financial resources of the controlling agency, the rule of thumb planning, and the policy of making each park available for all park uses, the system as a whole is successfully performing a number of diverse roles. However, this success is mainly due to the low intensity of use and the absence of major claims for alienation, and it appears unlikely that the system can continue to function satisfactorily if increasing demands are made upon it, without some major changes to administration and management.”

Two further theses were written about Australian national park history in the 1970s. Sandra Bardwell examined the Victorian national parks movement, and Andrew Turner the history of New South Wales’ (NSW) national parks between 1879-1979. Bardwell identified three basic functions of national parks: moral (incorporating ecological considerations); aesthetic and recreational and she linked these functions to branches of a conservation movement which coalesced in the environment movement of the 1960s. The upper-middle class urban reform
movement which, having crystallized in the 1840s and pushed for the reservation of urban parklands, was identified by Bardwell as a significant force in the early Victorian national parks movement. Her work suggested that the urban reform movement’s possible role in early Tasmanian parks history deserves investigation, though Mosley’s interpretation suggested that it would, at most, have had a minor role.

Turner’s thesis focuses on NSW parks, but the theories he developed are of wider relevance. He argued that the environmental preferences which dominated NSW national parks policy were those of the highly educated, professional elite of the parks movement with a nexus of interests in outdoor recreation, environmental concern and political efficacy. This group of people, he argued, fostered acceptance of a preservationist and ecological environmental image as a basis for resource management policy, notably in relation to national parks. In Turner’s view, however, they had not successfully confronted the conflict between preservation and the use of national parks. Turner was concerned that, because the influential national parks movement was not representative of the wider population, social justice was inhibited by the exclusion of alternative environmental images in national park policy. Turner’s argument raises questions in the Tasmanian context regarding the profile of members of the parks movement and the nature of the environmental image and recreational preferences they promoted matters which are examined in this thesis. Regarding the environmental and social consequences of the process Turner identified he wrote that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1967 provided only vague objectives and procedures to guide administrators, politicians having avoided the difficult issue of forming an environmentally sound land use policy for a pluralist society. Turner recommended that planners reconcile the diverse demands of recreational behavior and the needs of fragile park environments. In so doing, he suggested, they had to cast their public participation net much wider than organised pressure groups and diversify the supply of park environments available to the public. He also recommended that pressure groups adjust to the situation and consider the felt needs of those excluded from the ‘decision environment’. He advised them to begin by popularising intermediate regional parks, since, if passive recreational needs were not met, the populace would follow the parks movement to the
wilderness as they followed them to the national parks, and wilderness values would suffer. Turner’s work on NSW raises issues for Tasmania where involvement in park decision-making is not broadly representative of social groupings. The problems Turner identified have intensified over the three decades since he wrote his thesis, as this thesis argues in the Tasmanian context.

Some overviews of Australian States’ national park systems were written between the late 1960s and early 1980s. In 1969 the Australian Conservation Foundation published a collection of papers, many of which focused on national park issues, in *The Last of Lands: Conservation in Australia*. This publication addressed the inherent conflict between recreational demands and conservation in national park management, and the need for a wider range of habitat types to be represented within national parks. It included an overview of state and territory national park systems with the Tasmanian section having been written by Geoff Mosley.17

In their article, in ‘Evolution of Systems of National Park Policy-making in Australia’, which was published in 1977, Alan Black and Roland Breckwoldt, provided evidence to support the following generalisations:

(i) There has been a tendency for policies and practices to diffuse from the USA to Australia and from one State to another.

(ii) Most States have moved from a situation in which the primary purpose accorded to national parks was purely recreational to one in which increasing recognition is given in official statements to their scientific significance and general conservationist function.

(iii) Most States have moved from a situation in which control of national parks was decentralized and in the hands of trustees or statutory boards to one in which control is centralised and in the hands of a government minister.

(iv) Most States have moved from a situation in which national parks were relatively insecure against revocation and antithetical uses to one in which they are more secure in these respects. But their current security is far from absolute.18

Black and Breckwoldt’s generalisations are mostly applicable to Tasmania, the first reinforcing the relevance of literature from the USA, Victoria and NSW to the Tasmanian parks system’s history. The second generalisation, however, is not supported by Tasmanian evidence. The primary purpose accorded to national parks never was purely recreational; nature conservation always was at the forefront for some national park activists. In support of their arguments, Black and
Breckwoldt cite examples of events and practices throughout Australia, including Tasmania, but they do not attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of Tasmania’s park history.

Under the introductory heading ‘Why national parks’, in their 1981 paper, ‘National Parks in Australia - Origins and Future Trends’, Robert Bowden and Graham Baines present a list of reasons why land has been reserved for national parks in Australia. Their list includes: protection of flora, fauna and their habitats; protection of natural features, historical and archeological items and sites; encouragement of public awareness about Australia’s natural heritage; and the provision of outdoor recreational facilities associated with distinctive landscapes. The authors did not claim their list was exhaustive and a notable exclusion was the purpose of attracting tourist revenue - a major reason for governments’ support of parks in Tasmania and elsewhere. The listing also hides debates relating to some of the given reasons, such as the place of historical items and sites, and conflict between the principles of visitation and conservation in national park management.

Like Black and Breckwoldt, Boden and Baines argued that national park rationale shifted from an emphasis on recreation to one of nature conservation, which was clearly the case in Tasmania, particularly between the 1960s and the early 1980s when their paper was published. But the authors acknowledge that, ‘though there is general agreement about the basic functions there is a surprising variety of definitions of ‘national park’’. Boden and Baines described the areas set aside as early national parks throughout Australia as small, disturbed by forestry or attempts at agriculture, or regarded as ‘worthless lands', a concept that is further explored by Colin Michael Hall in *Wasteland to World Heritage* (1992). Tasmania has been an exception in that areas reserved have been comparatively large and relatively undisturbed, but they have undoubtedly been most secure to the extent they are not perceived to have alternate exploitative uses. The authors identified shortcomings of Australian national park systems as being their lack of representativeness, both in ecological aspects and location as most national parks are distant from urban centres. And they recommended a national approach to
land reservation for conservation purposes, thereby raising questions about the role of Tasmanian reserves in a national reserve system.

Black and Breckwoldt identified the diffusion of park management philosophies and practices from the USA to Australia, and from one state to another. Evidence suggests that the Tasmanian system has been influenced by developments in the USA and by the NSW national parks system, the latter having also been partly shaped by the USA model. Because of these direct and indirect influences, American parks history contained in some American texts is relevant to the Tasmanian national parks story.

In *America’s National Parks and Their Keepers* (1984), Ronald Foresta examined national park issues and the development of the USA Park Service primarily from an administrative perspective. He wrote about a Park Service that was established in 1916 to unify and bring order to the management of national parks, though it was unclear exactly what the national parks were to be while, as a political organisation, it was required to respond to political pressures, changing bureaucratic attitudes and shifting societal attitudes. Foresta wrote that, while everyone knew generally what national parks were no one knew specifically, an observation that can be extended to Australian national park systems. The head of the Park Service was described by Foresta as an ‘administrative politician’, guiding the agency’s survival in the context of competing bureaucracies. Early directors, he wrote, sought support from businessmen and politicians through tourism to offset opposition from forestry and mining interests, and aimed to broaden public support by catering for a broad range of constituents. The 1960s and 1970s, Foresta argued, saw the agency’s traditional goals, which focused on parks’ recreational role, devalued. Increased environmental awareness meant that nature-altering human activities came to be seen as inconsistent with parks’ conservation goals and, consequently, people became more aware of the contradiction between human use of parks and the preservation of ecological values. Park activists and managers placed more emphasis on ecological research and management, and the park system had to be pressed into duty as a ‘giant ecological lifeboat’. This perception of nature-altering human activities being inconsistent with parks’ conservation goals created, Foresta argued, a quandary
regarding the role of the Park Service and the national park system which Foresta described as having ‘muddied’ the US Park Service’s tourism focused mission. Foresta’s observations about the impact on park agencies of changing social and political expectations of national parks are relevant to Tasmania where such changes have also occurred. Despite differences between the USA and Tasmanian contexts there are also parallels in the vagueness surrounding inherent contradictions in national parks’ role, and parks’ and park agencies’ consequent vulnerability to shifting political and social values.

Another analyst of the US national parks system, Alfred Runte, traced the national park idea from its early sources to the 1980s. Runte’s analysis covered recurring themes: the importance of tourism in the parks system’s early years; the increased emphasis on ecology from the 1960s; the conservation versus visitation conflict, and the failure of legislation to clarify goals and expectations of the parks service. These themes recur in Tasmania. Runte raised the concept of ‘monumentalism’ in connection with park designation. He suggested that, lacking historic icons, the USA turned to natural icons as national monuments. Outstanding scenic features were reserved for the public and tourists, so long as the land they occupied was otherwise economically worthless. This ‘worthless lands hypothesis’ also applies to Tasmania - the question to be explored is, ‘to what extent?’ Runte identified the rise of ecology as a rationale for reserve selection and management, and drew attention to the discrepancy between the high priority placed by elements of the Parks Service, along with the national parks movement, on ecological criteria and the low priority assigned them by influential interests within government, which continued to view parks mostly in terms of their revenue raising potential. This is another theme that extends its relevance to Tasmania and is examined in this thesis.


> The emergence in the 1930s of an ecological and scientific perspective and its revival in the 1960s threatened to make park management more costly, difficult and
time-consuming, thus bringing about a struggle within the Service between the more ecologically oriented and more traditional factions.  

Sellers reinforced Foresta’s argument in showing that from its earliest days, prior to the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, the US parks movement was driven by utilitarian motives based on the promotion of tourism. The Service’s first director, businessman Stephen Mather, established a staff dominated by landscape architects and engineers, and a corporate philosophy that prioritised increasing visitor numbers and expanding park infrastructure. This philosophy and structure dominated the Service at the expense of ecological considerations until the 1960s. Sellers concludes, ‘in both philosophy and management, the National Parks Service remains a house divided - pressured from within and without to become a more scientifically informed and ecologically aware manager of public lands, yet remaining profoundly loyal to its traditions’.  

According to Sellers, wildlife biologists attempted to influence the Service to base its management on ecological principles from as early as 1916, with no success until the early 1930s and with limited success thereafter. In providing evidence for this assertion Sellers contradicted both Runte and Foresta. Runte, like Foresta and Sellers, identifies scenery preservation as the initial motivating factor behind the establishment of the parks system, but he portrays Congress, not the Parks Service itself, as being responsible for resisting pressure for change towards an ecological basis for park decision-making. Runte wrote, for example, that, ‘as early as 1933 the National Parks Service publicised the need for broader management considerations in its precedent-breaking report, Fauna of the National Parks of the United States’.  

He did not add, as Sellers did, that the research this report was based on was funded by the personal wealth of biologist George Wright who insisted the work be done under the auspices of the Parks Service, not outsourced as was the preference expressed by Service leadership.  

Neither did Runte examine the continuing struggle by wildlife biologists to have their voice heard and their advice incorporated into park planning and management, as did Sellers. Sellers suggested that this process could be likened to the struggle for survival in the natural world - a struggle in which the biologists were disadvantaged by their lack of representation in leadership positions and the political strength of the pro-tourism and development faction within the Service. While acknowledging
concern expressed by outside critics, ‘that such members of the National Parks Service as have a high ecological awareness are not taking a significant part in the formulation of policy’.  

Runte argued that, ‘the future of the national park system, however, was actually in the hands of the Congress more than the Parks Service’. Sellers did not contradict this assertion in regard to park acquisition but, if applied to the management of those parks in the Service’s jurisdiction, the case he presented illustrated that the Parks Service itself could be held at least as responsible as Congress for the low priority placed on ecological considerations.

Foresta went further than Runte in absolving early park leadership from its failure to embrace an ecological perspective. He wrote that Mather, and his successor Albright, could not have been expected to be aware of a responsibility to gain and use scientific information. Ecological awareness, he argued, is the result of a contemporary notion of ecosystems that was not popularized until the 1960s. Sellers, in contrast, wrote about wildlife biologists such as Joseph Grinnell unsuccessfully attempting to urge the Service to adopt an ecological perspective from the Service’s earliest days, and others, including George Wright, a student of Grinnell, continuing the battle.

The conflict that Sellers explored between factions representing scenery preservation and ecology was evident in Tasmania during the late 1960s, when the Scenery Preservation Board was abolished and the National Parks and Wildlife Service established. At that time the ecological lobby benefited from altered arrangements for national park policy and administration. However, the conflict re-surfaced in the late 1980s when the ecological lobby lost ground to tourism interests. Shared themes between US and Tasmanian national park history mean that the differing perspectives of writers on US park history, including Sellers, Runte and Foresta, provide valuable insights into shifts in Tasmanian national park history, despite differences in time-frames and in detail.

**National Parks, Science and Culture**

Recent Australian writings have explored questions of balance between scientific and human interpretations of park values, particularly wilderness values. The writings are part of a debate from the late 1980s regarding the treatment of history
and ‘cultural’, as opposed to ‘natural’, landscapes in national parks. Kevin Frawley, for example, in a journal article of 1989, responded to the growing public and professional support for cultural landscape conservation, a move that he saw as having serious implications for national parks. Frawley wrote that, while the national parks movement is not opposed to cultural landscape conservation within parks, support does not extend to attempts to maintain environmentally damaging, exploitative land use practices in the name of cultural landscape conservation. While public support for this position might be widespread, controversy relating to cultural landscape conservation in Tasmania’s national parks and World Heritage Area continues over interest groups’ varying perceptions of ‘environmentally damaging’.

Tom Griffiths, in the paper he contributed to Mulvaney’s book The Humanities and the Environment (1991), questioned whether history and natural history should represent conservation movements in conflict. He argued that history has a marginal, even oppositional, status in modern interpretations of perceived natural landscapes. This, he said, is not new but has become more sharply defined by the increasing dominance of ecological criteria in the assessment of natural values and the broadening of our historical perception of landscapes from isolated sites to whole cultural patterns. He described the kind of ecological thinking applied to parks management as biocentrism, casting humans as the intruder in the landscape, particularly in wilderness landscapes. Ecology, consequently, becomes a ‘green science’, the antithesis of romanticism and part of a movement that has attempted to remove traces of history from parks and nurture a concept of wilderness that borders on fantasy. Griffiths concluded by recommending the development of a conservation ethic that is both social and ecological, a recommendation that the conclusions of this thesis support.

Richard Flanagan, a Tasmanian writer, expressed views consistent with those of Griffiths in his challenge to what he described as a widely held perception that the value of the State’s World Heritage Area lies in its being ‘untouched by man’. This perception, he argued in ‘Wilderness and History’ (1992), is not supported by the historical record but has been perpetuated by the dominance of science in interpreting the Tasmanian wilderness from the nineteenth century to the present.
The scientific influence within the park’s system stems, he argued, from the colonial middle class’ passion for natural history - a passion that was partly a reaction to the alienation of man from the land that accompanied industrialization. Tasmanian naturalists sent specimens to Britain for classification and to be used by scientific theorists to advance their ideas. Flanagan suggested this practice has contributed to Tasmanian scientists and intellectuals becoming part of an international scientific discourse, but never having sought to construct new or different intellectual paradigms for the ecological or social worlds they were exploring.

Flanagan argued that wilderness continues to be represented as ‘the other’, though where it was once seen as malevolent it is now accepted as benign. Proponents represent wilderness as an antithesis of much of that which they see as repugnant about the modern world: natural as opposed to artificial; pristine as opposed to sullied; spiritual as opposed to materialist, solitary as opposed to crowded. Flanagan suggested that rather than addressing humanity’s alienation from its soul, this idea of wilderness simply reproduces it. He argued, with relevance to contemporary conflicts over the management of wilderness areas in Tasmania’s national parks, that new ideas - ideas that come from people’s connection with wilderness - are needed as a basis for our understanding of and, by implication, management of wilderness.

People’s connection to wilderness and to other natural areas, including those within national parks, relates to the concept of ‘place’. In introducing his collection of papers on ‘people and place’, Tom Griffiths quoted British naturalist and historian Richard Mabey who wrote that while on the surface problems of conservation present themselves as practical ones, management or scientific ones, ‘underneath there are more fundamental and less easily resolved conflicts of values’. These values, Griffiths suggested, include territorial attachments, roots, identity and belonging, that are reflected in the ways people feel and talk about places they care about. And these places include natural areas, iconic or otherwise personally special, within Tasmania’s national parks.
Margie Jenkin, who explored place attachment through the stories of Tasmanian lighthouse keepers, defined ‘place’ by quoting Richard Flanagan’s explanation that ‘place is not a given fact, but the sum of relationships, social and ecological, that exist in a certain area. It is a process, an ongoing movement through both the past and the future, and it is never a fixed topographical entity’. To illustrate her understanding of the nature and the importance of place Jenkin wrote that, while a number of environmental impacts were raised in opposition to proposed helicopter landing sites in the course of the ‘chopper debate’ which took place in Tasmania early in 2000, resistance was founded primarily on social impacts, in defence of relationships quintessential to the notion of place. Many Tasmanians, Jenkin implied, have a relationship with areas within the State’s national parks that translate to a sense of place, and the meaning of this relationship is not expected to be compatible with commercialization. Issues underlying the meaning of ‘place’ and their relevance to Tasmanians’ relationships with areas within national parks are fundamental to contemporary conflicts over national park policy and administration. But the sources of these tensions are not being acknowledged by decision-makers, and the conflicts that arise from them are far from being resolved as Chapter 10 of this thesis will show.

In his paper 'Challenging History: An Environmental Perspective’ (1993) Jim Russell added to the debate over the roles of ecological, historical and cultural criteria in assessing national parks’ conservation values. Like Flanagan, Russell wrote of reconciling history and the nonhuman world, transcending oppositions between the ‘wholly synthetic’ and ‘wholly natural’ and better integrating humanity with nature. Russell challenged Tom Griffiths by insisting that the issue goes beyond a debate about the balance between the relative contributions of history and natural science in interpreting natural history, arguing that the debate raises broader issues about how society relates to the rest of nature. And, he wrote, from an environmental perspective reserves should be related to a ‘holding operation’ imagery, as the prospects for campaigning for long-term social changes that might render national parks unnecessary has proven too daunting. Russell argued that sanitizing, or isolating, park management from the social and political values that cause environmental destruction, and ascribing the role of ‘independent life raft’ to the reserve system can be no more than a short-term
approach. If environmental management principles are applied within but not outside national parks, Russell’s argument implies, the destructive forces affecting the wider environment will increasingly impact on the integrity of park environments.

Debate about the role of national parks and reserves in the broader context of nature conservation, the issue to which Russell’s description of national parks as ‘independent life rafts’ refers, has affected particularly the recent history of Tasmania’s national park system. In his paper ‘Changing Concepts of National Parks’ (1989), David Hales observed that, between 1972 and 1982, the dominant perspective on national parks reflected at world National Park Conferences changed. It shifted from the ‘traditional’ concern of the national parks movement - preserving natural landscapes and their use for recreational and educational purposes - to a concern about land management which extended beyond park boundaries.

This contemporary perspective - termed bio-regionalism - stems from a belief that, ‘if conservation is to succeed, it must become part of humanity’s adaptation to the living environment, part of the human ecosystem’. It argues that national parks must not be regarded as isolated islands; that park policy should acknowledge peoples’ prior relationships with reserved land, that there should be flexible transition from a protective core to intensive uses within parks and that conservation measures should extend outside park boundaries. Hales argued that there is a need for such a broadening of perspective if long-term conservation goals are to succeed, writing that ‘park values cannot survive in a hostile environment, nor can our support for parks save our societies from otherwise irresponsible behavior’. At best, Hales contended, parks are holding actions, which, if they are successful, will serve as bridges between the past and the future. In the long term, however, he wrote, conservation must resolve basic problems relating to population growth, irresponsible consumption and waste, unrestrained technology, industrial poisoning and gross inequities between rich and poor in order that boundaries, ‘walls and buffering’ are unnecessary to preserve park values.
An Australian conservationist, Penny Figgis, argues, like Hales, that isolated archipelagos of national parks and protected areas will fail to achieve biodiversity conservation in Australia and that conservation management needs to extend beyond park boundaries to surround and link protected areas with buffers, biosphere reserves, regional agreements, Indigenous protected areas and land stewardship agreements. Her argument is pertinent to Tasmania where national parks and reserves are concentrated in the State’s south-west and central highlands while other environments are poorly represented. But, Figgis argues, while the inadequacy of parks alone achieving biodiversity conservation is accepted, the question of whether to downplay strictly protected sanctuaries as the core lands around which to build the corridors and other initiatives is contentious. The concept of multiple use protected areas associated with bioregional planning constitutes a policy shift away from the principle of national parks being managed predominantly for nature protection and, Figgis wrote, is opposed by most conservationists because they believe it undermines environmental protection and erodes environmental management.

The arguments presented by Figgis, Hales and Russell in relation to the place of national parks in the broader context of environmental protection and land management are particularly relevant to the history of Tasmania’s national park system at the end of the twentieth and start of the twenty-first century which this thesis examines. From 1987 the Tasmanian government restructured national park administrative arrangements partly, it appeared, to diminish the national park agency’s political power, but also as a means of shifting national park policy and extending conservation land use practices outside national park boundaries for the kinds of reasons identified by Figgis, Hales and Russell.

The National Parks Movement

From the middle of the twentieth century, when part of Mt Field National Park was revoked for paper pulp production, Tasmanian politics has been marked by overt conflict over national parks and the reservation of land for conservation purposes. The fight between conservationists and supporters of Australian Newsprint Mills concerning forests of the Florentine Valley at Mt Field was the first major political battle over a national park in Australia. Subsequent land-use
conflicts over Lake Pedder National Park, the Wild Rivers National Park and the reservation of old-growth forest followed, pitting conservationists against ‘growthists’ in a political divide that has placed parks at the centre of Tasmanian political debate.

Peter Hay has argued that conflict over land use is the factor which most sets Tasmanian politics apart from the other Australian States. Hay wrote that,

Three factors contribute to land-use issues being at the head of the political agenda: the existence of rare environments, a government in aggressive pursuit of material ‘goods’, and a physical scale which does not allow these goods to be obtained except at the expense of rare environments. All three exist in Tasmania, where smallness virtually ensures that any given interest in the land will conflict with another.

Conflicts over competing interests in land use have involved interest groups, and the principal interest groups advocating for national parks have been conservation organisations broadly grouped in a national parks movement. Interest groups form when people with the same, or compatible goals, work together to further their cause. Based on his research on the Australian environment movement, Bruce Davis identified five broad groups of participants in environmental conflicts - eco-activists, development (or exploitative) interests, public servants, politicians, and members of the broader community. It is from the first two of Davis’s broad groups that the most powerful interest groups which have fought over national park issues have arisen, and it has been members of the latter three groups that those interest groups have sought to influence.

In his analysis of Americans’ response to signs which appeared in the mid-nineteenth century that natural resources - game, fish and timber - were being depleted, Carl Moneyhon argued however that not one but three different, and in some respects conflicting, groups of ‘eco-activists’ emerged. Moneyhon wrote that these groups represented three of four interpretations of society and the environment which developed, each with a wide following. The four modes of thought - conservation, preservation, ecology and laissez faire - differed in ways that made a general reform movement to solve environmental problems almost impossible. Moneyhon described conservation as a belief in efficient use of natural resources and scientific solutions to shortages. Preservationists,
alternatively ‘believed that nature possessed a spiritual quality necessary for the survival of mankind and argued for wilderness, for the preservation of the undeveloped’. Ecology stressed the inter-relatedness of nature and of human action with the rest of the living world and, Moneyhon argued; ecologists perceived themselves in an adversary relationship with the rest of the community, including conservationists and preservationists, because they had the true and only answer to the situation. Followers of the fourth response - *laissez faire*, or ‘let the situation develop and find out what happens’ - were hostile to those groups seeking to intervene in the process and thereby undermining ‘the best in American life’, were situated outside the realm of the eco-activists and opposed eco-activists’ attempts to intervene in the process of economic development.

Moneyhon’s analysis suggests parallels with the Tasmanian situation: that, rather than changing over time, the Tasmanian national parks movement has, from its inception, included Moneyhon’s three groups of eco-activists and, while individual beliefs might not have changed, the balance of power among the three viewpoints within the national parks movement has.

Interest groups seek to protect and advance their members’ interests through the political process by interacting with politicians and bureaucrats directly, as well as indirectly through their influence on public attitudes and voting intention. A pluralist theory of politics assumes that power is distributed evenly among groups and that, consequently, interaction between them and governments can resolve conflicts that arise between elections in a fair manner. However, Timothy Doyle and Aynsley Kellow argue that environmental policy is an area where pluralist assumptions are deficient because power does not seem to be distributed evenly between the interests involved. Also, Doyle and Kellow argue, groups advancing private financial interests often have better financial and bargaining resources with which to influence governments than do environment groups and are more likely to become members of ‘policy communities’, while environmentalists are left with protest as their only avenue of influence.

In the major conflicts over expansion of Tasmania’s national park estate those people Peter Hay referred to as growthists, people who do not believe that economic growth should be compromised by nature conservation, were on one
side of the battle-lines. On the other side were adherents of the conservation, environment and green movements, movements that are often seen as one although they differ and do not always agree on national park issues. Neither are they consistently defined - contemporary perceptions of an environment movement incorporate the three separate groups Moneyhon defined as conservationists, ecologists and preservationists. Doyle and Kellow suggest that membership of the Australian environment movement comprises people who consider themselves to be environmentalists, a method of identification which transcends some definitional problems, and can be applied to Tasmania’s national parks movement.

Tasmania’s conservation movement pre-dates the State’s first scenery reserves, which the amateur naturalists and social reformers who comprised the movement initiated. The environment movement which, Verity Bergmann argues, emerged with growing ecological concern in the 1960s, was supported by many, but not necessarily all, of the established conservation movement. The green movement which also appeared in the 1960s alongside the environment movement, linked ecology with social values in a movement that shifted political alignments based on workplace relations, power, materialism and class interest towards political alignments based on non-materialistic values such as individual integrity, ecological integrity, sustainability and quality of life. According to Burgmann, the green movement has close links with other social protest movements such as the peace movement, feminist, sexual identity and indigenous peoples’ movements and its adherents include a large number, but not all, constituents of the environment movement or its predecessor, the conservation movement. Doyle argued that issues that do not truly include the human dimension have dominated the Australian environment movement, unlike the green movement. The environment movement has rarely addressed issues of social and environmental justice and has continued to regard nature as separate from people. Though the environment and green movements differ, and neither replicates the conservation movement of the early twentieth century, membership of the three movements does loosely overlap, and people who are perceived to adhere to any one of the three movements that now comprise the broad conservation movement are referred to randomly as ‘greenies’, ‘environmentalists’ or ‘conservationists’.
By the late twentieth century the community-based elements of the movement that reflected conservation, environmental and, sometimes, green values, was commonly referred to as ‘the environment movement’, while the social base of green political philosophy tended to be referred to as ‘the green movement’. People who supported national parks and who, by doing so, became members of the national parks movement were spread across the conservation, environmental and green movements as individuals and sometimes as members of formal organisations. But while ‘old guard’ conservationists, environmentalists and greens tend to be perceived as one group by people outside the conservation movement and by many within it, the perspectives held by individuals vary significantly, which has sometimes resulted in members of the broad conservation movement having significantly different views on the role of national parks, national park policy and management. These differences provide some of the dynamics of the history told in this thesis. They contribute to an explanation of changes in the national parks movement’s priorities as it shifted from being dominated by a conservation to an environmental perspective. They also contribute to an understanding of tensions that increased from the 1980s between some groups of traditional park users, including bushwalkers and horse riders, and environmentalists in contemporary debates on national park usage.

Timothy Doyle argues, on the basis of his own social research, that adherents to the conservation, environmental or green movement hold diverse values and goals upon which they base their approach to national parks. Tim Tenbensel agrees with Doyle that a clear philosophical or value coherence is elusive in green politics, but cites research showing strongholds of support for green political orientation among those born since 1945, who are tertiary educated and who work in the ‘non-productive’, or ‘reproductive’ sectors of the middle-class labor force. Peter Hay’s analysis of Tasmanians’ voting patterns in the 1986 House of Assembly election indicated that the distribution of environmental support in Tasmania is consistent with Tenbensel’s theory of environmentalists’ social location. The analyses of Doyle, Tenbensel and Hay of participants in the broad conservation and narrower environmental movements contribute insights into the divisions which are examined in this thesis that have occurred within Tasmania’s conservation and national parks movements. Also, the way in which social
location coincided with competing interests - industry workers, recreational groups and environmentalists - in national park conflicts, informs the tensions and mistrust associated with ongoing conflict over national parks that became part of what Hay cited as ritualized environmental conflict in Tasmania.66

The history and development of Australia’s environment movement, which incorporates Tasmania’s national parks movement, has been described in terms of ‘phases’ in A History of the Australian Environment Movement, written by Drew Hutton and Libby Connors and Green Power: The Environment Movement in Australia, by Timothy Doyle. Hutton and Connors describe ‘first wave’ conservationists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as mostly young, highly educated ‘progressives’ who fought for national parks and other nature conservation measures, wise resource use and species protection on the basis of national pride and progressive political beliefs. Their language, which was that of progressivism, emphasized the human and national benefits of conservation although some of their writings, such as the ornithologist Dudley Le Souef’s comment that ‘the wild birds do not belong to us to treat as we like’,67 revealed a more profound and less anthropocentric basis for their activities. Largely through the voices of the scientific societies to which many belonged, first-wave conservationists advocated for national parks, nature reserves and regulated resource exploitation in the face of the extensive species loss that had taken place by the 1890s. From the 1880s, they also advocated for national parks in order to protect forests, motivated by the destructive impact of the increasing imperial demand for Australian hardwoods.68 The early national parks movement, Hutton and Connors illustrated, was aided by its links to, and support from public health, urban parks and playgrounds movements, tourism and railway interests.69

Hutton and Connors describe the first-wave environment movement as declining in the aftermath of World War Two, by which time the resource managers who had been influential in the early movement were incorporated in the bureaucratic structures of the movement’s making.70 Doyle, as well as Hutton and Connors, identified 1960-1983 as the first phase of the modern Australian environment movement. Technological developments and economic growth of the postwar period had created new environmental problems, including pollution, which were
widely publicized. This gave rise to a re-mobilized and radicalized environment movement which clashed not only with environmentally destructive industries but also with elements of the more conservative first-wave of the movement.\textsuperscript{71}

Doyle, Hutton and Connors describe 1983 to 1990 as the second phase of Australia’s modern environment movement. Following the movement’s Franklin River victory organisations such as the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wilderness Society developed more conventional structures, employed skilled researchers, lobbyists and public advocates, and, Hutton and Connors argued, they increased their impact on public policy making:

In this era of deregulation, the environment movement urged strong government intervention; in a profane age where ‘greed was good’, it promoted the sacred nature of wild places. In the face of technocrats’ suspicion of the public, the environment movement supported demands for community consultation and participation. Given these contradictions in Australian political life it is a testimony to the professionalism and commitment of the movement that, by the end of the 1980s, it had achieved so much, especially in terms of nature conservation.\textsuperscript{72}

Timothy Doyle argues that, while the environment movement, including the national parks movement, made significant gains for nature conservation during this period when major environmental groups were incorporated into the process of government policy making and implementation, there were negative results as well. The inclusive ‘round table’ political decision making process that was introduced during the period of the Hawke Labor Government, while seen by some as beneficial to non-government organisations, was seen by others as a strategy for neutralizing political opposition.\textsuperscript{73} It was during this era that Australian governments, like those of other western democracies, adopted the concept of ‘sustainable development’, thereby partially neutralizing the concerns and power of the environment movement. ‘Sustainable development’ over-rides limits to growth arguments on the basis that biophysical limits can be overcome by increased efficiency and effectiveness in production and, through technological development, ‘growth is the engine of change and the friend of the environment’.\textsuperscript{74}

The Australian environment movement’s second phase, Doyle wrote, ended with the election of the conservative coalition in 1996, when an era of ‘wise and
sequential use’, along with blatant opposition to the environment movements aims, began;

The attack on the environment movement by the conservative coalition government, in close collusion with powerful business interests, has been vicious and without precedent in the last 30 years. Since its election in 1996 the Howard government has attempted to disempower the environment movement and to discredit its concerns in a number of ways. 75

Firstly, Doyle argued, the federal Coalition government focused its environmental agenda on ‘brown’ issues such as soil degradation - the kind of environmental concerns that have been shown to be of primary concern to conservative voters. At the same time it removed ‘green’ issues such as forest destruction and wildlife - issues shown to be of more concern to pro-Labor, Democrat or Green voters - from the national agenda. 76 Secondly, it has reduced funding to its most vociferous critics, such as the Australian Conservation Foundation and Friends of the Earth, while increasing funds and support to the more politically palatable nature conservation organisations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature and some of the more traditionalist conservation councils. Doyle also noted that while some of the corporatist strategies of the movement’s second phase remained, negotiating round tables have become increasingly defined and dominated by business. 77

Changes in Tasmania’s national parks movement from the 1960s that resulted in it adopting an environmental and wilderness focus, then becoming a green political force that held the balance of power within the Tasmanian parliament, posed a serious challenge to land use based industries. In Tasmania, as in other Australian states, industry met that challenge by organising to counter some environmental gains and to resist further restrictions in a ‘green backlash’ that appears to be part of a world-wide organised resistance to the aims of the environment movement. Andrew Rowell, who has written about the backlash, says that, while the anti-green movement is strongest in the USA where it has links to the political right, far right and the militia, and involves corporate funding of anti-green groups, it is also present elsewhere, including Tasmania, and it is networking. 78 The theories presented by Hutton, Connors, Doyle and Rowell in relation to changes in the Australian environment movement’s political power and positioning are relevant
to this history which argues that environmentalists were most successful in achieving their goals in relation to national parks during the 1970s and 1980s.

**The Wider Political Context**

The global context of accelerating technological change, environmental damage and world population increase, combined with international capitalism’s push for rapid economic growth accompanied by increasing privatisation, reduced public expenditure and reduced government control of business activity\(^7^9\) has direct repercussions for Tasmania’s national parks. Capitalist economic systems inherently challenge the concept of retaining land in public ownership within national parks and conservation reserves. Donald Worster has explained the impact of capitalism on the environment, writing:

> The capitalists and their theoreticians promised that through the technological domination of the earth, they could deliver a fairer, rational, efficient and productive life for everyone, themselves above all. Their method was simply to free individual enterprise from the bonds of traditional hierarchy and community, whether the bondage derived from other humans or the earth. That meant teaching everyone to treat the earth, as well as each other, with a frank, energetic self-assertiveness, unembarrassed by too many moral or aesthetic sentiments. … Above all, they must learn to pursue relentlessly their own private accumulation of wealth. … They must regard everything around them – the land, its natural resources, their own labour – as potential commodities that might fetch a profit in the market. They must demand the right to produce buy and sell these commodities without outside regulation or interference.\(^8^0\)

Such a way of thinking was supposed to be superior to anything that preceded it because it was more logical and scientific. But more commodities for all had to mean ‘more pollution, more crowding, more depletion, more extinction’, costs that Worster suggested the human mind was not, and might never be, capable of avoiding.\(^8^1\) Worster argued that the earth’s ecology is threatened by more than the capitalist economic system, that the threat includes the larger set of values associated with the rise of bourgeois civilization, the world view of the middle class with its dedication to technology, unlimited production and consumption, self-advancement, individualism and domination of nature. Yet, he observed, if the ecological movement’s task is to overthrow bourgeois civilization, it is ironic that the movement’s strongest following is amongst the middle-class. Can the middle-class carry through a revolution against their own economic self-interest,
he asked, or do they mean to enact pragmatic reforms that will leave the basis of the bourgeois culture intact? 82

The potential destructiveness of human power expressed through capitalism was first comprehensively documented in George Perkins Marsh’s *Man and Nature*, which was published in 1864. Marsh’s book drew attention to changes in the earth’s physical conditions and processes of nature caused by human actions, notably actions promoted by capitalism. It appears that his arguments encouraged ecological thought and, consequently, the national park idea. However, ecology did not emerge as a powerful political force for another hundred years, and it was not until the 1970s that ecology was strong enough in Australia’s social and political consciousness to support the development of environmental legislation and monitoring agencies, including national parks services.

The 1970s might be described by environmentalists as the ‘heyday’ of the Tasmanian national parks system and of the national parks service, as that decade witnessed rapid expansion of the national park estate and increased capacity of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. But, as writers such as Andrew Rowell, Timothy Doyle, Drew Hutton and Libby Connors argue, capitalism responded to increased environmental regulation by launching a counter-movement aimed at deregulating the economy and dismantling or disempowering those government structures responsible for environmental monitoring and control. Government interference in the form of environmental monitoring hampers business and, consequently, the national economy. Environmental protection has marginal status within the free market ideologies that both major Australian political parties have adopted, and environmental protection agencies, including the nature conservation arms of national parks services, have been re-structured to accommodate changes in government policy. Public ownership is problematic, and the relative success of the radical libertarian lobby in economic debate has resulted in a shift towards privatising economic responsibility, with direct consequences for national parks. 83

The changing balance of power within capitalist economies has impacted on national parks administration. Referring to the United States of America, one observer, Michael Frome, wrote;
Years ago the National Park Service built a reputation as a bureau powered by professional ethics, free of political pressures. This is no longer the case. Democratic and Republican administrator’s alike and congressional power brokers have politicized the agency, influencing personnel selection and treating parks like political pork. The National Park Service has caved in and lost its sense of mission, its commitment to protect the parks in perpetuity. 

The National Park Service, as we know it now, cannot provide the necessary leadership. The influence of the director has steadily declined; he follows orders from assorted political supernumeries in the Interior Department. Consequently, the Park Service fails to speak on issues that degrade parks; it pussyfoots around the issues and answers in cautious, politically acceptable terms.

Though it may be assumed that, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, Tasmania’s national park estate had a clear mandate, ongoing political conflicts over whether or not given sites warranted national park designation, wilderness preservation versus types and levels of use, and commercialisation within parks revealed an absence of consensus about the role of the State’s national parks.

Given the significance of the State’s national parks to Tasmania and to Tasmanians, it is important that not only the natural values but also social values embodied in national parks are clarified in order that an agreed understanding of parks’ role and value might guide the future of the State’s national parks estate. Presently, the outcomes of conflicts that inevitably arise largely reflect the political strength of parties involved in the conflict, rather than a rational interpretation of policy. This process will not be simple. It will have to overcome challenges posed by the ritualized conflict over land-use that exists in Tasmania, as well as clarify social values embedded in Tasmania’s national parks and address interactions between parks’ environmental and social values. By examining the history of Tasmania’s national parks and the nature of conflicts associated with them, this thesis aims to contribute to this process through achieving a better understanding of the role and value of Tasmania’s national park estate throughout its history.
Appendix 1: Reserves by IUCN class by area.

2. ibid.
13. ibid., p.46.
16. ibid, p.491.
20. ibid, p.149.
26. ibid, p.290.
30. ibid.
36 ibid, p.114.
38 ibid.
40 ibid, p.3.
41 Interview with M. Jenkin, 3 August 2004.
43 ibid, p.36.
44 ibid, p.46.
46 ibid.
47 ibid, p.143.
50 ibid. p.45.
52 ibid.
55 ibid, p.149.
56 ibid, p.152.
58 ibid, p.122.
59 ibid, p.121.
60 ibid, p.89.
63 ibid., p.5.
66 ibid, p.7.
68 ibid, p.23.
69 ibid, pp. 73 & 82.
70 ibid, p.89.
71 ibid, pp. 90-91.
72 ibid, p.167.
74 T. Doyle, quoting President George Bush, Green Power, 2000, p. 141.
75 T. Doyle, Green Power, 2000, p 176.
77 T. Doyle, Green Power, 2000, p.189.
80 D. Worster, *The Ends of the Earth*, USA, 1988, p.11.
81 ibid, p.17.
85 ibid, p.229
PART 1

Gentlemanly Accommodations:
Politics of Consensus

Chapter 2

Naturalists and Tourism Promoters form a Tasmanian National Parks Movement

Tasmania’s national parks movement emerged in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It arose from a combination of interests pursued by people who supported the establishment of parks for a range of purposes which included fauna and flora preservation, scenery preservation, tourism and public access to recreational parklands. These interests were complementary in some respects and contradictory in others, but the complementary aspects, notably a common goal of achieving national parks, dominated largely because contradictory aspects were not apparent to most people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Then, interest groups that promoted nature preservation worked in close collaboration with tourism interest groups to lobby successive Tasmanian governments to dedicate land for national parks and similar reserves. In addition, governments’ interests in aspects of national parks and nature reserves, notably the revenue that resulted from tourists attracted to Tasmania by its scenic beauty, made them receptive to approaches from interest groups promoting the national park idea.

Belief in the reasons for which people promoted national parks and nature reserves was widely shared at the turn of the century, particularly among members of the middle and upper classes. The majority of park activists, senior government bureaucrats and parliamentarians shared similar social backgrounds, mixed in the same social circles and shared interests in natural history, social progress and nationalism, interests which supported the national park idea. At the turn of the century, when there was a vast amount of Crown land at governments’ disposal, the politics of parks was characterised by consensus and reserve declarations were
largely a matter of gentlemanly accommodations to the interests of protecting Tasmania’s wildlife and natural scenery.

**Fauna Preservation**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reserve proponents’ conservation interests focused on reserves as a means of protecting particular species of wildlife, mostly animals. Conservation of Tasmania’s native game species was a matter of concern to some people and the hunting of black swans was, in particular, an issue of contention from the earliest days of European settlement in Tasmania. Swans were highly regarded for their meat, swan shooting was a popular sport, and swan eggs were considered a delicacy. As early as 1804 Lieutenant Governor Collins advocated for the protection of black swans on the Derwent River, particularly while they were nesting, lest over-killing endanger the food source.¹ Collins’ utilitarian motive for regulating the numbers of game species killed was reflected in the actions of other fauna conservationists, including members of the Tasmanian Game Protection and Acclimatisation Society which formed around sixty years after Collins’ earlier warnings. The Acclimatisation Society worked for the preservation of native game and birds, ‘some of the most useful and beautiful’ of which were, by then, becoming extinct.² It also introduced non-native game species including hares and Californian quail, and British birds such as the skylark which was a ‘source of delight’, and starlings and sparrows which multiplied to an ‘enormous extent’ and had become by 1900 ‘anything but an unmixed blessing’.³

Another group that worked both to preserve native animals and to introduce British game species was the Royal Society. Scientific societies, such as the Van Diemen’s Land Scientific Society, which evolved to the Royal Society of Van Diemen’s Land, for Horticulture, Botany and the Advancement of Science, then the Royal Society of Tasmania, existed in Tasmania from 1829. The Royal Society, which, in its early days, focused on managing a botanical garden, a museum, and ‘collecting useful information regarding the island and its productions’ served as a meeting place for amateur natural historians and nature conservationists.⁴ Because its interests embraced Tasmania’s industrial development and economic advancement as well as issues that related to social
policy and quality of life, the Royal Society’s membership included social leaders and parliamentarians. By providing a meeting place for reserve proponents and social leaders the Royal Society contributed to the politics of consensus that resulted in the proclamation of Tasmania’s earliest reserves.

Though scientific societies such as the Royal Society emerged in Tasmania early in the nineteenth century it was not until the 1860s that people established interest groups that specifically focused on observing and seeking to protect wildlife. The colony of Victoria led the way, establishing an Acclimatisation Society which aimed to conserve imported wildlife, in 1861, and a Field Naturalists’ Club in 1880. Tasmanian naturalists started an ornithological society in 1888, inspiring a movement which led to the formation by 1901 of the Royal Australian Ornithologists Union. In 1904 they established the Tasmanian Field Naturalists’ Club. Thirty people attended a preliminary meeting of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists’ Club and such was their enthusiasm for field trips that two were held prior to the group’s first ordinary meeting, held in October 1904 in the Royal Society’s Board Room. Membership of the Club, the objects of which were ‘the encouragement of the Study of Nature, and the collection, preservation, and systematic classification of Specimens’, grew rapidly, from 62 members at the end of its first year to 100 by 1907.

The emergence of associations such as the Field Naturalists’ and Ornithologists’ was, in part, a result of an interest in natural history - botany, zoology and geology - that was widespread, particularly among members of the middle and upper classes in Victorian Britain and British colonies, including Tasmania, from the 1820s to the 1860s. At that time, amateur natural historians ordered and classified living things into ‘an unassembled jigsaw of thousands of parts, the relation of one to another existing only in terms of a similarity or dissimilarity of stamen, or leaf, or whatever’. They fragmented the world into pieces and studied those pieces independently of their surroundings, and Tasmanian collectors frequently sent samples to England for identification in what was, essentially, a non-ecological approach to the natural world. During the 1860s, however there was a shift
towards a more ecological approach to natural history. Helen Gee has argued that the ideas expressed by George Perkins Marsh in his book *Man and Nature* - warnings that human’s impact on the natural world, impacts such as forest clearing, extensive land clearance and pollution, would eventually render the earth ‘unfit for its “noblest inhabitant”' - had a strong influence on Australian naturalists from the time of the controversial book’s publication in 1864.\(^ {11}\)

Naturalists’ studies of native animals made them aware of some species’ diminishing numbers. Like settlers in other Australian colonies early Tasmanian settlers, through necessity, obtained much of the protein in their diets from the killing of native animals.\(^ {12}\) And the slaughter continued as people assumed the right to kill native animals.\(^ {13}\) Visiting British naturalists included Tasmania in their criticism of Australians’ ruthless attitude towards the country’s native fauna. John Gould, for example, who produced a series of books on Australian wildlife following his visit in the late 1830s, made ‘stony reference to the careless attitude of Australians to their heritage of wildlife, which they took pride in slaughtering’.\(^ {14}\) Gould foresaw that the Tasmanian emu would soon become extinct because of the extent to which the bird and its eggs were consumed, his observation prompting him to ask, ‘how much will the loss of this fine bird be regretted by every right-minded person who claims Tasmania as his father-land?’\(^ {15}\) Depletion of wildlife throughout Australia was exacerbated by collectors who ‘inundated’ Australia to obtain specimens before predicted exterminations took place.\(^ {16}\)

The Tasmanian parliament passed legislation in 1846 to regulate kangaroo hunting.\(^ {17}\) But, despite fears for the future of some Tasmanian wildlife species having been expressed years earlier, it was not until the 1860s - the decade in which Tasmanian naturalists began joining together in national and local natural history organisations - that the Tasmanian parliament acted to protect a broad range of animal species. Large landowners and wealthier merchants together with some members of the legal profession dominated Tasmanian parliaments in the nineteenth century. Government was not based on political parties, though there were factions, and members were able to take an independent stance on issues.\(^ {18}\) This meant that the interests of individual parliamentarians had more direct
influence over political outcomes than they might have in a party-based political system and that political disagreements over reserve proposals were not exacerbated by becoming part of party-based political conflict.

In October 1860, during the premiership of English born lawyer Francis Smith, parliament passed three pieces of legislation - the *Protection of Imported Game Act*; the *Protection of Native Game Act*, and the *Swans Protection Act* - which were aimed at protecting a long-term supply of the most popular species of native game, and the investment involved in efforts to acclimatise species of introduced fauna. In addition to the protection afforded by legislation that restricted the numbers and species of animals hunters could kill, land was set aside for acclimatisation. Green Island in the D’Entrecasteaux Channel, for example, was reserved under a fourteen-year lease for acclimatisation purposes in 1868.19 These measures were promoted by naturalists who were, at that time, joining natural history groups with aims that encouraged their members to take steps to preserve wildlife. Some parliamentarians, being upper middle-class gentlemen, had an interest in natural history and nature conservation themselves, and close social connections between parliamentarians and prominent naturalists created a political environment that was conducive to legislative reform.

The *Protection of Native Game Act 1860* applied to some species of native game, including wild duck, teal, quail, plover, bittern, emu and the bronze-winged pigeon. Under the legislation these birds were not to be taken or killed during the breeding season between August and April. A greater number of native birds were brought under the Act’s provisions in 1868 and in 1874 the protection of a closed hunting season was extended to forest and brush kangaroos. For the benefit of Aboriginals, limits were also placed on the hunting of mutton-birds from islands in Bass Strait, and the rocks and reefs of a number of the islands were reserved for sealing and mutton birding in 1872 and 1891.20 Under the relevant provisions of the Game Act, mutton-birds could legally be killed or captured for sale during a limited season of two months, though it remained allowable for individuals to kill and eat the birds, or take their eggs for immediate consumption, throughout the year.
Seals were ruthlessly exploited by the sealing industry which operated in Bass Strait and their numbers were so seriously depleted by 1820 that the once robust industry faced extinction together with the seals.21 Victoria legislated to protect seals in 1891 and a three-year closure of the seal fishery also served to protect seals in Tasmanian waters at that time.22 In 1894 a deputation consisting of Sir James Wilson Agnew, Bishop Montgomery, Curzon Allport and Alex Morton from the Royal Society, and a representative of the Fisheries Board, met with the Premier Sir Edward Braddon to discuss the introduction of a closed season in Tasmania. The deputation by members of the Royal Society was intended to reinforce the Fisheries Board’s request for a closed season, which had been rejected by the government.23 In the course of the discussion Curzon Allport argued that, though seal numbers had increased during a recent three year ban, if female seals and their young were not protected during the breeding season each year the species would soon be killed off again. Bishop Montgomery explained that indigenous people who lived on the Bass Strait Islands were anxious to make money from sealing and their livelihood would be threatened if the industry were to be thrown open all year, allowing traders to ‘come in and sweep the rocks without any reserve’. He said that sealers themselves had told him of the ‘heart rendering’ cries of young seals which, left motherless, died of starvation and that,

Therefore, on the ground of humanity, and also on the ground of conserving an industry to benefit the half-castes, who were the only remnants of our aboriginal population, he impressed on the Government the necessity for proclaiming a close season for the seals.24

The delegation raised only utilitarian and humanitarian reasons, not species protection in its own right. This was possibly not because members did not see preservation of the species as important, but because the utilitarian approach may have been more persuasive pitted against the political strength of the fishing industry which viewed seals as a menace.25 Despite their precarious situation, seals were not protected in Tasmanian waters until the Seal Protection Act of 1905 which afforded them some protection until it was revoked in response to pressure from fishermen in 1923.26

Swan shooting was the subject of the most overtly political of the game law debates of the late nineteenth century. Unlike the hunting of other animals, swan
shooting, which was a popular sport for, amongst others, members of the middle and upper classes including landowners, was undertaken mostly on public land where conservationists expected game laws to be enforced. In October 1860 parliament proclaimed the *Swans Protection Act* in response to concerns about declining swan numbers. The legislation determined a closed season during which time it was illegal to kill swans or destroy their eggs. A first offence attracted the penalty of 40 shillings or one week in prison, increasing to £10 or one month’s imprisonment for a third offence. Swan shooters, however, lobbied against the restrictions. Residents of Swansea, near Moulting Lagoon, were particularly conspicuous in their efforts. The east-coast town of Swansea was famous at the turn of the century for ‘shooting, fishing and magnificent scenery’, though the number of people who visited the area was limited by its distance from the principal centres of the colony. Two Members of the House of Assembly from Swansea, Frederick Shaw and Carmichael Lyne, spoke against applying an extended closed season to black swans. In the course of a 1901 debate on amendments to the *Game Protection Act* they argued that the number of black swans at Moulting Lagoon had increased sufficiently for restrictions to be eased and that, given that their number had risen to tens of thousands, a limited closed season provided them with adequate protection. The Bill was subsequently amended to meet this objection, causing a disgruntled William Hartnoll, MHA from Longford, to attribute the Council’s amendment to ‘the inhabitants of Swansea still harking after the fleshpots of Egypt’, saying that, ‘after Parliament had voted them such a large sum for their canal, he thought it was bad form for the East Coast people to agitate against the proposal to protect the black swan which was being ruthlessly destroyed’.

A few years later the family of an early advocate for a nature reserve at Freycinet Peninsula, Edward Cotton who lived at the property ‘Kelverdon’ at Lisdillon, near Swansea, invited a member of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club to see how shooting was carried out and to assess the threat to bird numbers. The Club’s founder Edmund Alfred Elliott took up the invitation rode his bicycle over-night from Hobart to Lisdillon and was taken by boat to assess the situation. Reassured, Elliott reported that the number of swans shot should not endanger the population. Egg stealing, he believed, was a greater risk, and he wrote, ‘if vigorous action was
taken in enforcing the £1 penalty for having an egg of the black swan in one’s possession, then there would certainly be no fear of this beautiful bird ever becoming extinct in Tasmania, or even becoming less in numbers.’ However, while Elliot may have been reassured that shooting did not seriously jeopardise the swan population, the Field Naturalists Club continued to lobby for game protection measures on behalf of the species.

Legislation was only one part of the fauna protection equation - there remained the question of enforcement. Game laws were not consistently enforced because support for the legislation was lacking, even among representatives of the State’s legal system. Country justices of the peace were often local landowners who enjoyed shooting, and a policeman willing to try was unlikely to succeed in prosecuting a member of the bench or one of his friends. Many would also have shared the popular belief that it was an individual’s right to kill native game for food or for a livelihood and sympathised with those, including friends and relatives, who wished to exercise that right. One police commissioner’s lack of zeal for prosecuting under the Game Act is reflected in the proceedings of a meeting that took place in 1894 between conservationists William Legge, who attended as the Tasmanian member of the Australasian Committee for the Preservation of Native Fauna, Sir James Agnew, Secretary of the Royal Society, the Attorney-General and the Commissioner of Police, Bernard Shaw. The conservationists put the case that, as a result of over-shooting and nest robbing, notably around Moulting Lagoon, black swans needed to be fully protected for at least one or two years. The Commissioner of Police, who originated from Swansea and was a brother of Frederick Shaw MHA of ‘Redbanks’, protested against conservationists’ use of the word ‘barbarous’ in reference to anything done by Swansea people because, he said, he had been assured by a Swansea resident that all swans shot were carried away to be eaten, contrary to the conservationists’ repeated assertion that many were left to rot. He argued that the birds were very numerous and that many more birds flew away than were shot. Despite the Commissioner’s reassurances, the Attorney-General agreed to amend the Game Act in accordance with the conservationists’ request, and instructed the Police Commissioner to be more vigilant in apprehending people who attempted to steal swan eggs.
While the issue of fauna conservation failed to attract broad popular support, it did become a focus for a growing number of people, mostly intellectuals who were connected through their common membership of groups such as the Royal Society and the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club. Among them was Colonel William Vincent Legge, who combined an interest in natural science with an army career. Legge was a member of a number of scientific societies, including the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science and the Linnaean Society. Following his appointment to the position of Commander of Forces in Tasmania in 1883 he became a Vice-President of the Royal Society of Tasmania and President of the Australasian Ornithologists’ Union, and was active in Tasmania’s early fauna conservation movement.33

Among other members of the Royal Society who were active in fauna conservation were Clive Lord and Thompson Flynn. Clive Lord was an architect, though his interest in natural history led him to become the State’s leading ornithologist and Director of the Tasmanian Museum. Lord became a foundation member of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club when he was fifteen years old, eventually becoming president. He also became secretary of the Royal Society, a fellow of the Linnaean Society, local secretary for the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science and President of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists’ Union. Said to have been an energetic man and a good organiser, Lord was also active in the Hobart Development League and a foundation member of the Hobart Rotary Club. Like Legge and Lord, Thompson Flynn was a member of the Royal Society of Tasmania. Flynn, who lectured in Zoology at the University of Tasmania, was a member of the Linnaean and Zoological societies of London, in addition to being active in community affairs, including adult education, debating and theatre.34

Advocates of fauna conservation, such as William Legge, Clive Lord and Thompson Flynn, represented a small minority of the Tasmanian population. By the turn of the century, however, they were part of an identifiable interest group, people who influenced public thinking and who joined together in delegations to lobby members of parliament for improved fauna conservation measures. Most were members of groups such as the Royal Society and other scientific and
community bodies which supported their cause and, being well educated, articulate, and mostly well connected to the State’s intellectual and political elites, they had access to the decision-making process. They were skilled in organising, public speaking and writing, all valuable tools for attempting to effect social change of the kind they were aiming to achieve - public recognition of the value of fauna preservation.

Arguments for establishing nature reserves and tightening enforcement of the Game Laws were a recurrent topic in newspaper articles that appeared in Hobart’s Mercury newspaper early in the twentieth century. In January 1910, under the heading ‘Bird Sanctuaries’, the paper printed part of an address given to a meeting of the Australasian Ornithologists’ Union, in which the President, Dudley le Souef, described Australia’s reserves as insignificant and inadequate. At the time, Canada had a total of 2,764,800 acres in eight reserves, the USA, with twelve national and provincial parks and game preserves, a total area of 7,258,963 acres, compared to Tasmania’s eleven reserves with a total area of 26,000 acres. In May of the same year the newspaper reported sympathetically on a deputation seeking ministerial support for better protection for native fauna. The Mercury supported the delegation’s request that Crown land be used for a large fauna reserve, suggesting that the cost of rangers might be met by a gun tax or the sale of timber and bark from the reserve. In response to the delegation’s proposal that the government create a Board of Commissioners to regulate closed seasons, licenses and other fauna matters, the newspaper commented that this reform would be worthwhile if it comprised the right people and was given powers extensive enough to meet the challenge it would face. The delegation apparently elicited sympathy for its case from the Chief Secretary. The Mercury called for action:

The question now is whether that sympathy is going to show itself in deeds. This matter has come up from time to time during many years, and in no single instance have Ministers failed to say how heartily they approve of something being done to check the ruthless destruction which goes on. But having made nice little speeches, full of fine sentiments, Ministers have been satisfied that their duty was done, and that has been the end.36

In September 1913 Thompson Flynn addressed a meeting of the Field Naturalists Club on the need for better measures to protect native fauna. In its report of the
meeting, the *Mercury* supported Flynn’s call for a Game Commission. But the journalist did not support Flynn’s suggestion that representatives of groups such as the Royal Society, Field Naturalists and Tourist Association should be included in its membership. The groups had no claim to administrative powers in the matter, the journalist wrote, suggesting that not all supporters of fauna preservation shared the same perspective or motives. The *Mercury* recommended that the Fisheries Commission be dissolved and a new body formed to control fisheries as well as administer the game laws. With revenue from game license fees, the newspaper suggested, the new body would be able to advance fish and animal acclimatisation, check poaching and promote tourism by developing Tasmania as a resort for sportsmen. Not quite Professor Flynn’s aim, though the newspaper noted that Flynn and his colleagues were to be congratulated on having taken-up the matter and progressing the case for reform.37

The issue of uncontrolled killing of birds, notably by boys with pea-rifles, was ongoing. In 1916 the *Mercury* reported on a Field Naturalists Club meeting at which the Reverend Atkinson drew the Club’s attention to a letter in the newspaper about the wanton slaughter of birds, and asked if the club proposed to take any action. Clive Lord explained that the club had approached members of the government, then a Liberal government led by Sir Walter Lee, about the matter on many occasions, but to no avail. Given the apparent futility of lobbying efforts in the prevailing attitudinal climate, the possibility of a different approach was raised - that of encouraging the Education Department to assist in changing attitudes by taking-up the work of the Gould League of Bird Lovers, which had been incorporated in school curriculums in Victoria and New South Wales.38

By the start of the twentieth century Tasmanian fauna preservationists had become an identifiable and effective interest group which had achieved some of its goals through informal lobbying, media exposure and delegations to parliamentarians. Advocates for fauna preservation were persistent and they succeeded in placing the issue on Tasmanian social and political agendas, even though it was not given as high a priority as they may have wished. Protection of wildlife remained a low priority while the costs of law enforcement and reserve management appeared to be so much greater than did any financial or political gains that may have resulted.
When governments’ perception of the relative costs and benefits of nature reserves did shift a little in favor of reserves at the turn of the century, it was more a result of their interest in reserves’ tourism potential than recognition of any inherent value in wildlife preservation.

Tourism

In Tasmania at the turn of the century, as in the rest of Australia, there was a broad consensus of support for all forms of development. For farmers, a larger population meant more consumers for their produce, businessmen foresaw new enterprises and markets, and for workers, development meant more jobs.39 The virtues of development were not questioned by the mainstream of society, and tourism meant economic development. Consequently, many of the people who were active in pursuing economic opportunities for Tasmania were interested in promoting the island’s tourism potential. At the same time, conservationists were aware of tourism’s importance in securing government support for reserve proposals and they incorporated it in their arguments for new reserves, though the extent to which they used this argument genuinely, or expediently, is not always clear. At the turn of the century, however, the inherent conflict between park usage and conservation of natural values was not apparent, and most of the individuals who pushed for nature reserves appear to have done so because of their combined interests in nature conservation, recreation and tourism.

In the early days of European settlement, when pastimes such as fishing and nature rambling were popular, and most ex-Europeans held a nostalgic attachment to things that reminded them of ‘home’, Tasmania’s cool climate and British-like countryside provided a natural attraction to holiday-makers, as Bolger has argued.40 The first tourists to arrive in numbers, from the 1820s, were Anglo-Indians. Encouraged by writers who appraised the colonies as possible destinations for Indian colonials, many spent their leave in the colony, sometimes combining a holiday and period of climatic relief with an opportunity to evaluate the colony as a future option for settlement.41

Tourists from other Australian colonies became a significant adjunct to the Tasmanian population from the 1860s, largely as the result of the gold
discoveries, because money made from the Victorian and NSW gold rushes meant money that could be spent on holidays. Between 1851 and 1861 a third of the world’s gold output came from Victoria, and Melbourne became a busy city from which people sought respite.

Hundreds of fortunate adventurers, enriched by success at the diggings, found their way to Van Diemen’s Land, and freely spent the wealth they had so easily acquired. Hotels were crowded, stagecoaches and all manner of conveyances were loaded to excess with excursionists; shopkeepers sold their goods at an immense profit, and land and house property rose to a fictitious value.

In the 1860s a passenger vessel traveled between Melbourne and Launceston every fifth day. Ferries also linked Hobart with Sydney by a fortnightly passenger service, and Melbourne with Hobart by a fortnightly service in winter increasing to three times monthly during summer. By 1904 the annual number of visitors to the State was estimated to be 20,000, which was significant compared to the State’s permanent population of around 173,000.

Tasmania’s picturesque mountainous scenery, its cool, invigorating climate, its likeness to England, and its healthy environment were all promoted to potential tourists. Claims of Tasmania’s comparative ‘healthiness’ were supported not only by the comfort that new settlers experienced in the cool temperatures, but by statistics showing, for example, a low rate of death from preventable diseases in Hobart compared to that in other cities of Australia and Great Britain. In recognition of the saleable value of the colony’s climate and environment it was portrayed as ‘The Sanatorium of the South’, where heat-weary colonials could recuperate and there were, to this end, plans to develop a major spa-hotel in Lower Sandy Bay, in 1888. In his 1870 Guide to Excursionists between Australia and Tasmania, ‘Dedicated to all in Search of Health, Recreation and Pleasure’, H. Thomas wrote,

Tasmania is the Sanatorium of the Australian colonies. The doctors must be of this opinion, judging by the number of patients sent there to follow the example of the islanders by eating, drinking and sleeping well.

Thomas’ advice to Tasmanians regarding the health of their colony’s finances was that they ‘will do well to promote the influx of summer visitors, tourists and
invalids from the mainland, by whose expenditure so many classes of the community cannot fail to benefit.50

Tasmania’s cool, bracing air, which encouraged healthy pursuits such as walking and fishing, featured in tourist guides. The earliest of these was Thomas’ first Guide to Excursionists, which was published in 1869, and writers, tourist organisations and steamship companies subsequently produced numerous similar publications.51 Thomas Cook & Sons’ Railway Official Guide Book to Tasmania, of 1894, gave Tasmania’s environment the following praise:

Tasmania, which may be justly termed the Switzerland of the South, presents an attractive succession of mountains and valleys, peaks and glens, and has many other advantages of climate over any other part of Australia. In the lowlands there is neither excessive heat or cold, the days are bright, with a cool, refreshing breeze, and a hot night is absolutely unknown. … The exhilaration and sensation of pleasure in life experienced in the morning at an elevation of from 1,000–2,000 feet above sea level, and the delicious aromatic odor of the Tasmanian forest, are such as words utterly fail to convey – to be realised they must be experienced… Good roads, with comfortable hotels, will be found in all the older settled districts of the Colony. The principal rivers and several of the lakes are well stocked with salmonideæ in various forms and native fish; game and wildfowl are plentiful in many localities; and the bays and estuaries, besides forming a romantic cruising-ground, abound with many varieties of native fish.52

Another guide book, The New Tasmanian Guide Book: for visitors, intending settlers, miners etc, recommended that visitors take a walk on Mt Wellington, along tracks that would take them among immense trees, ferns and beautiful grass trees. It suggested a day’s fishing on the Derwent River while recovering from fatigue on the following day, and a visit to Russell Falls. In its description of Caves Side and the Mole Creek Caves it suggested that ‘lanterns, matches, a ball of stout twine as a clue, and one or two very light ten foot ladders, would enable many cross passages to be explored, and possibly many new wonders discovered’, adding that ‘the Government reserves in the immediate surroundings are well adapted for picnicing’.53

These guide books portrayed Tasmania as a rewarding destination for recreational tourism. Not only did they promote the State’s natural beauty as a tourist attraction, they drew attention to Tasmania’s recreational opportunities, such as waters to fish, mountains to climb and caves to explore, and the benefits, in terms of health and comfort, of recreating in a cool climate.
Tasmania’s civic leaders were aware of tourism’s potential to boost the State’s economy, and they were also aware that, in the face of competition from other colonies and New Zealand, tourism infrastructure needed to be developed and maintained if the industry was to prosper. In 1889 citizens of Launceston formed the Launceston City and Suburban Improvement Association, with the aim of beautifying Launceston and encouraging tourists to stay in the city.\textsuperscript{54} The Association’s main project was to improve access to Cataract Gorge and develop the site as a resort, which it did by constructing paths, seats and shelters, and planting shrubs and ferns. A southern equivalent, the Hobart Improvement and Visitors’ Aid Society appeared the following year, but lapsed. Alarmed at the fall in tourist numbers that resulted from economic depression - the 1890 level of approximately 20,000 had dropped to 10,000 in 1900\textsuperscript{55} - the Premier, Henry Dobson, called a meeting at the Hobart Town Hall at which the Tasmanian Tourists’ Association (TTA) was formed, in 1893. The aims of the TTA were:

\begin{enumerate}
  \item to circulate information regarding the natural attractions of Tasmania as a pleasure and health resort:
  \item to initiate and support any measures which will improve communication with Tasmania by sea;
  \item generally to promote and support all proposals which may increase the number of tourists and provide for their convenience and pleasure;
  \item to interview and correspond with the Government, public bodies, companies or individuals, to further the above objects.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{enumerate}

Dobson was President of the Association, which had a committee of forty-three members and an executive of five: the Hon. Frederick Piesse; Rev. Joseph Woolnough; Philip Seager; Francis Mather, and John Beattie.\textsuperscript{57} Many of the TTA’s members were actively involved in the national parks movement - Dobson, Seager and Beattie became members of the National Park Association, Mather successfully lobbied for Freycinet Peninsula and Schouten Island to be proclaimed a fauna reserve, and there were other committee members, such as Leonard Rodway, who were prominent in both the TTA and the national parks movement. The TTA aimed to assist the Tasmanian economy, and therefore Tasmanians, prosper, through the general promotion of tourism throughout the State. However, the group’s emphasis on developing access to, and facilities such as shelters and tracks within, natural areas revealed that many of the group’s most active members had a particular interest in nature reserves. The TTA’s commitment to
the parks movement was formalised in October 1901 when it established a sub-committee, of which both Francis Mather and Leonard Rodway were foundation members, to focus on the protection of native flora and fauna. As Sandra Bardwell argued in her brief account of Tasmanian national parks history, the TTA took the lead at the turn of the century in campaigning for the protection of scenic areas and the creation of public reserves.

A number of prominent Tasmanians were actively involved in the TTA. The Association’s President, Henry Dobson, was State Premier from 1892 to 1894 and represented Tasmania in the Senate from 1901 to 1910. A philanthropist, Dobson worked to relieve the unemployment of the 1890s and, during the depression, refused the full salary for the position of Premier. His commitment to access to education led him to instigate compulsory school attendance, but his advocacy of Tasmania as a tourist resort, particularly the preservation and promotion of the Colony’s natural assets, was paramount among his public works. Dobson brought the issue of ‘wanton and mischievous destruction’ of tree ferns at Mt Wellington to the attention of a meeting of the Royal Society in 1884. Many locations on the mountain, he said, had been robbed of their beauty by the ‘stupid destruction’ of the tree ferns and he was sorry to say, ‘this destruction was permitted by many of whom better things might have been expected, and in very many cases, for the mere decoration of a ballroom’. Dobson recommended that the Mt Wellington Reserve be made a ‘People’s Park’ and the removal of ferns and other trees be prohibited in order to stop the senseless waste of beauty. He worked for the preservation of natural areas through his role as President of the TTA from 1895 to 1914, and his efforts to secure a national park on Mt Wellington, with a hotel to provide accommodation at The Springs. Later, he became an active member of the National Park Association and National Park Board.

John Beattie, a well-known Tasmanian photographer, contributed his photographic skills to the cause of promoting and protecting areas of outstanding scenic beauty in Tasmania. He was appointed Tasmania’s official photographer in 1896 and the colony’s overseas agents used his photographs to further immigration as well as tourism. Beattie’s work, which included prints, postcards,
lanternslides, and the artwork for a set of postage stamps, stressed the wildly romantic aspects of the island’s beauty. He was a member of the TTA and the Royal Society, to which he presented papers and illustrated talks on the case for reserving areas of natural beauty such as the Hartz Mountains and the Gordon River. Beattie presented an account of a photographic tour he took through the bush from Geeveston to the summit of the Hartz Mountains to the Royal Society in 1894. He told his audience that the Hartz Mountains were likely to become popular as a tourist resort because they ‘comprehend every phase of tourist enjoyment’, and were easily accessible via a scenic route from Hobart. The reasons he gave for preserving land along the banks of the Gordon River, where the slow-growing Huon pine was harvested, extended further than tourism, to the conservation of Huon pine forest and West Coast flora.

In view of the annually increasing scarcity of suitable timber for the world’s requirements, it would appear to be a matter deserving of great attention at the hands of the Government to endeavor by every means within its own power, not only to conserve the existing forests, but to take every step possible to increase the supply of so valuable a timber (Huon pine), with possibilities in the future of considerable magnitude…

Apart from the aesthetic side of the Gordon’s attractions, its scientific aspect, as contributing a unique display of our West Coast flora, must become apparent to all, and should warrant beyond question its rigid protection against axe and fire. It is necessary that urgent measures be taken in bringing about this protection, for already whispers of the erection of a sawmill are in the air, and this, if once established without restrictive precautions, would undoubtedly mean the “beginning of the end” to the beauty of the Gordon…

Some attempt at protection has, I believe, already been made, the Government having reserved a strip of land five chains wide on each side of the river, for a distance of 16 miles from the entrance at Macquarie Harbor. This is totally inadequate to fully protect the river from the depredations of the timber hunter.

Disregarding the value of Huon Pine as boat building timber, Beattie suggested that the area had no economic value to preclude its dedication as a reserve. Beattie had good reason to think his proposal to protect some stands of Huon pine from logging might succeed given that concern about the species’ future had led to the appointment, in 1878, of a Parliamentary Select Committee to ‘enquire into and report upon the necessary steps to be taken for the Preservation from utter destruction of the valuable indigenous Forest Trees known as the Huon Pine and Blackwood’. As the banks of the Gordon River had no apparent value for settlement, agriculture or mining, Beattie thought the area’s potential to attract
tourists through its scenic beauty could secure the political support necessary to achieve its protection as a scenic reserve.

The economic value of this reserve to the state, apart from aesthetic or scientific considerations, may be regarded as practically “nil,” the land being worthless for settlement or agriculture, and no minerals have, I believe, been discovered …

The preservation of scenery in other parts of the world is receiving the greatest attention, and even in England a society has been formed for the preservation of Swiss scenery. How much greater is the necessity existent in a country like Tasmania, relying so much upon her tourist traffic, to preserve by every means within her power attractions without which such a traffic would diminish rather than increase, to the serious loss of the state. One hesitates to put this selfish aspect of the case before a learned society, but necessity knows no law,” and, afterall, a public awakening may be better aroused by a proposition in this form rather than from a more scientific viewpoint.67

Beattie’s apology for attaching his case to the ‘selfish’ argument of tourism was perhaps unnecessary, given the number of members of the Society who were also members of the TTA.

Another prominent Tasmanian who served on the executive of the TTA was Francis Mather. Mather was a Hobart businessman who was well connected in Hobart’s business and social circles, serving on the committees of a number of business, charitable and religious organisations in addition to being a committee member of the TTA.68

Three other members of the TTA’s executive committee - Seager, Piesse and Woolnough - also held influential public positions. Philip Seager was the Official Administrator of Public Grants and Registrar of the Supreme Court. A Commissioner of Fisheries, Seager acted as Secretary to the Royal Commission on Fisheries and the Commission on Salmon Fisheries. He was interested in horticulture, being honorary secretary of the Horticultural Society for many years, and took an active role in promoting the tourist movement.69

Piesse and Woolnough were both members of parliament. Frederick Piesse worked for social reform through his parliamentary role in addition to his community involvements that included membership of the Southern Tasmanian Political Reform Association and the committee of the Victoria Convalescent Home.70 The Reverend Joseph Woolnough represented the District of Sorell in
the House of Assembly, in addition to being a Magistrate, Senior Chaplain to the Tasmanian Defence Forces, and a member of the Royal Society.71

Leonard Rodway, who was, in his time, Tasmania’s leading botanist, was also a member of the TTA. A dentist by profession, Rodway was passionately interested in botany and served as honorary government botanist between 1896-1932. A foundation member of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists’ Club, he was a popular leader of its meetings, excursions and Easter camps. Rodway was also a member of the Royal Society, a trustee of the Tasmanian Museum and Botanical Gardens and Director of the Gardens for a time. He lectured in botany at the University of Tasmania from 1923-1929, wrote numerous articles and texts about botany and had several botanical species named ‘rodwayi’ in his honor. A keen bushman, the nomenclature of physical features in the vicinities of Mt Field, Ben Lomond and Cradle Mountain also perpetuates his memory.72 The predominance of people such as Rodway, Dobson, Seager and Mather, all of whom demonstrated an interest in nature preservation, in the affairs of the TTA influenced the Tourist Association to focus on developing areas of natural beauty as tourist destinations.

The Hobart-based TTA ran a Tourist Bureau in conjunction with Cook’s Travel Agency opposite the Post Office in Elizabeth Street, from which it issued excursion tickets and distributed advertising material. The association organised the construction of tracks to fishing lakes and scenic spots such as the Hartz Mountains and Mt Field, lobbied the government to provide facilities such as the road to The Springs at Mt Wellington, and supervised government-owned accommodation houses at Interlarken, Lake St Clair and the Hartz Mountains.73

The Northern Tasmanian Tourists’ Association, based in Launceston, and the North-West Tourist Association complemented the work of the TTA in the northern regions, and smaller bodies existed in Deloraine, Burnie, Devonport, Queenstown, Wynyard, Zeehan, Longford, Westbury, Ulverstone and Swansea.74 Both the Hobart and Launceston bodies organised tourist drives. From Hobart, transport was provided for excursions to The Springs, Fern Tree, Brown’s River (Kingston), Derwent Park, Glenorchy, Mt Rumney, and Frederick Henry Bay. From Launceston, excursionists could take a cab drive to Corra Lynn, the electric
power station, Perth, Longford, Ravenswood, Carrick, Dilston or Rosevears. The Northern Tasmanian Tourist Association (NTTA) aimed to capture as large a share of the tourist traffic as possible for the north of the state. It did this by promoting beauty spots in and near Launceston, including places along the Fingal Line towards the East Coast such as Ben Lomond, St Columba Falls, Scamanda and Falmouth Beach, in addition to the caves at Chudleigh and Mole Creek, and making these places accessible to tourists. Like the TTA it produced tourist information and organised excursions. The NTTA assumed responsibility for tracks on Ben Lomond and Mt. Barrow, some caves in the Chudleigh district, and managed government accommodation houses at Lake Leake and Miena.  

Like its southern counterpart, the Northern Tasmanian Tourist Association concentrated on developing tourist access to natural attractions. The Association was eager for all the caves in the Chudleigh area, some of which were in private hands, to be protected, arguing that they rivalled NSW’s Jenolan Caves in beauty and formation. Given proper supervision they had the potential to become the most attractive feature of the island to visitors. The caves, which were accessible from the Mole Creek Railway Station, were being damaged by visitors and, in 1899, the NTTA sought government support for its proposal that they be vested in the Association as Trustees so that steps could be taken for their proper supervision and preservation. In its correspondence with the Premier the NTTA argued that there was no doubt the area had tremendous potential as an attraction to tourists and that, with careful management, the site could be made to yield a good financial return for the government.  

The government did eventually purchase some of the privately owned caves and took steps towards better preserving all the caves in the area, but not until some years later, after the establishment of the Government Tourist Bureau.

Until 1914, when the Earle Labor Government established a government tourist bureau, Tasmanian governments’ role in promoting tourism went little beyond providing limited financial support to the tourist associations, which relied heavily on voluntary effort. The financial support provided to the TTA in 1905 amounted to £200, divided equally between north and south. The TTA saw that level of funding as inadequate, and members met with the Premier to request an increase.
They did not believe that two hundred pounds a year, conditional on being matched pound for pound by private subscriptions, was sufficient for the Association’s work, particularly since the value of tourist income to the State was estimated to be £20,000 per annum. At that meeting, the Premier reassured the delegates that he was not in favor, ‘at present, at any rate, of forming a Government department in the place of the splendid energy, zeal and ability displayed by both North and South by the executive of the association’. However, the fact that he raised the possibility, if only to reject it, indicates that assuming control of tourism was an option of which the government was aware.

Hobart's most popular tourist attraction was Mt Wellington. During the 1905-1906 season 10,320 tourists were driven to The Springs. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1905 to allow for the construction of an aerial railway to convey passengers from Cascades to the Pinnacle, changing cages at The Springs. Though the plan had public support, including that of the TTA, it failed to gain the necessary financial backing, largely because it would have been inoperable for eight months of the year due to weather conditions, and the plan lapsed. As a result of public and TTA agitation, legislation was passed in 1906 to preserve part of the eastern slope, near The Springs, for a National Park. A group of people, led by Henry Dobson, applied for permission to erect a hotel at The Springs to accommodate people visiting the park. The proposal met with concerted opposition from the Hobart Corporation which had, thirty-five years earlier, been vested with control of a reserve representing a substantial area of the mountain for the purpose of securing Hobart’s water supply. An acrimonious debate ensured over possible harm to Hobart’s water supply that could result from the hotel, the outcome of which was that the National Park failed to eventuate, a hotel was finally built but good faith between the TTA and both the Tasmanian government and Hobart Corporation was not. Undoubtedly this incident helped to clarify, in the minds of some parliamentarians and government officials, the potential advantages of a government controlled tourist body.

The Tasmanian Tourist Association continued to operate until 1914, when the government assumed its functions. The take-over was attributed to financial mismanagement on the part of the TTA, but given that tourism was said to be
worth £400,000 to Tasmania by 1913\textsuperscript{85}, and other Australian States had followed New Zealand’s lead in assuming regulation of their tourist sectors, the mismanagement issue was probably a precipitating factor rather than being the sole reason for bringing about the change. In February 1914 the Chief Secretary received a letter of complaint about the TTA from the Devonport Municipal Council based on the absence of any reference to NW Coast attractions in TTA publications - an example of many complaints about bias that were being made about the TTA at the time.\textsuperscript{86} In the previous year the TTA had proposed a Co-operative Advertising Scheme to rationalise the separate tourist promotion efforts of the tourist associations, the Railways Department, the Hobart Marine Board and chambers of commerce. The proposal failed to gain support because it was feared that the new authority would be controlled by the TTA and, because of the predominance of TTA members’ financial interests in the South, promote Hobart and the South at the expense of the rest of the State.\textsuperscript{87} The Railways Department at the time was pressuring the government to assume control of tourism because cars were taking over from rail as the main form of tourist transport.\textsuperscript{88} That Department had, in 1913, taken the initiative of opening a tourist bureau in Melbourne in an effort to increase tourist traffic to aid the ailing railway, and had produced its own Tasmanian guide book. In 1914 the government formed a committee to address a reorganisation of the TTA’s affairs, and that committee recommended the establishment of a government department. In December of the same year a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into the TTA’s accounts, since income from tourist drives to The Springs had failed to match ticket sales, indicating theft and, implicitly, mismanagement on the part of the TTA.\textsuperscript{89} The TTA, which was, by then, responsible for a task that had become too large and too complex for a voluntary association of its kind to manage, was subsequently abolished. In its place the Government established a Tourist Bureau as part of the Railway Department, with Evelyn Temple Emmett, an employee of the Railway Department who had been sent to Melbourne the previous year to open a Tasmanian Government Railways Tourist Office, as its head.

Tasmania’s first Labor Government was elected in 1914, during a period in which the State’s economy faced the effects of the beginning of World War One, a severe drought and major fires. Issues relating to economic development were
prominent and the Tasmanian Workers’ Political League, which set the platform for the Parliamentary Labor Party, called for more state ownership and involvement in major economic enterprises as a means to reform society and redistribute wealth. Having at last achieved power, however, the pragmatic element within the Party, conscious of the limitations to what a government with limited finance and a conservative upper house could achieve, guided it along a path of caution. Consequently, a motion that the Labor Party adopt the socialist objective was rejected, as was a sweeping land nationalisation proposal, but the government did assume a more regulatory role in some spheres in order to achieve what it saw as necessary social reform, or economic efficiencies. The Workers’ Political League passed a resolution at its 1915 conference calling for state ownership where practicable and necessary. The Government, led by John Earle, interpreted this directive moderately. Taking over the tourist associations and ownership of the State’s hydro scheme were among the few enterprises for which it assumed responsibility.90 Significantly for the Tasmanian national parks system, the Earl government, having assumed responsibility for tourism, proceeded to take responsibility for the management and administration of national parks and reserves, establishing the Scenery Preservation Board under its own legislation, in 1916.

Once it had assumed control of tourism the government had a more direct interest in the various components of the industry, including the direction and administration of nature reserves. The way in which the government would interpret its role in relation to scenic reserves was not clear, however, and national park activists - people who advocated reserves either for scenery or fauna protection purposes - regrouped to continue the pursuit of their goals. Most of the men who were conspicuous in lobbying for reserves, and for the resources to open them up for the public, were members of the TTA in addition to other groups such as the Royal Society and the Field Naturalists Club. By 1914 some had joined a new interest group established specifically to secure Tasmania’s first national park at Mt Field. Promoters of tourism who were interested in scenery reserves joined with other nature preservationists in the National Park Association, a group that proceeded to lobby government in relation to its reserve acquisition and management function.
The National Park Association was Tasmania’s first interest group to focus specifically on national park issues. It was, from its beginning, an interest group that comprised the different interests of fauna and flora conservation, recreation and tourism, interests that were, at the time, seemingly compatible to most people, and the combined interests formed an effective lobby for Tasmania’s first national park.

National parks: a response to demand for public access to parkland

The idea of a Tasmanian national park was nurtured in the late nineteenth century by the political strength of democratic ideals in Australia and the USA, ideals that were derived from Britain and some other European countries. During the nineteenth century egalitarian ideals, combined with the effect of industrialization which had relegated many urban workers to unhygienic living conditions, fueled a demand for public access to parkland. Tasmanian authorities, like their counterparts in other parts of Australia and the USA, were able to respond to that demand through their control over the allocation of unclaimed Crown lands.

Prior to the egalitarian revolutions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Europe’s parklands were held in private hands, mostly those of nobility. The word ‘park’ actually derives from the Old French, or Middle English word ‘pare’, meaning ‘an enclosed piece of ground stocked with beasts of the chase, held by prescription or by the King’s grant’. Following the French Revolution parks such as the Bois de Boulogne were taken from the Crown and opened to the public. Many of London’s parks were similarly turned over to public use, and a precedent was set when London’s Victoria Park was purchased especially for public use in 1842. These public parklands provided places where people could temporarily escape from the worst of the noisy, smelly urban environments in which many of them lived. The concept was emulated in Tasmania and other Australian colonies, where public recreation parks were set aside in most of the new cities and towns.

Tasmanian governments proclaimed land as public reserves from the 1860s. Legislation was passed in 1858 that tightened control of land distribution, and
provided for land to be reserved for public purposes. Until then land had been
granted and re-sold under the power of the Lieutenant-Governor with minimal
regulation, resulting in the concentration of large tracts of the best arable land in
the hands of a few powerful families. The *Wastelands Act 1858* allowed for the
purchase of surveyed land, but it also formalised guidelines for the setting aside of
land for public purposes. Under the legislation the Governor-in Council could
reserve land for public purposes such as roads, schools, churches and places for
the recreation and amusement of the inhabitants of a city or township, and the
Surveyor-General became the Commissioner for the disposal of Crown lands.

The first public reserves proclaimed under the Act were recreational parks in, or
adjoining, townships. To these were added a lesser number of botanical gardens,
cricket grounds, racecourses and agricultural showgrounds. In addition to the
provisions of the Wastelands Act, the *Queen’s Domain & Launceston Swamp Act
1860* dedicated 634 acres of the Queen’s Domain, Hobart, and 72 acres of the
eastern portion of the Launceston Swamp, for public use and recreation. Though
it shared the origins of the public parkland tradition from which these recreation
reserves were derived, the national parks movement that emerged in Tasmania in
the 1880s comprised a number of social forces which called for a different type of
reserve, public reserves that embraced unspoilt natural landscapes and expansive
areas of natural habitat.

In Australia, where land belonged to the Crown until granted to, or purchased by a
new settler, the opportunity existed for a different type of public reserve from
Europe’s urban parks. Reserves of a type that came to typify the national park
concept began to appear in Australia, similarly to the USA, from the 1860s. These
parks were generally larger and further away from metropolitan centres than were
urban parklands, train travel having followed close on the heels of European
settlement, and they featured elements of impressive natural scenery such as
waterfalls, rock formations or stands of ancient forest. Not only did they serve the
purposes of recreation and scenery preservation but, soon after their inception in
Australia and later in the USA, they were also promoted as wildlife sanctuaries.
As Alfred Runte has argued, the idea of democracy is interwoven in the early history of the national parks movement. Americans were condemned by European visitors in the 1830s for allowing the beauty of Niagara Falls to be spoiled for the purposes of public enjoyment and national pride by private developers.96 The European writer Alex de Toqueville, author of *Democracy in America*, urged one of his friends to hasten to Niagara if he wished to see the place in its grandeur, before it was completely spoiled. His concerns were echoed by other European critics with the claim that Niagara, after all, did not belong to Canada or the USA, but that ‘such spots should be deemed the property of mankind’, since their destruction compromised ‘the tastes, the morals, and the enjoyments of all men’.97

Such criticisms, and concern about the implications for democracy of private profiteering at Niagara, did not go unheeded. Following Abraham Lincoln’s declaration in 1864 of the reserve that was to form the basis of the present Yosemite National Park, Frederick Law Olmstead wrote a report on the park’s management to the Yosemite Commissioners in which he rejected the elitist tradition of a few rich people monopolising ownership of, and access to, areas of scenic beauty. Olmstead argued that it was a duty of government to assist all citizens in their pursuit of happiness, by creating public parks. Inspired, no doubt, by the lesson provided by the commercial exploitation of Niagara Falls, Olmstead wrote that it was a government’s duty to protect areas of outstanding natural beauty from despoilation in order that their scenic beauty would be preserved for public enjoyment for all time.98

Social reformers in Tasmania also challenged the elitist tradition of rich people monopolizing access to areas of scenic beauty. By the 1870s a number of people were starting to view as unacceptable the state of social and political inertia that characterized Tasmania, inertia demonstrated by the absence of manhood suffrage, social mobility and opportunity.99 A group of young men in their twenties and thirties, most of whom were born in the colony and many of whom had taken up law with the object of achieving social reform, embarked on a programme of law reform, workers’ education and recreation, and public works aimed at achieving social progress.100 Provision of public parkland was among the
areas of interest to these people and some became directly involved in Tasmania’s early national parks movement.

In the early 1870s Tasmanian social reformers started the Minerva Club, where members discussed intellectual topics, held debates, played chess and listened to speeches extolling the virtues of democracy. A number of Minerva Club members went on to play prominent roles in Tasmanian politics, and some became involved in the national parks movement. The Minerva Club produced *Quadrilateral*, a political journal for people ‘who, being dissatisfied with the present conditions of mankind, seek to improve … a condition of things which they believe is not consistent with justice or the well-being of the race’. The *Quadrilateral* article ‘Public Lands’, which was written in 1874 probably by Andrew Inglis Clark who later became Tasmania’s Attorney General, reflects the democratic ideals that influenced Tasmanian politics, and assisted the national parks movement, in the late nineteenth century,

…what right has the present, or any government, to sell the land, which we assert is not only the property of the present generation, but also of those in all time to come. “The Land is the Lord’s”, the use and produce thereof only the property of the people.

Membership of two other associations that were formed in Hobart in the mid 1880s, the Land Nationalization Society and the Tasmanian Political Reform Association, overlapped that of the Minerva Club, and some early parks activists were also members of these associations. Democratic and social reform movements were not responsible for the first national parks and nature reserves, but they created a social environment that strongly supported the reservation of land for public use, and a political climate in which a national parks movement could hardly fail to achieve at least some of its goals.

A climate conducive to the establishment of national parks was also fostered by the idea of progress which, like democracy, was prominent in social and political thought during the final decades of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth century. The idea of progress, embraced by Tasmania’s intellectual and civic leaders, followed on the heels of industrialization as a consequence of scientific advances and general improvements in material standards of living.
Progressive ideas spread in Tasmania from the 1870s and, from then until after the First World War, the virtues of industrial, material and economic progress were virtually unquestioned. At meetings of the Royal Society, papers advocating the expansion of the mining and timber industries, and hydro industrialization, were read alongside others on natural history and nature reserves. Resource exploitation and the conservation of natural resources were not viewed as contradictory, partly because of the nature of scientific understandings, and partly because of the relatively small scale of industry compared to seemingly limitless natural resources.

The expansion of railways to transport workers and produce was central to the idea of progress. As Richard West Sellars argued in relation to the USA’s Yellowstone National Park, strategically placed national parks had the potential to assist the viability of a railway line. Tasmania’s small population meant that railways struggled to achieve financial viability, but, if a railway line were to transport visitors to a reserve, it would stand a better chance of profitability.

The importance of tourist development to Tasmania’s economy was widely recognised by the time railway expansion became an issue in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Until the transportation of convicts to Tasmania ended in 1852, England sent £350,000 per annum to pay for prisoners’ maintenance and custody. When transportation ceased not only was a source of free labor lost, but so too was this revenue. In 1875 the island’s entire revenue did not exceed £280,000, and Tasmanians ‘declared themselves to be ruined’. Maritime industries such as shipbuilding made some contribution to the colony’s economy, and mining, timber, agricultural and pastoral industries were being developed, though difficulties posed by poor transportation infrastructure, drought and rabbits meant that progress was slow. But Tasmania enjoyed a reputation as the prettiest of the colonies. Hobart, with its beautiful convict-built buildings and picturesque setting, was described with home-grown pride as having more natural advantages providing for tourist traffic than possibly any other capital in the world. Tasmanian parliamentarians, community leaders and businessmen believed in the importance of tourist development to the colony’s future. Public recreation areas such as national parks helped tourism, tourists helped to support
railways and railways supported industrial and economic progress for Tasmania. National parks were, therefore, consistent with the interests of progress in addition to those of nature conservation - which situated them in politics of consensus.

Public health was another aspect of progressive ideas that assisted the national park movement. Though conditions were not as bad as in some other Australian and European cities, a lack of water sewerage, poor housing and overcrowding in parts of Hobart and Launceston led to illness and disease, and major outbreaks of measles, typhoid, scarlet fever and diphtheria in the 1870s. Worst affected were the low-lying city areas, where members of the working classes mostly lived. The reason why higher areas were generally healthier was not understood prior to a knowledge of germ theory, but high places such as mountains were recognised as having healthful qualities, and democracy called for public access to them. So too did the idea of industrial progress, which depended on a healthy workforce. Given the health advantages of relaxation, fresh air and exercise in areas that were clean and preferably at high altitude, the public health movement of the late nineteenth century created expectations that national parks could help to fulfill.

Conclusion

The dominant political interests of late nineteenth century politics - progress, democracy and greater government involvement in the provision of services - created a social and political climate that was conducive to the establishment of nature reserves. It was in this environment that social activists, through promoting their interests in democratic access to parkland and the colony’s tourism potential, and naturalists who lobbied to further their interest in wildlife reserves, created the foundations of a Tasmanian national parks movement. At the turn of the century, national park activists were able to achieve their goals through ‘gentlemanly accommodations’ and politics of consensus because of shared interests among members of Tasmania’s political and social elite in natural history, tourism and social ideals associated with national parks and reserves.
Endnotes: Chapter 2

3 ibid.
6 ibid, p.99.
10 ibid.
13 ibid.
14 W. Goldstein (ed.), Australia’s 100 years of National Parks, Sydney, 1970, p.49.
17 Parliament of Tasmania, ‘An Act to Restrain the Practice of Kangaroo Hunting and for other purposes connected therewith’, 13 July 1846.
19 Tasmanian Government Gazette, 19 May 1868.
20 Tasmanian Government Gazette, 8 July 1872: Islands reserved in 1872 were: Wright Rock; Craggy Island; Hogan’s Group; Erith Island; Kent’s Group; Two Rocks; Ninth & Tenth Islands; Chappell Islands; Cat Island.
21 Hobart Gazette, 15 December 1891: The listing of islands was extended to include: Babel Island; Store Island; Forsyth Island; Mt Chappell Island and Little Green Island.
22 H. Vivian, ‘Natural History and Status of the Australian Fur Seal, Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus in Tasmanian Waters’, Environmental Studies Project report 1982/1, Centre for Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, p.15.
24 ibid.
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27 ibid, p.16.
31 The Tasmanian Naturalist, 1894, pp.xxxvii-xxxxviii.
35 Mercury, 18 January 1910.
36 Mercury, 28 May 1910.
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86 Archives Office of Tasmania, CSD 22, File 172.
88 ibid.
89 Archives Office of Tasmania, CSD 22, File 172.
92 *Hobart Gazette*, from 10 Dec. 1861.
93 Parliament of Tasmania, *Wastelands Act 1858*
95 *Tasmanian Government Gazette*, 4 October 1860, No.16.
97 ibid, p.7.
100 ibid, p.10 7.
106 ibid. p.154.
108 ibid. p.147.
Chapter 3

Success for Tasmania’s National Park Movement

Prior to the opening of Tasmania’s first national park at Mt Field park proponents with interests in wildlife conservation, recreation and tourism agitated for many years for land to be dedicated as a national park. Because the term ‘national park’ was not clearly defined in the nineteenth century it is difficult to say what, in the minds of park proponents, constituted a national park as opposed to any other kind of public park or nature reserve but, given that each of these types of reserve was supported by broad political consensus, the distinction was of little significance.

A resident of Wellington Bridge named Charles Walch used the term ‘national park’ to refer to a people’s park on the Queen’s Domain, Hobart, in his Letter to the Editor, ‘Our National Park’, written for Hobart’s daily newspaper the Mercury, in 1875. In associating the term ‘national park’ with Hobart’s Domain he used it to refer to a public reserve on the outskirts of the city centre, part of which the Royal Society aimed to develop as a botanical garden. His use of the term in that context appears to have been idiosyncratic rather than part of a national park movement, though Walch’s view of the Domain reserve did contain elements of the national park idea - a public park worthy of national pride where all citizens, regardless of their wealth, could relax in pleasant surroundings. In his letter, Walch wrote:

First make our national park a fit and attractive place for ‘the people’, give us a green sward, and the welcome shade of leafy trees; dig, and plough, and sow, and plant; and then, when this is all done, when we, ‘the people’, with our little ones, have a pretty place to which we can continually resort for health and recreation, then provide for the ‘carriage folk’. And finally, I hold, and in this I am upheld by the practice of all civilised governments, that a park in connection with the capital city of a country is a national affair, and its maintenance should be provided by national funds. 1

Areas that national park proponents subsequently sought as Tasmanian national parks were further removed from metropolitan areas than was Hobart’s Domain. The opening-up of the colony by road and rail meant that previously remote areas became accessible. Public reserves could feasibly be established in non-metropolitan areas, where real estate values were far lower than they were in the city and, therefore, the cost of lost alternative land use opportunities was far less.
A local landowner initiates the Russell Falls Reserve

Some of Tasmania’s community leaders who were attuned to the potential benefits of tourism and recreation, as well as natural scientists, bushwalkers, inland fishermen and social reformers of the late nineteenth century wanted accessible beauty spots to be set aside as public reserves before they were either bought or destroyed. Louis Shoobridge was among these people. Louis’ father, Ebenezer Shoobridge and his two brothers, William and Robert, were active in community affairs and politics in addition to being successful Derwent Valley farmers noted for their agricultural innovations. During discussion at meetings of the Royal Society members of the Shoobridge family expressed an active interest in nature conservation, especially forest conservation, an interest that at least partly inspired the idea of securing an area surrounding Russell Falls - Crown land adjoining one of the Shoobridge properties - as a public reserve. Given the family’s involvement in matters of social reform and nature conservation it is likely that the family shared the initiative for a Russell Falls reserve though it was Louis, the youngest son, who was most involved and to whom the area’s reservation is attributed.

Louis Shoobridge was apparently first shown the falls by Robert Browning who, at ‘Fentonbury’, was a neighbour to Louis at ‘Fenton Forest’. Though the approximate position of the falls, named Russell Falls after a member of an early exploratory expedition to the area, had been shown on maps from as early as 1830 not many people knew of their whereabouts at the time Browning took Louis to see them around 1880. The falls were at the time known as ‘Brownings Falls’. More accessible falls nearby had become known as ‘Russell Falls’ and the name was later transferred to the falls for which the name was probably originally intended. Recognising the potential of the falls and surrounding forests as a scenery and forest reserve, Shoobridge sought to have the area protected.

The Minister for Lands at the time was Nicholas Brown who, like the Shoobridges, was a landowner - a pastoralist who owned ‘Meadowbank Station’ near Hamilton - and a member of the Royal Society. By 1884 Louis’ influence had resulted in Brown, as Minister for Lands, requesting that 300 acres around Russell Falls and an access road be surveyed for the purpose of making the area a public reserve. Premier at the time was Adye Douglas, a ‘deeply convinced advocate for railway
transport’ who may have appreciated the reserve’s potential to assist the Derwent Valley Railway Line. A proclamation advising that the area was withdrawn from sale or selection under the Wastelands Act appeared in the *Tasmanian Government Gazette* on 10 March 1885.

Louis Shoobridge became a local contact for inquiries relating to the falls reserve. Alexander Morton, the American-born curator of the Royal Society’s Museum in Hobart and committee member of the Tasmanian Tourist Association, wrote to him in 1891 regarding plans for a visit. Shoobridge advised him to bring refreshments from town because no locals could cater for a party of fifty though, he wrote, if a week’s notice was given saddle horses and a chase carte could be arranged. Shoobridge also advised Morton that the normal 4.00pm return train would not allow sufficient time for a day visit and, consequently, he suggested Morton contact the Railways Department to arrange a special late train.

An interest in nature conservation appears to have been the primary reason for Shoobridge’s enthusiasm for the reservation. But local progress undoubtedly played a role as well. In 1885 the Derwent Valley Railway Line went only as far as Granton. ‘Conveyances’ met trains at the New Norfolk road to collect passengers travelling on to New Norfolk, Glenora and Hamilton. It was in the interests of Derwent Valley residents, particularly agricultural producers, to have the line extended further. Visitors to the reserve at Russell Falls would contribute to the profitability of the Derwent Valley line which, by 1899, had been extended beyond New Norfolk as far as Conara. And catering for visitors to the reserve created some additional employment and income for nearby residents. By 1910 there were five guest houses accommodating visitors to the reserve. One of these, ‘Russell Falls House’, opened in 1910 by Charles and Mabel Marriott to cater primarily for fishermen and visitors to the Falls, was built on land that they had purchased from Louis Shoobridge adjacent to the Falls Reserve boundary. Marriott also owned a horse-drawn brake equipped to carry eight passengers, which he drove daily to meet the train at Russell. From its beginning, the new reserve at Russell Falls served the interests of nature conservation in addition to those of progress and economic development for the local community.
Reserve expansion extends to caves, scenery, fishing spots and wildlife

Government surveyors identified areas worthy of reservation for reasons consistent with the aims of national parks, and recommended their reservation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Surveyors such as James Sprent, James Calder and Edward Counsel, as senior officials, moved in intellectual and social circles that included the Royal Society. They were well placed to identify areas that park supporters considered worthy of preservation, and to influence their reservation. Surveyors consequently initiated the proclamation of a number of reserves with characteristics of national parks, and the withdrawal of land from sale or selection for reasons typical of the national parks movement.

When the government withdrew Russell Falls from sale or selection in May 1885 it also reserved the foreshores of a number of popular fishing lakes under Section 4 of the Wastelands Act.\textsuperscript{14} Davidson and Spearritt write that Tasmania traded as ‘the Angler’s paradise’ in Edwardian times.\textsuperscript{15} The lakes country of the central highlands was praised for its beauty, and the good fishing which brought visitors, including some wealthy visitors whose need for guides and accommodation provided a source of additional income for local families.\textsuperscript{16} Crown land within half a mile of Lake St Clair, Lake Echo, Great Lake, Woods Lake, Lake Sorell, Lake Crescent, Arthur’s Lakes, Nineteen Lagoons and adjacent lakes, Toom’s Lake, Lake Pedder and Lake
Edgar was set aside for recreational fishing. These reserves were small; they were not the equivalent of national parks, but the areas in which they were situated had national park potential and most of these lakes did later become incorporated in Tasmania’s national parks estate.

The Russell Falls and lakes reserves were the first of their kind in Tasmania, though the number of areas set aside for nature conservation and hardy recreation soon expanded. A listing of reserves prepared in September 1899 and submitted to parliament by the Surveyor-General, included twelve scenery, falls, fernery and cave reserves:

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<th>Locality</th>
<th>Locality Guide</th>
<th>Type of Reserve</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tyenna</td>
<td>Russell Falls</td>
<td>Falls Reserve</td>
<td>300 acres (212.4 ha)</td>
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<tr>
<td>South George River</td>
<td>N.E. Tasmania</td>
<td>Falls Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honeywood</td>
<td>Geevaston</td>
<td>Scenery Reserve</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fernery Reserve</td>
<td>15 acres (6.07ha)</td>
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<td>Forestier’s Peninsula</td>
<td>Tasman Peninsula</td>
<td>Scenery Reserve</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle Hawk Neck</td>
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<td>Blowhole</td>
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<td>Adventure Bay</td>
<td>Bruny Island</td>
<td>Scenery Reserve</td>
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<td>Parish of Kendall</td>
<td>Central North Tas.</td>
<td>Scenery Reserve</td>
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<td>Town of Ugbrook</td>
<td>Mole Creek/Caveside</td>
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<td>Cave Reserve</td>
<td>99 acres  (40.06 ha)</td>
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</tbody>
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There is little information available about the establishment of some early reserves. Notices appeared in the *Hobart Gazette* designating an area a reserve for a particular purpose in some instances, but in others the notices merely advised that land had been withheld from sale or selection without disclosing the motive behind the decision. Add to this the confusion caused by changes in nomenclature, repeals and the occasional re-proclamation of a given reserve and it becomes very difficult to consolidate a complete and accurate history of the State’s nature reserves prior to the establishment of the Scenery Preservation Board in 1915. It was not until then that relevant records were systematically kept. A map showing ‘nature reserves on account of scenery, fauna or any other reason of natural interest’ was apparently prepared in 1914. A.F.R. Wallaston of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, who was compiling a listing of all nature reserves in the British Empire, approached Tasmania’s Agent-General in London who subsequently wrote to the Premier. The Premier requested that the Surveyor-General prepare the information...
and an accompanying memo confirms that a map was produced and sent to London. If a copy of that map is ever located it may help to fill some gaps in our current knowledge of the Colony’s early nature reserves.

Included in the 1899 listing was Tasmania’s first cave reserve, 300 acres (212.4 hectares) near Ugbrook which was reserved in 1894 under section 24 of the Crown Lands Act 1890, ‘for the preservation of the caves thereon, and reserving access thereto’. Northern Tasmanians viewed caves in the Chudleigh/Mole Creek area as a prime tourist attraction and they featured in the earliest excursionists’ guide books. Davidson and Spearritt suggest that caves’ popularity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was partly because they were notable features in otherwise undifferentiated landscapes and because of their resemblance to grottos which were romanticized in the eighteenth century, adorned with formations that appealed to ‘a sensibility drawn to bric-a-brac, damask lace and cast iron’. Public awareness and popularity of the Chudleigh caves was heightened by Anthony Trollope, a popular writer of the time, writing about his visit to the caves in the company of the Governor of Tasmania in his book *Victoria and Tasmania*, which was published in 1875.

The first fernery reserve was proclaimed in 1897. Situated in the Parish of Honeywood, near Geeveston, the 15 acre (6.07 hectare) site was ‘reserved for the purpose of public enjoyment’. A falls reserve on the South George River is also included in the 1899 listing. The falls were probably St Columba Falls which were later proclaimed as part of a scenery reserve under the Crown Lands Act. In 1911. Between 1899 and the establishment of the Scenery Preservation Board in 1915, Tasmanian governments proclaimed more small scenic reserves, including three further dedications of cave reserves in the north - one of 63 acres (25.5 hectares) in 1906, one of 24 acres (7.1 hectares) in 1910, and one of approximately 100 acres (40.5 hectares) in 1911.

As the result of lobbying principally by William Legge whose family lived near Ben Lomond at the property ‘Cullenswood’, parliament proclaimed eighteen thousand acres of the Ben Lomond Plateau a scenery reserve in 1907. Legge, however, apparently saw this measure as insufficient to afford the area the protection it
required and, in 1910, accompanied by other representatives of the Royal Society and the Tasmanian Tourist Association, he met with the Premier to discuss measures to prevent fires on the plateau. Legge, whose interest in reserves was a reflection of his long-standing interest in fauna conservation, was concerned that fires, lit chiefly by hunters and miners, were destroying the plateau’s unique flora. He proposed proclaiming it a scenic reserve for ‘botanists and tourists’ and prohibiting fire lighting and hunting on the plateau in order to strengthen its conservation status. Philip Seager, who attended the meeting as Chairman of the Tasmanian Tourist Association though as Commissioner of Fisheries and member of the Horticultural Society he also shared Legge’s interests in wildlife conservation...
and botany, supported Legge’s suggestions. Seager added that he thought a comprehensive scheme should be drawn-up to reserve all the mountain plateaux in the State as scenic reserves. The Premier, John Evans, responded saying that the matter would be fully investigated but that the chief difficulty would be the appointment of rangers to enforce the regulations connected with such reserves.

Other Tourist, Scenery and Waterfall Reserves proclaimed between 1899-1915 included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Reserve (Type)</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Date Proclaimed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King River (scenic)</td>
<td>(5 chains on either side)</td>
<td>14.04.1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon River (scenic)</td>
<td>(&quot; &quot; )</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Deloraine (waterfall)</td>
<td>146 acres (59 hectares)</td>
<td>01.09.1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Bothwell – Lake Sorell Interlaken Tourist Reserve (fishing)</td>
<td>57 acres (23 hectares)</td>
<td>01.12.1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Portland</td>
<td>50 acres (20 hectares)</td>
<td>31.08.1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Bothwell</td>
<td>300 acres (121 hectares)</td>
<td>23.11.1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Circular Head Dip River Falls (waterfall)</td>
<td>50 acres (20 hectares)</td>
<td>27.08.1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deloraine (recreation/tourist)</td>
<td>51 acres (20.6 hectares)</td>
<td>18.02.1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Scottsdale (scenic)</td>
<td>290 acres (117 hectares)</td>
<td>03.03.1914</td>
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In addition, the Liberal Government led by Albert Solomon proclaimed a flora reserve in the northwest of the State. Two hundred acres (81 hectares) was reserved in the vicinity of the current Rocky Cape National Park for the preservation of Banksia serrata in 1912. Some areas were also set aside as fauna or game reserves and as wildlife reserves - ‘sanctuaries for sea birds and wildfowl’.

The varied nature of the reserves set aside reflects a range of park proponents’ interests that included scenery, recreational and tourist attractions, and fauna and flora conservation. Park proponents who instigated the reserves were not identified at that time as a single interest group. They included landowners with an interest in natural history who advocated for the reservation of areas with which they were familiar, government surveyors who appreciated the natural values of the land they surveyed, in addition to the social activists and amateur natural historians among the ranks of Tasmania’s professionals, businessmen, senior public servants and parliamentarians. Though they represented a range of different interests, they mixed
in the same social circles and shared their interests through membership of clubs and organisations such as the Royal Society. People who wanted reserves to be set aside for public and conservation purposes joined forces in their lobbying efforts when lobbying was necessary. The underlying interests of people working together to achieve reserves varied but they worked together successfully for their over-arching interest in establishing reserves.

**Park proponents push for a Tasmanian National Park**

While park proponents sought and achieved a number of small reserves in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some - those who formed the early national parks movement - aimed to secure an impressive reserve that would be Tasmania’s first national park. By the 1890s the USA had Yellowstone National Park, a wilderness park encompassing 3,300 square miles, in addition to Yosemite which, though not called a national park, was a national park type reserve of 1,500 square miles and some other national park-like reserves which, though they were smaller than Yellowstone and Yosemite, were larger than any in Tasmania.29

A committee of a national conservation organisation, the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science - a committee of which the Tasmanian naturalist William Legge was a member - recommended the reservation of Freycinet Peninsula as the Tasmanian National Park in 1894. The Committee’s report, which included recommendations on six other reserves throughout Australia and New Zealand, and changes to game laws throughout the colonies, was sent to the Premier with a request that he assist in carrying out its recommendations.30 The Premier, Sir Edward Braddon, referred the matter to the Royal Society. The Royal Society delegated Bernard Shaw, Commissioner of Police, member of the Royal Society and of a landowning family of Swansea near Freycinet Peninsula, to deal with the points raised.31 Shaw sought advice from a neighbor of his family’s property ‘Redbanks’ - John Meredith of ‘Cambria’ - who said he considered that, ‘while the Peninsula was unsuitable for a national park, owing to its geological formation, etc., Schouten Island would be a suitable spot’.32 Meredith’s advice may have reflected concerns about the future of tin mining or potential granite quarrying operations at Freycinet if the area was protected as a national park - concerns to which Meredith could have been attuned through his family’s involvement in mining.33 Alternatively, or in
addition, Meredith’s opinion may have reflected local landowners’ concerns about the implications of national park status on the future of grazing leases and swan shooting in the vicinity. Shooters would not have welcomed the Committee’s report, given its recommendation that not only should Freycinet be made a national park but that existing game laws should be strictly enforced and legislation should provide for the absolute protection of a particular species for indefinite periods. Whatever the underlying reasons for Meredith’s advice, and the Royal Society’s subsequent failure to support the Freycinet proposal, the Society’s Chairman was recorded as having said that, in his view, Tasmania’s birds were well protected and that ‘as regarded the animals, he did not see how they could be preserved in a park unless a very large area, as some of them preyed on others’.

Nothing more was done in response to the recommendation though the Chairman of the Royal Society did suggest that ‘…it would be as well to keep the matter before them, and, if an opportunity occurred, they might obtain land for a national park’. The recommendation of naturalists involved in the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science that the Freycinet Peninsula be proclaimed a national park, was rejected probably because of parochial interests but there was support for the idea among Tasmanian naturalists and they persisted with it.

Ten years after the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science’s proposal, Francis Mather, with the support of the Royal Society and the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club, succeeded in having the Government withdraw the Freycinet Peninsula and Schouten Island from sale or selection for the purpose of a fauna reserve. In his letter to the Minister Mather wrote:

The desirability of setting apart lands for acclimatisation purposes has frequently claimed public attention; but up to the present time very little thought has been bestowed upon the necessity for preserving our Tasmanian fauna; yet the emu is no longer found on the Tasmanian plains, and the forester is rapidly disappearing, whilst the black opossum has been so persistently hunted that it seems likely to also become ‘a lost Tasmanian race.’ In the interests of science, to say nothing of Tasmanian sentiment, our Government should devote at least one portion of this island to the preservation of native animals. And seeing that we now have a Ministry composed of Tasmanian-born Britishers, the opportunity appears to be favorable for again pressing the suggestion for a Government reserve for the purpose above mentioned. There is one locality exceedingly well adapted for the end in view, viz. Freycinet’s Peninsula and Schouten Island. Scarcely any of the land is alienated at present, and nearly every variety of existing Tasmanian fauna is there represented. Moreover, the lagoons near Hazard Island are breeding places for the black swan, and Schouten Island is the habitat for many kinds of opossum. The soil has very little commercial value, whilst for
picturesque scenery, delightful walks, and opportunities for fishing, the position is unrivalled as a tourist resort.\textsuperscript{36}

A relative of Mather, landowner Edward Cotton of ‘Kelvedon’ south of Swansea, also worked to have the area protected before growing disillusioned. Cotton came to believe it was too late for reservation to be effective after so many thousands of the area’s native game had been slaughtered - between 40,000 and 50,000 animals in the 1905 season alone, despite the area being a reserve for fauna conservation purposes under the \textit{Crown Lands Act 1903}.\textsuperscript{37} The pervasiveness of the resistance to fauna protection that had disillusioned Cotton was illustrated by opposition within the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club’s own membership to the President’s request that members not take guns ‘to be used for sporting purposes’ to the Club’s 1906 Easter Camp at Coles Bay.\textsuperscript{38} Reservation of the Freycinet Peninsula under the Crown Lands Act and the \textit{Game Protection Act 1905} afforded little protection to wildlife while the area lacked the presence of rangers to enforce hunting restrictions and governments failed to provide funds to remedy the situation, however. Though Mather succeeded in having Freycinet declared a fauna reserve on paper, the fauna preservation movement lacked sufficient political power to achieve the enforcement measures necessary for the reserve to be effective.

Proponents of the Freycinet National Park proposal lobbied for the reserve primarily in the interest of fauna protection, but advocates for a Tasmanian national park stressed the recreational and tourism potential of their park proposal. At the time Freycinet was declared a fauna reserve, members of the Tasmanian Tourist Association were also pushing for a national park on Mt Wellington. Excursions on the mountain were extremely popular - the number of tourists visiting the mountain quadrupled in the five years to 1907\textsuperscript{39} - and large numbers of people travelled to the Springs, part way to the top of the mountain, using transport provided by the Association. Some people also enjoyed long, spiritually uplifting walks on the mountain, writing accounts, such as these, describing the pleasure experienced.

To ascend this hill is the favorite trip of a stranger, and though the toil is great, it is more than repaid by the sublimity of the scene, - D’Entrecasteaux Channel, Brown’s River, and the Huon seem like silver threads amid the dense mass of foliage around. But you are only now half-way, and the ascent higher up is still more laborious; yet the view from this is so grand that you gain fresh courage and hurry up the towering hill above you. Some level places afford rest to the weary feet, and, as you approach the top, the
air becomes more rarefied, cool and refreshing; at length you throw your exhausted frame on the highest rock, and rejoice that your difficult task is completed. The view from hence is transcendentally beautiful, and though from the extreme height the city seems but small, yet the distant sea and all its sinuous bays and inlets, now easily scanned, are spread out like living panorama before the eye, imposing and grand in the extreme.40

A shining confusion of light and shade is there to be seen – shining moss clothing the moldering boles of prostrate forest giants – lichens luxuriating on every rock, and water cresses growing on every pool – scintillating gleams of golden sunshine here and there dart through the umbrage of the dense foliage like angel visitants from the outer world – silence broken only by the occasional flitter and note of the forest bird or the sigh of the wind.41

Lobbying by members of a number of organisations, notably the Tasmanian Tourist Association (TTA), Tasmanian Field Naturalists Association and the Australian Natives Association - a friendly society that actively advocated patriotic causes in public debate42 – resulted in an understanding that a large part of the eastern slope of Mt Wellington was preserved for a national park. In 1871, 3,750 acres of the mountain fronting North-West Bay River had been reserved and management vested in the Hobart Corporation, for the purpose of the city’s water supply.43 Legislation passed in 1906 foreshadowed transferring some of this land on the mountain’s eastern slope to national park status and its management to a board of trustees. This understanding led park proponents to refer to the reserve as a national park, and the Minister of Lands, Alec Hean, also acknowledged it as such.44 In January 1906 a deputation of representatives of the Tasmanian Tourist Association, Australian Natives Association and the Field Naturalists Club, all of whom belonged to the TTA in addition to any other group they represented at the meeting, met with the Minister of Lands to discuss the appointment of trustees to take charge of the park. Park activist Leonard Rodway did not attend the meeting but he sent a note urging the deputation to insist on adequate financial support from the government for the park’s maintenance. Henry Nicholls, who officially represented the TTA, recounted the intentions of the people who had worked to secure the area as a playground for residents and visitors and outlined the developments they had planned, including hut and track construction. Philip Seager said that

one of the most important planks of the Tourist Association platform was the protection of the beauty spots in and around Hobart. The most important of these beauty spots was the portion of Mt Wellington known as the National Park, and what they wanted was a carefully selected committee or board who would not only make it their duty to preserve the natural beauties of the place, but to add to them by the judicious planting of native trees and shrubs.45
It had been practically agreed upon, one of the delegates argued, that the managing body should be elected from the Tasmanian Tourist Association, Australian Natives Association and Field Naturalists Club, and that land should be vested in them as trustees for the good of the community.46

Regarding finance for the park’s management, the delegates were of the view that, though members of the organisations represented would contribute their services, the government should provide a grant. The Minister responded that, while he recognised the advantages of having enthusiasts such as Leonard Rodway and others involved in the committee, it should also include representatives of the Lands and Works Department. As for funding, he thought that the committee should endeavor to arouse a spirit of emulation among the people of Hobart, so that they might, like the people of Launceston, put their hands in their own pockets and assist in a practical way such a deserving object. 47

The committee could expect to benefit from any revenue derived from leasing a portion of the park for a hotel or other development, but the government was not prepared to provide finance in order that the Tasmanian Tourist Association, in collaboration with other non-government bodies, could manage the reserve.

The national park proponents’ aspirations never came to fruition because of opposition from the Hobart Corporation. The Corporation, strongly opposed to any development at The Springs because of possible detriment to Hobart’s water supply, fought against the proposed National Park and accompanying Springs Hotel. Through 1906 it was the subject of a protracted public debate between health officials, Henry Dobson, who was the park proposal’s chief advocate, municipal council officials and State politicians. The Chief Health Officer objected to Dobson’s hotel scheme because of potential contamination of the Bower Creek water supply, especially the possibility of infected sewage from typhoid convalescents who might stay there.49 Dobson, however, argued that he saw no evidence of this danger given that sewage need not affect Bower Creek, and that people were entitled to their park after seven years’ delay.49 The government was caught between two competing public interest groups in deciding on the fate of the proposed Mt Wellington National Park, that representing the Hobart Corporation’s view on Hobart’s water supply and that representing the public reserve. Given the health problems linked to poor
sanitation that Hobart’s population experienced during the late 1890s the Hobart Corporation had considerable public and political support for its position, with which the park lobby had difficulty competing.

The 1906 Act had failed to proclaim the land described as ‘national park’ as such, and had not defined reserve boundaries. It simply designated an area in the vicinity of The Springs for a potential national park. The Corporation, Henry Dobson argued, should have been made to honor the intention of the legislation - public enjoyment of the park, and provision of accommodation at the Springs - and organise its water schemes accordingly. But, with public health concerns in its favor, the Hobart Corporation won the Mountain Park debate, and it retained control of the reserve. Dobson wrote to the Premier;

[I am] …amazed and disgusted at the action of the Corporation. In applying for the National Park I wrote that the Park would be a sham unless it included the Bower Creek. This sham was given us and in order to make the Park a sham in every way the Council put their fence against the picnic shed and declined to allow the public to step beyond the shed. Our real National Park therefore consists of about 100 square yards surrounding Gadd’s Cottage and the track to the Pinnacle.50
After protracted debate about drainage and the impact of accommodation at The Springs on Hobart’s water supply, Henry Dobson’s application to erect accommodation at The Springs was eventually granted, but the hotel was never a financial success and was finally destroyed by fire.

Soon after the mountain park disappointment, national park proponents became focused on the Russell Falls Reserve as a favored site for the State’s first national park. By the turn of the century the national parks and nature reserves movement had become firmly established in both Australia and the USA. It was to be expected that, with national parks being established elsewhere, Tasmanian activists would continue to pursue the goal they had articulated in their campaign for a Mt Wellington National Park - a sizable nature reserve managed by a body which reflected the goals of, primarily, the Tourist Association and the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club.

Following the declaration of NSW’s Royal National Park in 1879, South Australia became the second colony to proclaim a national park. Approximately 1,977 acres (800 hectares) at Belair, land which had previously been the Governor’s country residence and later been used as a government farm and forest reserve, was declared Belair National Park under the National Park Act of 1891. Achieved as a result of representation from the Field Naturalists Section of the Royal Society of South Australia, the park was designated as, ‘a national recreation and pleasure ground as a place for amusement, recreation and convenience of the inhabitants of the Province of South Australia’. It may not have ever obtained the status of Australia’s second national park but for the Premier insisting on including ‘national’ in the park’s title during a parliamentary debate on the Bill, on the grounds that the park near Sydney was called a ‘national park’. In the year following Belair’s declaration, 1892, Victoria passed the Tower Hill National Park Act, which placed around 1,483 acres (600 hectares) at Tower Hill, near Koroit, in the trust of that municipality, for use as a public park. The legislation, however, retained the Crown’s right to prospect or mine within the area, or use any part of it for public works such as roads and waterworks. The land, having been previously subjected to clearing, grazing, quarrying and vegetable growing, had a history, as well as a possible future, far removed from the unspoilt landscapes that are generally associated with national parks. Queensland set the precedent of passing legislation concerning the
procedures to be followed in establishing national parks. The *State Forest & National Parks Act 1906* provided for the Governor in Council to permanently reserve Crown land for the purpose of a national park, by proclamation. The legislation specified that a national park could not be alienated without an Act of Parliament, though it provided for the Governor in Council to grant leases over the land of up to 30 years duration. The legislation did not define the purpose of a national park but, in introducing the Bill, the Minister for Lands said that, ‘national parks would be placed where people could go on holiday and know that they would find pure air, good scenery, and country life’.54 The first park proclaimed under the Act was a relatively small reserve of 324 acres (131 hectares) at Witches Falls, at Tamborine Mountain close to Queensland’s present-day Gold Coast.

In Western Australia the term ‘national park’ was used in official correspondence and plans in reference to a reserve at Greenmount, though it was not ever included in the park’s name. The 3,212 acre (1,300 hectare) Kings Park, declared in 1901 - an expanded version of a smaller public recreation ground that had been reserved at the same site in 1872 - has achieved historical status comparable to Royal and Belair National Parks, despite ‘national’ not appearing in its title. The success, reflected in the relative permanence of Kings Park, has overshadowed less successful efforts to secure nature reserves and national parks in Western Australia, as has happened in Tasmania and undoubtedly elsewhere. A less successful previous attempt at park reservation aimed at protecting the Margaret River Caves. A reserve of 16,012 acres (6,480 hectares) was declared in 1892 in response to Lands Department Surveyors’ recommendations but the reserve’s integrity was subsequently destroyed through inadequate supervision, changes to reserve boundaries, and inappropriate administrative arrangements.55 Another early attempt to achieve a national park for the purpose of wildlife preservation also failed. When the Committee for the Advancement of Science - the Committee which recommended Freycinet be made Tasmania’s National Park - inquired into what was being done for fauna preservation in Western Australia, Bernard Woodward, Curator of the Western Australian Museum, recommended an area of 160,617 acres (65,000 hectares) on the Darling Escarpment. This was duly approved by the Governor in Council, and declared a reserve for the preservation of native flora and fauna. Contrary to representations from the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science the government
failed to grant the reserve the status of national park under the Parks and Reserves Act. Subsequently, the timber industry succeeded in having the reserve’s purpose altered from fauna and flora preservation to that of production of timber for government requirements, and the area lost its potential as a national park.56

Despite some early efforts to reserve relatively large and wild areas of natural landscape, the parks that survived to become known as Australia’s first national parks tended towards the Arcadian tradition of park making - ‘nature improved upon’ - more than they did the ‘wilderness’ innovation exemplified by Yellowstone.57 The relative success of this type of park proposal was a reflection of the outcomes of the political process, and did not necessarily accurately reflect the priorities of park proponents of the time. Situated on the outskirts of metropolitan centres, the parks that survived to achieve the status of a ‘first’ national park, with the exception of Tasmania, were chiefly recreational parks, of a kind that is closely allied to the British urban parks and formal gardens movement.58 As Whitelock commented:

The Belair National Park, bisected by a railway, scarred by decades of tree felling, soon to be studded with tennis courts, groves of exotic trees, kiosks, even a maze, was always more a recreation park, as the current name implies, than a nature sanctuary. Like Sydney’s Royal National Park, it was seen essentially as a people’s playground’, a bigger, boskier, more relaxed version of a municipal park.59

Chronologically, Tasmania was the last Australian State to have established a national park.60 Given the size of the National Park at Mt Field, and the way in which all but a small proportion of the park was intended to remain a natural landscape, it could be argued, however, that it was one of the first to reflect contemporary expectations of a national park. In Tasmania, opposing industry interests such as the timber and mining industries did not organise to lobby against early national park proposals, and interests representing expansion of urban parkland were not strongly represented in the national parks movement.

Some of the early efforts of naturalists to have areas, such as those mentioned on Mt Wellington, and in the Darling Ranges in Western Australia, declared national parks, failed, but they were not without significance. The campaigns helped to clarify the political, social and economic forces that worked for or against nature reserve
proposals and, consequently, the political strategies that park proponents would need to develop. Unsuccessful efforts also helped to sharpen the skills and determination that activists would need in order to pursue their goal of achieving the kind of reserves they saw as necessary - extensive areas of unspoilt natural landscape and habitat.

Tasmanian park activists were aware of developments relating to national parks and nature reserves outside the State, partly through the involvement of some members of Tasmanian organisations in national associations such as the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, and bodies such as the London based Linnaean Society. One park activist who was well informed of overseas developments was William Crooke. Crooke was born in Tasmania, left with his family as a boy and returned in 1899, aged 55, after a teaching career with the Victorian Education Department. His father, the Reverend Robert Crooke, left Tasmania for Victoria after conflict with Bishop Nixon over his status, and harassment that had resulted from his active but unwanted interest in the local affairs of the Huon, notably his outspokenness about the morals of the local girls. 61 This background would have been well known to the southern Tasmanian establishment, which Crooke appears to have enjoyed challenging as he espoused his liberal-democratic principles. 62

William Crooke was involved in various organisations including the Southern Tasmanian Railway Association, the Workers’ Educational Association, the Workers’ Political League and the Labor League. Crooke was a keen angler and had a fishing cottage on the Russell River near Russell Falls. Under the penname ‘Jollytail’, he wrote ‘Angling Notes’ for the Mercury newspaper, and promoted Tasmanian angling in articles for Melbourne’s Australian. These descriptive, as well as witty, writings reveal a breadth of knowledge about angling, and about developments in American conservation practices that indicate he was probably also aware of developments in the United States’ national park system. Around 1910 Crooke teamed up with a number of men, most of whom had previously been involved in the Mt Wellington National Park campaign, in an effort to have the Russell Falls/ Mt Field area proclaimed a national park. Two of these men were Leonard Rodway and Herbert Nicholls.
Sharland has suggested that Leonard Rodway and Herbert Nicholls, while holidaying on the ranges of Mt Field East, triggered the national park idea when they decided on a mission of ensuring that the mountains and lakes of Mt Field were reserved as a public recreation area.\(^{63}\) Herbert was the son of Henry Nicholls, a journalist who migrated to Australia in 1853. As the editor of the Hobart *Mercury* from 1883 until his death in 1912, Henry Nicholls promoted his radical political views on workers’ rights, the role of government intervention in righting social wrongs, and nature preservation. Through his writings in favor of protecting nature in nature reserves, and because he helped to establish a sympathetic stance that the *Mercury* maintained for some time after his death, Nicholls’ involvement with the newspaper assisted the fledgling national parks movement. Henry’s son, Herbert Nicholls, began his working life as a barrister. He was elected to the House of Assembly in 1900 and rose to the positions of Attorney-General, Chief Justice and Lieutenant-Governor. His political leanings tended towards liberal idealism and during the depression years of the 1920s his ideals were reflected in his accepting reductions of 83% in his salary as Governor, and 25% in that as Chief Justice, while he organised and chaired the Citizens’ Relief Committee.\(^{64}\) He was a member of the Australian Natives Association, the Hobart Shakespearean Society and the Tasmania Club, and his interests included bushwalking, rowing, athletics, golf and rifle-shooting. His wife, Helen, was the daughter of the Surveyor-General, Charles Percy Sprent.\(^{65}\) Nicholls was also an active member of the Tasmanian Tourist Association, and it was in that capacity that he participated in the delegation to the Minister of Lands regarding the appointment of trustees to manage the national park on Mt Wellington, in 1906.\(^{66}\)

Though Nicholls and Rodway initiated the push for Mt Field to become a national park, William Crooke soon became the most prominent figure in the campaign. In October 1911 the Southern Tasmanian Railway Exploration League and the Tyenna Railway League, of which Crooke was a committee member, arranged a parliamentary trip to Tyenna. The 1911 Public Works estimates had included the sum of £80,000 to extend the Derwent Valley Railway further along the Russell River towards Tyenna and the trip was arranged in order that parliamentarians could be shown the Russell Falls, to which the railway extension would improve access. Crooke acted as host and guide to the party which included the Liberal Premier, Sir Elliott Lewis, a number of members of parliament, the Surveyor-General and a
Mercury reporter. Following refreshments at Crooke’s cottage, the party visited Russell and Lady Barron Falls with Crooke and some local residents including William Belcher, who had cut tracks to the Falls and to Mount Field East for the Tourist Association, acting as guides. The falls were highly praised, one member of the group saying that he did not think there were any falls in Australia, with the exception of Barron Falls near Cairns, to equal them.67

Two years after the parliamentary visit, in October 1913, Sir Elliott Lewis, by then ex-Premier, led a deputation to the Minister, Edward Mulcahy, to promote the national park proposal. Also in the deputation were William Crooke, Clive Lord, Henry Dobson, Leonard Rodway, Louis Shoobridge and William Legge, representing the Tourist Association, Australian Natives Association, Forest League and the Field Naturalists’ Club. Lewis began by saying that the area possessed magnificent scenery, and that, as a resort for the people of Tasmania, and visitors, it would rival any other part of the State. Land in the area, he said, was not of any great economic value. Land at the top of the mountains was particularly valueless, and yet by declaring the area a public reserve it would make revenue for the Railways Department. Crooke, who was described as ‘the promoter of the scheme’, added that other States had national parks - it was time Tasmania had one too, and, being only 50 miles from Hobart, Mt Field was ideal. The area, Dobson said, had the most beautiful forest and fern scenery in Tasmania, prompting Shoobridge to add that the area’s fine timber should be preserved. Rodway described the wonderful view to be had from the top of Mt Field and put forward a case for using the area as a fauna and flora reserve. To fund the rangers needed to supervise the reserve, Lord suggested erecting tall gates and charging sixpence admission. There were different opinions on how much the scheme would cost. Dobson thought it would be necessary to employ a caretaker for only six months of the year for which £100 per year would be adequate although Rodway said that, in order to manage the area as a sanctuary for flora and fauna, three or four rangers would be necessary. Dr Bottrill, another member of the delegation, recommended putting the scheme on a sound footing by placing the Tasmanian Tourist Association in control. The Minister responded to the delegation’s proposal by saying that there would be no point in declaring a reserve without the funds to manage it, but he did undertake to see what he could do.
The Daily Post’s account of the meeting created a colorful picture:

The deputation that waited on Mr. Mulcahy in reference to “a National Park” met with the kind of reception to which we are becoming accustomed. The word “National” was itself sufficient to place Mr. Mulcahy on his guard. The deputation were gravely informed that in the course of time they would receive a Report – and a Ranger. What is previously required is a Reservation but we would not be at all surprised if the Ranger was appointed before there was any reservation. And we may be quite certain that any “Reservation” of Mr. Mulcahy’s – unless it was a mental reservation – will be on a scale that can be easily measured. He desired “the assistance of the Deputation to enable him to reserve a number of small areas instead of a large one.” .... The proposal for a National Park to take in the Russell and Lady Barron Falls and the Mount Field Plateau and Lakes is altogether too large for Mr. Mulcahy, and we are astonished that a gentleman of the acumen of Mr. William Crooke would have dreamt of placing such impossibilities before a Minister whom he has so recently accused of partial, not to say total, paralysis. 68

The writer went on to extol the virtues of the park proposal and to argue that a reserve of a reasonable size was necessary in order to preserve the integrity of the area. The cynical tone of the article reflects the political atmosphere in which the campaign took place. A clearly marked divide between Liberal and Labor had not long taken-over from a tradition of shifting factions, and the Labor opposition was persistently attacking the government which ruled with a slender majority of 16 to 14. Labor, which was relentless in its opposition to the conservatives, divided the House at every opportunity. 69 The national park issue provided such an opportunity, and it appears that park proponents took full advantage of the competitive political environment to achieve their national park by promoting it as a political issue.

Later in October the Mercury published a map of a 22,000 acre (890.3 hectare) reserve that had been recommended to the Minister by park proponents. The article accompanying the map reported that the area, ‘presented a combination of natural beauty and sublimity of character not to be rivaled in the Commonwealth’, and that, ‘the reservation would for all time be a region of delight for the people of Tasmania, which they could proudly invite visitors from other countries and States to explore.’ 70  By the end of 1913 the Liberal Government, led by Albert Solomon, had agreed to expand the area of the proposed park to 5,000 acres (2,228 hectares), and the Assembly had passed a vote of £500 for the park, as well as £500 for the Forestry Department which was to manage it. It was envisaged that, with a caretaker in charge, the park would serve as a site for pine plantations and a tree nursery, as well as a nature recreation reserve, and that it should, in time to come, become one of the
State’s best assets.71 The ‘package’ did not, however, go far enough to meet with the approval of the park’s proponents.

The fall of the Solomon Government and succession of a Labor Government in April 1914 presented an opportunity for the proposal to be pursued with the new regime, and Crooke did not waste any time in doing so. On 7 April Crooke, as Honorary Secretary of the National Park Association, wrote to the new Minister for Lands, James Belton, to request a meeting.72 The National Park Association was formed by Crooke in 1912 from the amalgam of interested persons representing community organisations in support of the national park idea.73 Comprising representatives of the Tasmanian Tourist Association, Southern Tasmanian Railways Association, Australian Natives Association, Royal Society, Field Naturalists Club, University of Tasmania, Fisheries Commission and the New Norfolk Council, it remained in existence until the end of 1916 by which time the national park at Mt Field was secured. As a result of the National Park Association’s lobbying, the Earle Labor government in 1915 made a commitment to reserve 27,000 acres (10,927 hectares) in the Mt Field/ Russell Falls area as a national park, an area which exceeded the National Park Association’s expectations.74 Hobart’s newspaper, the *Mercury*, praised the parks’ proponents.

We heartily congratulate those who have taken an interest in the project of a National Park for Tasmania, and especially the few gentlemen upon whom the spade work of it has devolved, upon the fact that the Park has now been proclaimed.

And the reserve itself,

A National Park such as this now set apart may and ought to be a most valuable possession in many ways, in which the “business asset” value may be the least worth taking into account - for there are things far more worthy to be thought of than the lucre to be obtained from tourists or by other means. Such things as healthy and educative holidays, days among those crowded solitudes that appeal to the finer natures, opportunities for communing with the spirits of the trees and the brooks … will not be without their real value, though it may not be expressible in pounds, shillings and pence.  

The National Park was not actually proclaimed until management arrangements, embodied in the Scenery Preservation Act, were in place. Members of the National Park Association continued their involvement by working to influence decisions about the park’s management, particularly the involvement of community-based
interest groups. The Scenery Preservation Act was advanced legislation for its time, and the Scenery Preservation Board, established under the Act, was the first dedicated authority created in Australia specifically to deal with the creation and management of parks and reserves. The Act provided for the ‘acquisition and preservation of lands of scenic or historic interest’ and, under the Scenery Preservation Act, the only circumstance under which reserved land could be revoked was by the Governor, with parliamentary consent, if the land was rendered unsuitable for scenic purposes due to damage. This afforded better security to reserves than had previous legislation, the Wastelands Act and Crown Lands Act, under which the fate of reserves was determined by the relevant Minister’s discretion.

The Scenery Preservation Board, which became known as the Scenery Board, was a bureaucratic organisation structured to reflect the interests of government. It comprised four representatives of government departments and three other nominees: the Surveyor-General (Chair), the Commissioner of Railways, the Engineer in Chief, a representative of the State Tourist Department, and three ‘gentlemen enthusiasts’ for the cause of scenery preservation. Until the 1960s it was accommodated in the Lands and Surveys Department building in Hobart in keeping with its affiliation with the Lands Department. Responsible for scenery and flora preservation, but not for the protection of fauna, the Scenery Board’s main functions were to recommend areas for reservation based on their scenic or historic interest and to administer lands subsequently reserved under the Act. The Act also provided for the Scenery Board to vest control of a reserve, subject to conditions, in a municipal council or subsidiary Board. It was under this clause - a clause that the National Park Association undoubtedly initiated - that the National Park Board, and, later, other subsidiary boards, were established.

The Scenery Preservation Board embarked enthusiastically on its task of identifying areas for reservation. Board members E.A. Counsel (Surveyor-General and Chair), T.W. Fowler (Engineer in Chief), E.T. Emmett (Director, Tourist Department), C.S. Wilson (District Surveyor), L. Rodway (Government Botanist) and L. Bruce (Railways Commissioner) resolved, at their first meeting in June 1916, that:
In order to meet the provisions and requirements of this Act the Surveyor-General be requested with the approval of the Minister of Lands to take special note of waterfalls, forest clad mountain gorges, conspicuous rocky outcrops, attractive and commanding viewpoints or other places of historical or scenic interest and natural beauty.78

At its second meeting, in July, the Board agreed to recommend to the Government that no less than 26 areas be reserved under the Scenery Preservation Act:

- National Park, near Russell Falls
- Model Prison, Penitentiary, Old Church, Remarkable Cave, Dead Island, and Point Puer, at or near Port Arthur
- Eaglehawk Neck, Tessellated Pavement, Blowhole, Tasman’s Arch and the Devil’s Kitchen, at or near Eaglehawk Neck
- Flora and Fauna Reserve, Freycinet Peninsula
- Strip of land 10 chains wide along the Gordon River, from its mouth on each side up to the Franklin River
- Hartz Mountain (advice on the best area to reserve to be sought from Warden R. Geeves)
- Lake St Clair and ½ mile [0.8 kilometer] around its edge
- St Columba Falls
- Liffy Falls
- Beauty spots along the road between Deloraine and the Great Lake
- Montezuma Falls
- Parsons Falls and Devils Gullet, on the Western Tiers
- Sensation Gorge and the Alum Cliffs, near Mole Creek
- Dip River Falls
- Sandfly Falls
- Snug Falls
- Balmoral Plains
- La Perouse region
- Ida Bay Caves
- Junee Caves
- Guinns Plains Caves
- Hellyer River Gorge
- Bowen Tablet reserve near Risdon
- Cradle Mountain
Subsequently, in August 1916, the Earle Labor Government proclaimed the following scenery reserves under the new legislation: National Park, Freycinet, St Columba Falls and the Church, Penitentiary, Model Prison, Isle of the Dead and Point Puer in the vicinity of Port Arthur. Thompson Flynn and Clive Lord, representing the Field Naturalists Club, had lobbied the Minister, James Belton, for Freycinet to be declared a national park, with improved fauna protection, immediately after the Labor government’s election in April 1914, and the Port Arthur sites were established tourist destinations.

A deputation from the National Park Association comprising William Crooke, Henry Dobson and Arthur Butler attended the Board’s August meeting and spoke in favor of a separate subsidiary board to manage the National Park at Mt Field. Leonard Rodway put forward a motion to that effect but Wilson and Bruce voted against it and, as both Emmett and Fowler were absent from the meeting, it was lost. The National Park Association must have responded to the rejection by lobbying the Premier because soon afterwards the Premier requested of the Board that, after its next meeting, it convey a motion to the government vesting control of the National Park in a special board. This time, though opposed by the Chairman, the motion was carried. At a meeting of the National Park Association held at the Town Hall soon afterwards, in December 1916, the Chairman, Henry Dobson, congratulated the members on their success. Not only had the Scenery Board recommended to the Government that a special Board be appointed to manage the National Park, he said, but its proposed composition - the Surveyor-General, Engineer in Chief, Government Botanist, Director of the Tourist Bureau, and a number of citizens to be selected from the National Park Association, City Council, University, New Norfolk Council, Fisheries Commissioners, Royal Society, Field Naturalists Club and the Australian Natives Association - reflected the National Park Association’s goals for the park’s management. Dobson’s comment referred to the subsidiary board’s membership including a broader range of community and local interests than did the Scenery Preservation Board. The meeting selected William Crooke to represent the National Park Association on the new National Park Board, which, unlike the Scenery
Preservation Board, was to be responsible for wildlife protection in addition to scenery preservation.\textsuperscript{83}

A ceremony ‘worthy to rank with the epoch-making events in the history of Tasmania’\textsuperscript{84} was held to mark the opening of National Park, on Saturday 13 October 1917. Two special trains traveled from Hobart, collecting passengers \textit{en route} to witness the Governor, Sir Francis Newdegate, perform the official opening. At the ceremony the Premier’s representative, John Hayes, congratulated those people who had worked towards the park’s creation. He stressed the value to the State of tourist traffic and tourist attractions such as the park, saying that ‘he for one had never underestimated the value of the tourist to Tasmania, and the reservation of a park such as that would be talked about all over Australia, and help to attract people to the State’.\textsuperscript{85} Clive Lord presented the Governor with a silver key in the form of a gum leaf with which to unlock the park gate. In his speech the Governor praised the beauty of the park and acknowledged

\begin{quote}
Mr. Crooke, and those who had acted with him, first in selecting this particular site, and then in getting an association together, securing the support of the press (applause) – and finally the sympathy and support of the Government of the country.\textsuperscript{86}
\end{quote}

Henry Dobson, speaking on behalf of the National Park Board, emphasised the park’s role in promoting tourism, saying that ‘the tourist work performed by volunteers had progressed so well that the late Labor Government had taken it over’.\textsuperscript{87}

William Crooke was praised in both Hayes’ and Dobson’s speeches for his central role in the movement to establish the park but he was given a minor role at the ceremony - that of seconding Rodway’s vote of thanks to the Governor. Nevertheless, he took the opportunity to challenge the previous speakers’ emphasis on tourism, and was quoted as saying:

\begin{quote}
The idea of the Park was not originally conceived simply for tourists. Only by preserving a Park in this way would the people of Tasmania in the far future be able to see what primeval Tasmania was like. That was one of the objects. Another was the preservation of the native flora and fauna, and still another, the recreation of the people of Tasmania. The tourists, to his mind, came last, although they were always pleased to see them.\textsuperscript{88}
\end{quote}
Crooke, it seems, was voicing a minority opinion, but he was not entirely alone. On the Monday following the ceremony the editor of the *Mercury*, William Simmonds who had succeeded Henry Nicholls, supported Crooke’s position by stating in his editorial:

> The only creature to be driven out of the Park and kept out with flaming swords is the Utilitarian, who would indiscriminately chop trees, spoil waterfalls, dig up rare plants, kill live things, and spoil and ravage everything for money profit. If there ever come to exist legislators who cannot see the value of such a place we hope it will become a recognised custom to shoot them on sight whenever seen within three miles of the Park. But that does not mean that the whole place should be an untended wilderness. Mr. William Crooke, to whose foresight and energy the public really owes the whole idea of the Park, has offered excellent suggestions. Intelligent care, guided by loving knowledge, and assisted with enough filthy lucre to make the Park attractive and convenient for everybody, is what is needed.89

Given the importance that is now placed on national parks as protectors of forests, it is ironic that the rest of the afternoon was devoted to wood chopping competitions. At the time wood chopping was a celebration of rural skills and endurance associated with the virtues and bounties of bush living, and the competitions contributed to a successful day of celebration.

**Conclusion**

Hundreds of people shared the pleasure of the park’s opening but they did not share a single view on the role of the reserve. Views expressed at the time were an omen of political conflicts that lay ahead, arising from inherent contradictions between interests in recreation, tourism and nature preservation, between industry and conservation, though most people, it seems, were oblivious to the anomalies. Natural resources seemed plentiful enough that major social and political conflicts over land use would have appeared unlikely and unnecessary. William Crooke was an exception, his speech at the opening ceremony illustrating that he was alert to conflict between his vision of the park and its promotion for tourism. It was probably Crooke’s suspicion of tourism, which was embodied in his particular dislike of Evelyn Temple Emmett, Director of the Government Tourist Bureau90, that led him to fall out with, and leave, the National Park Board not long after his appointment.

Contrary to Crook’s wishes, by the time of his death in 1920 tourism had become firmly established as the primary focus of the National Park and of other reserves.
governed by the Scenery Preservation Act. Of the range of interests that had given rise to the national parks movement - outdoor recreation, protection of animal and plant species, scenery preservation, public health and tourism - tourism was dominant. At the turn of the century the Tasmanian Tourist Association took the lead in the movement’s push for a Tasmanian national park, and tourism featured in the speeches made at its opening. By the twentieth century tourism was of more interest to the government, and generated more government support, than did any of the other interests that had given rise to the national park movement. With few exceptions, among whom William Crooke was the most conspicuously outspoken, there was consensus within the community in relation to the importance of tourism as a rationale for the reservation of nature reserves.

The idea of progress was largely responsible for the political consensus that supported the establishment of public reserves at the turn of the century. And, by the early twentieth century, the most significant aspect of progress associated with reserves was their potential to generate revenue through tourism. The fact that park activists, community leaders and politicians were closely connected by social ties, such as membership of the same community, scientific or political organisations, or by marriage and family connections, also contributed to the consensus. Most park activists were, in fact, also community leaders or politicians themselves. The players in the political arena, including park activists, were members of the educated classes, mostly landowners, successful businessmen and professionals, whose social circles mingled. In this social environment much of the groundwork for political decisions was achieved informally. Tasmania’s small population, limited scale of industrial development and seemingly abundant natural resources meant that conflict between economic progress and the preservation of nature in national parks had not, by the turn of the century, created a rift in the climate of political consensus that helped to establish national parks in the State.

The interests that people ascribe to their actions, and those of the groups to which they belong, are usually not the only interests motivating political action. As Doyle and Kellow argue, human behavior is usually driven not only by concern for the community’s common good, but by personal reasons, or ‘self-interest’. Self-interest is not usually seen as a valid justification for behavior where there is, or might
possibly be, a conflict between an individual’s interest or the interest of a group, and the community’s perception of the ‘common good’. In a situation such as this, or in the case of one group’s interests being at odds with those of a more socially or politically powerful group, there is a strong incentive for the less powerful party to seek to achieve their goal through means, and arguments, consistent with the expressed interests of the dominant group. Private motivations, or ‘self-interest’ have always played a part in park creation, just as it has done in resistance to park proposals, though the parties involved are unlikely to place these reasons on the public record. They may not be aware of them. William Crooke, for example, was undoubtedly motivated by a genuine love of nature. It is unlikely he would have devoted so much of his time to the Children’s Excursion Association, and the National Park Association, if he had not been. Would he not have been influenced, too, by the unhappy prospect of the trees surrounding his fishing retreat at Tyenna being logged and a sawmill being built alongside his cottage?
Endnotes: Chapter 3

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PART 2

The Scenery Preservation Board: Compromise and Loss for National Parks

Chapter 4

Between the Wars, 1920-1940: The Initial National Parks Movement Wanes

Geoff Mosley argued that, if judged by the number and total area of reserves created, 1916-1922 was the most important period in the history of Tasmanian scenery preservation.¹ In contrast, the historian W.A. Townsley described the years between the two World Wars, 1919-1939, as the ‘stagnant decades’ of Tasmanian history.² The economy was depressed and, to make matters worse, the State began borrowing heavily and accumulating debt. There was very little money to spend on public services, including reserves. The Scenery Board’s expenditure on national parks and reserves was limited to £29.6.0 during the 1925-26 financial year, and was approximately £30 per year for a number of years between the mid 1920s and late 1930s.³

These years were not stagnant, however, in terms of developments in Tasmania’s national park system. Despite the Scenery Board’s limited budget for reserve management, the amount of land held in reserves under the Board’s jurisdiction increased significantly. Access to reserves was improved under the Premiership of Albert Ogilvie, who eased unemployment by financing construction of tourist roads to the summit of Mt Wellington, Mt Barrow, Mt Rumney, Hastings and Maracoopa Caves, Lake Fenton, Cynthia Bay and Cradle Valley.⁴ And, in 1938, the Scenery Board gained an enthusiastic chair, Colin Pitt, who reinvigorated the Board’s finances and activities, including the proclamation of sixteen new reserves between 1938-1941.⁵

Though Tasmania’s national park system did expand during this period between the two World Wars, nature conservation interests were subservient to the push for
industrial development driven by both Labor and Liberal governments, and the interests of national parks and reserves were compromised to accommodate industry interests, notably those of the timber and mining industries, and the Hydro-Electric Commission (HEC). Compromises were facilitated by the structure and procedures of the Scenery Board which mostly comprised representatives of government departments and industry. Reserve proposals were presented to members of the Scenery Board and often to representatives of competing interests not represented at meetings. Any significant objections meant the proposal was modified or shelved - scenery preservation was a residual land-use which governments supported in the absence of an alternative land use that offered a higher financial return.

During this period the Scenery Preservation Act was weakened in order to facilitate expansion of the reserve system and, at the Premier’s request, the Commissioner of Police and Conservator of Forests were added to the membership of the Scenery Board in addition to the Hydro Commissioner or nominee, which made that body even more representative of the interests of government and industry.6 There was some public challenge to governments’ willingness to compromise national parks for industrial development and a community-based national parks movement re-emerged during the 1930s in protest over damage to a national park caused by the HEC. Nevertheless, during the inter-war period, opposition from conservationists to development interests lacked the cohesion necessary to effect change.

Threats to the security of national parks and reserves became apparent as a clash of interests between industrial development and nature conservation impinged on reserved lands. Gerald Castles argued that conservationists involved in the Tasmanian national parks movement at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century co-existed with a majority of the public and a succession of governments more interested in national parks and reserves for their economic potential than their nature conservation role. The conservationists, or proto-conservationists as he describes these early conservationists, had to hope that the Scenery Board would accommodate their values and those of government and the rest of the population. But, as Castles pointed out, the naivety of their belief was revealed during the first thirty years of the Board’s existence when national parks’ conservation role was compromised in the interests of industry.7
In the State election of 1919 the two major political parties’ platforms were similar. In the name of empire, and national and Tasmanian prosperity both parties espoused repatriation, soldier settlement, hydro-electric development and industrial development of all kinds. The political supremacy of industrial development resulted, on the eve of the Second World War, in the first revocation of land from a national park for the purpose of mining, and four further revocations during the war years for purposes of hydro-electricity, mining, granite quarrying and forestry.

Conflicting interests between nature preservation and resource exploitation led to increased tension between conservationists and reserves’ management authority, the Scenery Board. This conflict of interests also affected the national parks movement itself as the movement, which comprised a following of people with a combination of nature conservation and utilitarian interests, confronted incompatibilities between the interests of conservation and development and, consequently, the interests of its members.

**The National Park Board confronts challenges**

In its first years the National Park Board faced internal problems that related to William Crooke’s membership in addition to the challenge of managing the State’s first national park. Members of the National Park Board met on the first Tuesday of every month, with enthusiasm but very little money, to deal with the business of managing the park. Evidently motivated by concern that the Board did not have sufficient money to achieve the gaols for which the park was established Crooke moved, at the Board’s July meeting, that:

> On and after 1st September 1917 a charge be made for admission to the National Park of 6d for adults, 3d for children, under the same definition determining children as used by the Railways Department. The Executive to make arrangements for the collection of the fee.

The motion was lost. Sadly for Crooke it appears that the Board’s lack of financial resources at least partially explained other members’ lack of support for the educational excursions which he organised in his capacity as an executive member of the Children’s Excursion Association. Members of the Board argued that it could not undertake any financial responsibility for the excursions because the limited funds available were purely for the purpose of improving the park. What little support the Board did give to the school children’s excursions appears to have been given
grudgingly. Crooke aired his grievances about the Board’s lack of support to school excursions in the *Mercury*, to which Evelyn Temple Emmett reacted by moving the motion,

> That no member of the Board should publish or inspire letters or articles in the Press attacking or criticising the action of his fellow members seeing that he has full opportunities of discussing all proposals at Board Meetings.12

Though the majority of the National Park Board’s members had reservations about encouraging Crooke’s education programme they allowed the excursions to proceed and the Board approved the hiring of some additional assistance to the Ranger, William Belcher, in order to avoid damage to the park during the visits.

In the course of the Board’s on-going business of constructing tracks, accommodation houses and huts, stocking lakes with Rainbow Trout, seeking additions of land and naming features of the park, a further conflict arose between Crooke and other Board members. This time it involved the name of a lake. One of the larger lakes on the Mt Field Plateau had acquired the name Lake Nicholls as a result of Herbert Nicholls and Leonard Rodway’s trip about thirty years previously, an excursion that resulted in the two men being so impressed with the Mt Field area that they had drawn public attention to the worthiness of its preservation.13 The same lake was, years afterwards, called ‘Lake Jollytail’ by anglers and Crooke believed that official adoption of this new name would be fitting recognition of his role in the effort which resulted in the park’s proclamation. A Special Board was appointed to resolve that and other nomenclature issues. If there was little love lost between Crooke and other Board members before that issue arose, there was precious little left by the time it was resolved. The *Mercury* supported the position of its angling writer ‘Jollytail’ on the name of the lake:

> It seems a lamentable thing that in a time of such serious trouble in thousands of millions of homes, those of our own State included, grown men should be wasting time, temper and labor over such a miserable triviality as that which occupied the National Park Board, the renaming out of sheer spite, of a small lake which few people have ever seen.

> … but for Mr Crooke and “The Mercury” there would have been at this moment neither National-park nor National-park Board, therefore no secretaries or members to rage furiously amongst themselves, and no “officials” to attempt such vain things as preparing maps in order to pay personal compliments by putting names on, or to gratify personal spleen by taking other names off. 14
Members of the National Park Board, however, believed that the nomenclature principle of precedence determined that the name ‘Lake Nicholls’ remain and that, besides, Nicholls too was worthy of such acknowledgement. The Board offered to name a smaller, but reputedly just as beautiful a lake ‘Lake Jollytail’ but Crooke was offended by the substitution and refused to accept the compromise. After this episode Crooke attended meetings of the National Park Board only intermittently. He lost his cottage at Mt Field in a fire, and died soon afterwards. The extent to which conflicts between William Crooke and other members of the National Park Board were the result of Crooke’s personality or of his interest in National Park’s role in nature conservation rather than tourism, which was a primary interest of other prominent members of the Board, is not clear. Both personality factors and clash of interests probably played a part.

Following his death, in August 1920, obituaries acknowledged Crooke’s contribution to the community through his efforts to achieve the National Park. But he was more fondly remembered for his role as founder of and energetic worker for the Children’s’ Excursion Association, the group that organised train trips for school children to National Park, where they visited Russell Falls and learnt ‘something of the charms of the bush’. The community’s appreciation of Cooke’s dedication was demonstrated by the crowd of approximately 650 people who travelled to the park in June 1924 to participate in the unveiling of his memorial.

Crooke’s preservationist views and his involvement in the Excursion Association that encouraged young people to develop protective attitudes towards the natural environment showed him to be a man whose views on the environment and the role of national parks were progressive for his time. Obituaries created a vivid image of him. They help to explain why the memory of a man who contributed so much to the Tasmanian community, notably with respect to the development of railways, fisheries and the parks movement, has been allowed to fade from public memory:

In appraising the worth of any individual citizen many things have to be taken into consideration, and many factors in the work of the day closely regarded and nicely weighed. The best kind of citizen is, of course, he who not only lives an exemplary life and has high ideals of citizenship, but who comes out into the open in the whirl and whirr of the times, and with voice, pen, and personal effort does his very best to lift up moral tone and place a stone, or many stones, in the building of a strong foundation for civic and state progress. William Crooke was this kind of man. He had a wide and a
long vision, and he builded [sic] as well as he knew and as well as those with whom he worked in a public sense, and for whom he worked, would allow. In very many matters he was years ahead of current thought, and he had to fight his way through many obstacles erected by stodgy minds. He was intensely patriotic, wonderfully progressive, and of nature untiring, resourceful, and courageous. He was of that type who will not accept defeat of a momentary nature where the public good is at stake, and his tenaciousness carried him very often to a wise success where a weaker nature and less fearless men would have given up in disgust.

... it was his never ceasing propaganda and utterly self-effacing effort which was in large measure responsible, too, for one of the greatest glories this state will ever have as a national and priceless possession – the great National Park up Tyenna way.

... Quite naturally such men get opposition from those who are content to stay in the rut forever, be they ordinary citizens or politicians, because the tired we will always have with us, but it is men of the outlook of the late Mr. Crooke who achieve things, and their work lives after them.16

Altogether in Mr. Crooke Hobart has lost a most useful citizen, and yet one whose merits were never fully appreciated. Perhaps the fault lay in himself to some extent, for he was indifferent to popularity, caring only to achieve the things upon which his mind was bent.17

In the absence of William Crooke the energies of the National Park Board and the park’s first ranger, William Belcher focused on promoting the park as a tourist destination and in the 1920s progress owed more to their commitment and ingenuity than it did to the Board’s limited budget. Evelyn Temple Emmett who, as Director of the Tourist Department, was a member of the National Park Board and a member of the Scenery Board, was keen to extend Tasmania’s traditional summer tourist season through the winter by promoting winter sports. He organised an excursion of National Park Board members to the reserve to investigate the suitability of the reserve’s snowfields and lakes as venues for winter sports. Emmett subsequently sought supplies of skis from the mainland and ice-skates from America, and led the promotion of National Park as a destination for recreational tourism in winter.18

The National Park Board appointed William Belcher, a local resident who had worked at the Russell Falls reserve for the Tasmanian Tourist Association, temporary ranger in 1919. His position became permanent in the following year, with a ‘package’ of £200 annual salary and the sole right to lease and manage horse traffic in the park.19 Belcher built huts and tracks as directed by the Board and he and his wife often acted as host and hostess to park visitors, sometimes guiding them up the ‘pack track’ to Lake Fenton at night with the help of a lantern. Because it was short of funds the Board asked the Railways Department to clean and maintain
facilities within the reserve. When the Lake Fenton hut was destroyed by fire in 1926, the Railways Department freighted timber for a new hut free of charge. Volunteers, notably members of the National Park Board and the Shoobridge family, did much of the work carried out in the park. When the Ski Club requested permission to lease land and the right to erect a ski hut the Board agreed, undoubtedly pleased to support development it could not finance itself. In 1924, to help finance the upgrading of the Lake Fenton pack track to cater for motor vehicles, a toll of 6/- for motor vehicles and 10/- for chara-bancs was proposed but again the idea of charging visitors a usage fee was defeated.

The Scenery Preservation Board focuses on tourism

The National Park Board’s parent body, the Scenery Board, was also short of funds. It is not surprising that the areas that received most attention from the Scenery Board during its leanest years were those that were expected to attract the most tourist revenue, notably Port Arthur and a number of caves deemed suitable for visitors.

The convict prison at Port Arthur had been a tourist destination even during the convict period, when viewing the ‘criminal physiognomy’ of sleeping prisoners was one of the sights available to overnight visitors. After its closure as a convict station Tasmanians’ attitudes towards the Port Arthur prison site were ambivalent, with calls for demolition of the buildings and obliteration of the site’s convict past continuing well into the twentieth century. Yet Kay Daniels described Port Arthur as having undergone immediate metamorphosis following its closure as a penal station in 1877. Tourists flocked there and ex-convicts adopted the role of actors, revealed their scarred bodies and gave their accounts of the horrors of convict days for the benefit of tourists. If the stories are to be trusted, Daniels has said, few transitions can have been more harmonious than Port Arthur’s transition from convict prison to rural community with tourism as a sideline. While some Tasmanians wanted the prison site demolished in the hope that the memories it held would then fade, for others the old buildings held a romantic appeal, and the site’s value as a tourist destination was obvious.

Supporters of the site’s protection secured its listing under the Scenery Preservation Act 1916 despite contrary views. Within six months of its appointment the Scenery
Board requested a report on the condition of buildings from the Engineer in Chief and visited the site as a basis for deciding on the appointment of guides and caretakers. Three guides were subsequently employed for a retainer of £1 per annum in addition to fees from visitors to the Penitentiary and the Isle of the Dead. A large slice of the Scenery Board’s expenditure during the 1920s and 1930s was directed to developing reserves on the Tasman Peninsula at or near Port Arthur. For example in 1925, £28 of a total of £32.14.6 was spent on Tasman Peninsula reserves; £28 of 1927’s expenditure of £34.19.5; £42.16.7 of 1929’s total of £52.16.7 and, in 1936, the Board spend £23.14.1 of the year’s expenditure of £32.15.2 on a turning ground for cars at Tasman’s Arch. In 1925 the Scenery Preservation Board delegated responsibility for day-to-day management of the Peninsula reserves to the Tasman Municipal Council for three years and the arrangement was extended for several terms. Just weeks after the new management arrangement had been put in place it was noted that ‘time has proved to the Board that reserves such as these are best managed by local residents’. The Scenery Board commended the Council for the way in which it was managing the reserves in its Annual Report of 1929, referring to twelve months during which 7,028 people had visited the Port Arthur site, resulting in revenue of £263.

The other group of reserves, in addition to those on the Tasman Peninsula, that were known to be popular with tourists and which attracted the Scenery Board’s attention and financial support was cave reserves. Three of the areas that the Board had recommended to the government for reservation in 1916 were put forward because of caves - Ida Bay, Junee and Gunns Plains Caves. Not one of them was proclaimed a reserve under the new legislation at that time, but the Scenery Board, aware of the caves’ potential for tourism, retained interest in them. In his position as Director of the Tourist Department Emmett invited fellow members of the Scenery Board to accompany James Wiburd, Superintendent of Jenolan Caves, and himself on an inspection tour of northern Tasmanian caves in the spring of 1917. Two members of the Scenery Board and the Manager of the Launceston Tourist Bureau joined the party that toured the Mole Creek Caves, Scott’s, Baldock’s, Byards (or Marakoopa) and King Soloman’s Caves. Wiburd said that what had been done to promote the caves was merely ‘scratching the surface’ and he encouraged the Tasmanians to develop them further. The following year the Tasmanian members of the party
visited Hastings Caves, South of Hobart, and organised to have the area surveyed with the aim of bringing it under the Scenery Preservation Act once a prospecting claim over the area had expired. After these visits caves successfully competed for a share of Scenery Board funds. Lighting and building pathways at Gunns Plains Caves consumed 68% of the Board’s expenditure in 1922 and 45% in 1923.

Cradle Mountain: a new national park is proclaimed, but fundamental principles are compromised

Cradle Mountain became the second major focus of the national parks movement and the primary focus in the north of the State after the declaration of National Park. The earliest recorded tourist party to visit Cradle Mountain was a group of three men who spent twelve days hiking in the area in 1890. One of the three, writing as ‘Pereginator’, provided glowing accounts of the trip for the local newspaper, Launceston’s Examiner, which also published photographs of the area taken in the course of a ‘Westward Ho!’ publicity trip a few years later. Early expeditions made use of huts that had been erected by stockmen, miners, piners and hunters, and a number of locals, such as Bob Quaile - land-owner, councillor and dairy farmer of Daisy Dell - supplemented their incomes by turning their bush skills to tourist work, guiding parties of tourists to Cradle Mountain with the help of pack horses.

Gustav Weindorfer campaigned for a national park at Cradle Mountain. Weindorfer made a botanical visit to the area with his friend and fellow member of the Victorian Field Naturalists Club, Dr Charlie Sutton, in 1909. He returned the following Christmas with his Tasmanian wife Kate, whom he had also met through the Field Naturalists Club, and a neighbour of the couple’s farm at Kindred, Ronald Smith. According to Smith, Weindorfer stood on the summit of Cradle Mountain, his arms outstretched, and declared, ‘This must be a National Park for the people for all time. It is magnificent, and people must know about it and enjoy it’. Kate, who like Weindorfer had witnessed the opening up of Mount Buffalo National Park in the Victorian Alps, shared his enthusiasm and together they selected a site for the tourist chalet ‘Waldheim’. The Weindorfers, Ronald Smith and Smith’s mother purchased three 200 acre blocks at Cradle Valley. In 1912 Gustav began building ‘Waldheim’ and, after Kate’s death in 1916, Gustav made ‘Waldheim’ his home. When he was
not entertaining visitors Weindorfer led a hermit like existence. He supplemented his limited income by snaring and selling skins, eating native game and grazing cattle during the summer on his land at Cradle Mountain. Weindorfer was a conservationist of his time. His appreciation of nature did not prevent him from cutting the rare King Billy Pine, killing native animals or altering the native vegetation through cattle grazing. Like most other nature lovers and supporters of the national parks movement of the time, protecting nature to Weindorfer meant preserving beautiful landscapes and species of native flora and fauna from wholesale destruction, not necessarily from the changes that result from human habitation and survival.

Evelyn Temple Emmett shared Weindorfer’s enthusiasm for promoting Cradle Mountain as a resort. Keen to establish winter sports, especially skiing, in Tasmania so that the State need not rely on the summer season’s tourist trade, he visited Cradle Mountain in 1916 to appraise the area. Inspired by the region’s potential he recommended it to the Scenery Board for reservation - Cradle Mountain and, to the south, Lake St Clair, were included in the Scenery Board’s initial list of reserve recommendations but his proposal lay in abeyance until 1921. Supporters of the parks movement in Northern Tasmania and members of the newly formed Northern Branch of the Royal Society joined the move to protect Cradle Mountain’s scenic values and open up the area for visitors. For example, Fred Smithies, a Launceston businessman, rockclimber, amateur photographer and member of the Royal Society, organised lantern slide lectures for Weindorfer to address, and presented a number of these lectures himself.

In 1921 Weindorfer travelled to Launceston to promote Cradle Mountain as a tourist resort and potential national park. He met with parliamentarians and was interviewed by a reporter from the local newspaper, the Examiner. The newspaper published a lengthy article about Cradle Mountain, quoting Weindorfer talking about the value of the area’s flora, the beauty of its mountains and lakes, about the accommodation he had built at ‘Waldheim’ for tourists and their horses, and his wish for more people to experience the beauty of the Cradle Valley. Weindorfer said that the area was totally unsuitable for agriculture or commercial timber operations, portraying the area as a wasteland for industrial use and commending its use as a national park. The Examiner article outlined the national park proposal - a reserve that would extend
from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Clair, about 20 miles (12 kilometres) from north to south, and 6 miles (3.7 kilometres) from east to west - incorporating scenery ‘resembling but probably surpassing’ the magnificence of the USA’s Yosemite Valley, Crater Lake and Yellowstone National Parks.41

From Launceston Weindorfer travelled to Hobart where, with Emmett and Clive Lord, he met with the Minister for Lands Alec Hean to promote the park proposal, and spoke at a special meeting of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club.42 The Mercury newspaper, in its report of the meeting, described Emmett and Weindorfer as the two most prominent promoters of the national park proposal. The newspaper quoted Emmett as saying that it was not intended to gazette the area under the Scenery Preservation Act, which would impose restrictions on taking native game and timber. This, he said, would be contrary to the promoters’ intention to have an area in which game could be taken moderately, timber marketed and minerals mined from which revenue could be derived. But scenery, Emmett was reported as saying, was one of the best natural assets of any country, and the State would benefit from the opening up of the fine scenery in Tasmania’s western region. Clive Lord added that, though opposition might be raised against closing up such a large amount of the country - 150 square miles - the land would be expected to afford some return to the State in the future and, since it was useless for agriculture, tourism was a good option.43

The day after it had publicized the Cradle Mountain National Park proposal the Mercury published a letter to its Editor from a Hobart resident who feared that the proposal could disadvantage miners. Concerned that the park’s proponents were intending that a royalty be paid to the Reserve Board on minerals from the reserve he argued that, ‘no restrictions whatever be allowed to be placed on prospectors or miners, or on minerals of any kind’, since ‘our old mining fields need reviving, and new ones opened free from outside control’.44 Despite public concern about access to resources in the Cradle Mountain area lobbying and publicity continued over the summer of 1921-22, and a parliamentary delegation visited the area. The Scenery Preservation Act was amended to make it ‘more elastic’, in order that the area, once it became a reserve, would not be excluded from mining, forestry or grazing. The
amendment permitted the government, on the recommendation of the Scenery Board, to exempt lands reserved under the Act from any of its provisions.45

The Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair expansion of the reserve system therefore came at a high price to the security of lands within it and other national parks and reserves under the Scenery Preservation Act. The extent to which the compromise of amending the legislation was imposed on the parks movement against beliefs held by park proponents is not, however, clear. It seems that the intent of the amendment was, to at least some degree, consistent with the view of scenic reserves held by some members of the national parks movement at the time, and certainly by prominent members of the Scenery Board. Weindorfer’s lifestyle and Emmett’s comments indicate likely support for the compromise. In their eyes it seems the area was worth preserving for its beauty and the protection it could offer native animal populations but it was not necessary to exclude the expedient and limited exploitation of resources for purposes that included, but were not limited to, tourism. If allowing resource extraction was necessary in order to have the Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair region reserved, however, the option suggested by Emmett, that of not including it under the Scenery Preservation Act, would have been preferable from an environmental perspective to weakening the legislation.

The reserve proposal was put to a vote at the March meeting of the Scenery Preservation Board. The motion was carried. The Chairman, the Surveyor-General Edward Counsel gave his support on the condition that mining, pastoral and timber interests were protected. Counsel argued that it would not do to reserve the area under the Scenery Preservation Act’s original conditions. There would be a great deal of opposition, he said, because people desired to go on the land for prospecting and mining was an important industry.46 An area of 158,000 acres (63,941 hectares) from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Clair was subsequently proclaimed ‘Scenic Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary’ on 16 May 1922 by the Liberal Government led by Sir Walter Lee. Lee represented the constituency of Wilmot, which in 1922 was extended south to include Lake St Clair as well as Cradle Mountain.47

Two subsidiary Boards managed the reserve. The National Park Board assumed responsibility for the section south of the Wallace River and plans were made to
appoint a second Board to manage the northern section. The National Park Board agreed to the arrangement on the proviso that it would not be spending any National Park funds on the new reserve. But the Northern Board was not formally appointed until six years after the park was proclaimed, and then with no funding. The Board that was finally appointed, largely at the instigation of its future Chair, Arch Meston, had eleven active members: Meston, William Savingy, Fred Smithies, Karl Stackhouse and Frank Heywood who were appointed on the basis of the work they had done in promoting the area, as well as representatives of the Northern Tourist Bureau, the Launceston Museum, Launceston branch of the Royal Society, the northern branch of the Workers’ Education Association (Ken Dallas), Kentish (Bob Quaile) and Deloraine Councils. The Cradle Mountain Board’s composition, like that of the National Park Board, reflected a range of interests. Though it was not restricted to nature conservation interests, neither was it dominated by industry and government interests to the extent of its parent body, the Scenery Preservation Board. Fortunately the enthusiasm of Cradle Mountain Board members outweighed its lack of finances because the government repeatedly refused its request for an annual grant of £5-£10. The early 1930s were years of depression. In Tasmania, unemployment rose from 9% to 27% and State income dropped to about 50% of its previous level. Matters improved for the Cradle Mountain Board in 1933, when the government conceded to grant its first annual allocation of £10. Weindorfer continued to manage ‘Waldheim’ and to give lantern-slide lectures mostly in the north of the State, while his life at Cradle Valley made him something of a folk hero in his own time. By the time he died in 1932 the Cradle Mountain reserve was close to becoming a major resort. During the 1932-1933 season over 150 people visited ‘Waldheim’ and several parties traversed the Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair Reserve.

In the 1920s Evelyn Temple Emmett encouraged hiking as a Tasmanian pastime by instigating the formation of walking clubs. He established the Hobart Walking Club in 1929 and similar clubs were started in the north and north-west soon afterwards. The walking clubs had been preceded by alpine or ski clubs in each of the three regions which, like the walking clubs, resulted from Emmett’s initiative. In order for hiking to become popular in the Cradle Mountain Reserve, however, walking tracks were needed. The first reconnaissance trip through the reserve was made in 1931 by Emmett, Smith and Thwaites, and thereafter Emmett, himself a keen walker and a
member of the Hobart Walking Club, made it an annual walking club trip. Volunteers from the two subsidiary Boards worked together to blaze a trail through the reserve which, for the competitive tender of £13, Lorinna snarer Bert Nichols made into a track.51

Waldheim Chalet - Christmas 1928
(Source: Archives Office of Tasmania, NS573/4/10/22)

The poor condition of the Cradle Mountain Road was a serious impediment to developing the reserve’s tourist potential. Weindorfer’s clientele at ‘Waldheim’ had always been restricted to a few hardy souls who arrived either with the help of a guide and pack horses, or who risked their motor vehicle becoming bogged. Albert Ogilvy, who became Labor Premier in June 1934, visited the Cradle Mountain reserve and, in recognition of its potential as a tourist resort, allocated money for road improvements. The Tasmanian government spent £9,600 on the road over five years from 1934 with an additional £2,000, between 1938 and 1940, from the Commonwealth vote for unemployment relief.52 The most active member of the Cradle Mountain Reserve Board in lobbying for this money was Ronald Smith. Both Smith and Weindorfer planned to sell timber from their adjoining blocks and with
This in mind the two men had an ‘in-principle’ agreement with a timber merchant. This interest predictably meant that questions and accusations were raised in connection with Smith’s motivation for pushing for improvements to the access. Nevertheless, Smith, in his position of Secretary of the Cradle Mountain Reserve Board, successfully lobbied through the 1930s for money to upgrade sections of the approach to the reserve and a road was finally opened in 1941. By then the Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair Reserve was an established tourist destination with a framework of tracks and huts, and boats available for the Dove Lake crossing.

Lyle Connell and his family assumed the role of caretakers at ‘Waldheim’ following Weindorfer’s death in 1932. Under the oversight of the Cradle Mountain Board Lyle, his wife Maggie and children Esrom, Wal, Os, Ross, Kathy and Audrey, operated tourist accommodation, acted as guides, and built tracks and huts in the northern section of the reserve. According to Michael Sharland, no bushmen would have been more suitable for park ranger positions than the Connells, whom he described as ‘mountain men to the core’. Lyle was appointed the park’s first salaried ranger in 1935. His wage was £15 per month which he and his family supplemented by snaring bush fauna, providing visitor accommodation and guiding tourists. His work in the northern part of the reserve was complemented by that of Bert Nichols, ranger for the southern section. Tourist numbers steadily increased during the 1930s - in the six years to 1939 the number of annual summer visitors quadrupled to 874.

**Tasmania’s reserve system expands despite limited funds**

From the mid 1920s through to the end of the Great Depression in the mid 1930s, the Scenery Board existed on a shoestring budget. In 1931 Emmett actually said that, ‘at present the most useful work appears to be to preserve our scenic resorts from being sold, so that when the population increases, they may have the benefit of areas that are well worth while developing into attractions for travellers’. Nevertheless, the area of reserves under the Scenery Board’s control increased considerably in the years between the wars. Between 1922 and 1938 only two new reserves, Mount Strezleki and Weldborough Pass, were proclaimed, but both National Park and the Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair Reserves were expanded. The size of National Park was increased by 11,400 acres (4,650 hectares) in 1919 after the Scenery Board unanimously supported the National Park Board’s request to include the whole of the...
Mount Field Plateau in the reserve for reasons relating both to scenery and wildlife preservation.\textsuperscript{58} The Scenery Board supported a further application from the National Park Board to extend the size of the park in 1930. This extension, involving an additional 3,400 acres (1,376 hectares) along the northern boundary, made the park boundary coincide better with the topography, thereby making it more obvious to hunters and hunting easier to control.\textsuperscript{59} These two extensions brought the size of the reserve to 41,800 acres (16,916 hectares).

An application by the Cradle Mountain Board to increase the size of the northern reserve however met with opposition from mining and timber interests. The Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair reserve was also a wildlife sanctuary under the \textit{Animals and Birds Protection Act 1928}. In 1934 the Animals and Birds Protection Board planned to extend its sanctuary to the west of the national park, to make the boundary more obvious from the ground for the purpose of controlling game hunting. When the Cradle Mountain Board proposed adopting the new boundary, the Mines Department opposed the move, arguing that the land in question was mineral bearing and that to include it in the reserve would restrict prospecting, and the Forestry Department protested that the expansion would encroach on valuable timber country.\textsuperscript{60} Consequently, the government did not approve the proposed extension to the park boundary at that time. A few years later, in 1940, the Animals and Birds Protection Board contracted further survey work with the aim of making the sanctuary’s boundaries even more easily recognisable by both hunters and rangers and, despite the opposition that had previously been expressed by mining and timber interests to an expansion, the eastern and western boundaries of both the game sanctuary and scenic reserves were extended in accordance with the surveyors’ recommendations.\textsuperscript{61} The Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair reserve was now double the size it had been when it was first proclaimed. To cater for an increasing number of walkers the Scenery Board allocated a large part of its budget to developing the Cradle Mt - Lake St. Clair walking track. A joint meeting of the two subsidiary boards in February 1935 recommended spending £200 on the track, and in June the \textit{Mercury} reported that, as a result of recently completed trackwork it was possible to walk through the reserve without a guide.\textsuperscript{62}
Some, though not very much, progress was made towards developing reserves during this period. At National Park some accommodation was built and a road was constructed to Lake Fenton. With the assistance of a government subsidy of £250, sale of timber from the reserve, and the Hobart City Council’s intention to use water from Lake Fenton as a second water supply for Hobart, work on the Lake Fenton Road started in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{63} Freycinet Reserve’s potential as a tourist destination was furthered by the interest of private developers, Harry Parsons and Ron Richardson, who leased land adjoining Coles Bay from the Scenery Board and built tourist accommodation for visitors to the east coast reserve.\textsuperscript{64} Port Arthur, which was managed by the Tasman Municipal Council, continued to fare relatively well. It received revenue, mostly from visitors’ fees but also from the leasing of cattle grazing in the reserve. And Port Arthur’s popularity with tourists was so obvious - 7,028 visitors were recorded for the year to June 1929 - that the Tasman Peninsula reserves attracted a large share of what little money government authorities did allocate to reserve development.\textsuperscript{65}

**New Measures to Protect Fauna**

Eric Guiler has argued that there was, after World War 1, a general feeling in the community that the degree of protection given to native animals was inadequate, and the Royal Society, amongst others, lobbied the government to improve the situation.\textsuperscript{66} At that time public concern was heightened by the impact of a series of open game seasons during which an alarming number of native animals were destroyed. Trappers were earning high prices for skins and furs and the industry provided much needed employment during depression years. In the winter of 1920, for example, 98,000 kangaroos, 93,000 wallabies, 16,000 black possums, 40,000 gray possums and 275,000 ringtails are recorded as having been killed.\textsuperscript{67}

In response to public pressure, the Liberal government led by Sir Walter Lee passed the *Animals and Birds Protection Act 1919* to replace the game Acts. This decision, though it was a step forward in that it made administering regulations more manageable, did not go far enough for the fauna protection lobby because it did not provide for an expert body to advise government on policy relating to fauna protection, and enforcement remained largely at the discretion of country policemen. Responding to further public pressure the government prepared new legislation under the same title. The new legislation gave control of fauna to a body corporate chaired by the Commissioner of Police with eight other members appointed by the Governor, including representatives of trappers and hunters, fur skin merchants, the
Tasmanian Farmer's, Stockman's and Orchardist's Association, the Agricultural Bureau of Tasmania, associations and societies interested in or concerned with the science of zoology, the Municipal Association of Tasmania and the Game Protection and Acclimatisation Society of Tasmania.\textsuperscript{68}

The \textit{Animals and Birds Protection Act 1928} provided for a largely independent statutory body, the Animals and Birds Protection Board, which was more independent of other government agencies than was the Scenery Board, to govern faunal matters. The new Board was better financed than the Scenery Board - the Animals and Birds Protection Board, commonly referred to as the Fauna Board, started its operations in 1929 with a budget of £500 and the services of four police officers as rangers.\textsuperscript{69} Its responsibilities and powers extended to research and investigation, the prohibition or permission of entry into Tasmania of all species of animals and birds not covered by the Stock Act, management and control of sanctuaries and the appointment of officers.\textsuperscript{70} Guiler argued that in establishing the Board and granting it the degree of independence it enjoyed, the government wanted a buffer between itself and the public, a buffer that would protect it from direct criticism of decisions on what were often political issues, but allow governments the option of not accepting the advice offered.\textsuperscript{71}

The new legislation gave the Fauna Board the power to declare three types of reserves - sanctuaries, in which hunting and other threats to fauna were prohibited; faunal districts, in which hunting and other activities were subject to the Board’s discretion; and muttonbird hunting grounds in which the Board could prohibit activities other than muttonbirding.\textsuperscript{72} The Fauna Board inherited seven sanctuaries and reserves, to which a further seventeen were added by 1940.\textsuperscript{73} Most of the reserves were small and reflected the interests of the fauna preservation groups that had lobbied for them rather than a reserve acquisition policy which, at that time, did not exist. Recognising the need for a more strategic approach to fauna protection Clive Lord, who was a member of the Fauna Board until his death in 1933, suggested that the Board urge the government to convene a conference of representatives of the Fauna Board and other government departments interested in discussing a land settlement plan for Tasmania. Lord envisaged that the conference would address the connections between the State’s fauna and forests, land policy and State development. The conference did not proceed but Lord’s idea was progressed with the help of the Secretary for Lands, W.N. Hurst, who agreed to oversee preparation of a map to illustrate the subject. In October 1932 Lord submitted the map showing forest and timber reserves, game sanctuaries and scenic reserves, which was hailed as ‘a decided advancement in the matter of collating useful information on Lands, Forests and Fauna questions.’\textsuperscript{74} Though Lord’s project might not be seen as a major advance in terms of modern science, it reflects progressive
thinking for its time and a move towards more systematic planning of reserves than that exercised by the Scenery Board.

The fauna and scenery preservation movements had traditionally been allies and the formation of the Fauna Board, with its focus on acquiring wildlife sanctuaries, was to the advantage of the cause of scenery preservation. Guiler argued that in the 1930s the Fauna Board, like the Scenery Board, tried to promote the reserves under its jurisdiction as tourism assets and, though its efforts waned in the face of government lack of interest during McPhee’s premiership, the Scenery and Fauna Boards shared a common interest in reserves’ tourism potential. Among the sanctuaries proclaimed in the 1930s were those at Ben Lomond, Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair and Mt Field, which also came under the jurisdiction of the Scenery Board, and the ‘duel reserve status’ served to strengthen the areas’ protection and supervision. The Fauna Board also declared Macquarie Island, where seals and penguins were slaughtered in large numbers to produce oil, a Sanctuary in 1933. The Board’s action followed the recommendation of Sir Douglas Mawson to the Premier, John McPhee, whose lack of support for the proposal was dismissed by the Fauna Board which proclaimed the island regardless. Hunting, however, was an important rural industry and popular pastime. Many rural Tasmanians killed game for meat, some hunted for an income often in seasonal rotation with agricultural work or prospecting, and shooting was a popular pastime among both rural and urban dwellers, which people believed they had a right to pursue. And license fees from sealers operating at Macquarie Island had been a source of revenue for the Tasmanian government. The increase in wildlife sanctuaries and tightening of game law enforcement were good for the interests of wildlife and scenery preservation, but it did lead to some resentment of, and potential political opposition to, the parks and reserves movement among those sections of the community whose interests it threatened.

**Competing interests foreshadow conflict over national parks**

While Tasmania was clawing its way out of the Great Depression in the mid 1930s by encouraging large-scale industries to which it offered cheap hydro power and generous timber concessions, the State’s national parks and reserves were vulnerable. After National Park was proclaimed and the Scenery Board was established, the early national parks movement dissipated. Some members of the movement were incorporated in the National Park and Cradle Mountain Boards which operated under
the authority of the Scenery Board. Conservationists had little influence within that structure, but neither were they organized as an effective force of political opposition to the dominant developmental ethos that was encroaching on the integrity of national parks and reserves.

The Hydro-Electric Commission (HEC) proposed, in 1934, to dam the outlet of Lake St Clair within the national park and construct a power house. When this plan was brought to the notice of the Scenery Board members expressed the hope that an increased population at the site might enable the government to see its way clear to providing police protection against the destruction of flora and fauna. The Board did not oppose, or try to prevent, HEC’s intrusion into the national park. In 1940, by which time Alan Knight, a member of the Scenery Board from 1938, had become the Hydro Electric Commissioner, the Board agreed to the Commission’s application for part - 556 acres (225 hectares) - of the Lake St Clair section of the reserve to be excluded from the Scenery Preservation Act. The only request made by the Scenery Board in return was an assurance from the HEC that it would remove dead timber from trees that had died along the lake’s shore when water level was raised. The Scenery Board made little if any attempt to protect Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair National Park’s nature conservation values from the impact of hydro-industrialisation.

The Hobart Walking Club did not accept the prospect of flooding the foreshore of Lake St Clair and destroying the Frankland Beaches so easily. Club members protested against the threat to the scenic beauty for which the reserve had been declared. The government assured club members that the natural scenery around the lake would be preserved, but the destruction caused by the flooding rendered the assurance a mockery. This protest by conservation-minded members of the walking club signalled the re-emergence of a community-based national parks movement.

Another developmental issue affected the northern part of the Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair Reserve. Between 1937 and 1939 the Mines Department negotiated with the Cradle Mountain Reserve Board and Scenery Board regarding a proposed wolfram mine near Mt Pelion. The Cradle Mountain Board argued against it, being of the opinion that the area was of greater economic value to the State as a scenery and timber reserve than for minerals. Its previous mining history, the northern Board wrote to the Scenery Board, showed little profitable result and a good deal of destruction to timber values. As they burnt to uncover hoped-for mineral outcrops prospectors would bring a risk of fire to an area that ‘is one continuous forest of hardwood pine timber, with myrtles, sassafras, native laurels, manferns and other vegetation that make it valuable and attractive’. Ronald Smith, writing in his capacity as Secretary to the Cradle Mountain Board, advised the Scenery Board not
to accede to the Mines’ Department’s application to have the area excluded from the reserve but to seek a report from the Forestry Department. In hindsight it is difficult to judge the degree to which the line of argument expressed by members of the Cradle Mountain Reserve Board - the relative merits of alternate forms of exploitation - reflected Board members’ inner beliefs. Some may have suppressed arguments relating to nature preservation for political expediency, given the economic pressures of the time. Despite concerns expressed by the Cradle Mountain Board, the Mines Department persisted in pushing for its mine, justifying the project on the grounds of employment and revenue creation, and it won. In May 1939 the government revoked 3,200 acres (1,295 hectares) from the reserve for the purpose of the mine. This was the first revocation of land from the State’s scenic reserves, and it was done with little protest from the body responsible for national parks and reserves, the Scenery Preservation Board.

By the end of the 1930s political differences between members of the parks movement and between members of the controlling boards - political differences that arose from opposing philosophies about the purpose and use of nature reserves - were becoming evident. But the ‘selective exploitation’ philosophy remained very strong. According to this approach, reserves were expected to accommodate society’s need for the resources - minerals and timber - within them, as long as the exploitation did not obviously destroy the value for which the reserve was proclaimed, which was scenery. The National Park Board’s sale of timber from National Park, Gustav Weindorfer and Ronald Smith’s intention to sell King Billy Pine from their blocks at Cradle Valley and the Connells’ practice of snaring native fauna exemplify this philosophy.

The appointments, in the late 1930s, of representatives of the State’s Forestry Department and HEC seriously compromised the Scenery Board’s ability to oppose the exploitation of reserves for the purpose of industry. Accommodated and resourced by the Lands Department, chaired by the head of the Lands Department and dominated by government and developmental interests, any potential the Scenery Board once had to be an advocate for scenery and nature preservation was effectively destroyed. After the Premier, Albert Ogilvy, requested in 1936 that the Scenery Board administer the Defacement of Property Act - legislation that placed
limits on the display of unsightly billboard advertisements along roadsides - dealing with advertising applications became one of the Board’s most time-consuming functions. Perhaps it was a welcome one, a diversion from tensions that were developing between the Scenery Board, its subsidiary Boards with their broader bases of representation and varying views - the National Park Board, for example, included a representative of the Hobart Walking Club, Jack Thwaites from 1938 - and outside bodies, notably walking clubs. The cause of these tensions was the growing rift between the pragmatic and preservationist approaches to reserve management. People such as Jack Thwaites were starting to articulate a preservationist view in opposition to the exploitation of reserves by industry and the destruction of natural values that did not survive compromise. The Scenery Board, however, was structured on compromise.

**Conclusion**

By the end of the 1930s the national park system was well-positioned in some respects. The amount of land in reserves had expanded considerably and, the worst of the Great Depression over, State governments increased their budget allocations to scenery preservation. But Tasmania had emerged from the Depression determined to create employment by providing cheap electricity and natural resources to large scale manufacturing industries. This resolve not only threatened the integrity of the State’s national parks and reserves but exacerbated tensions between conservation and development interests that were becoming apparent in the politics of national parks and reserves.
Endnotes:  Chapter 4

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14  _Mercury_, 10 April 1918.
15  _Tasmanian Mail_, 2 September 1920.
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17  _Tasmanian Mail_, 2 September 1920.
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19  National Park Board, Minutes of Meetings, 12 March 1920.
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31  Scenery Preservation Board, report for the year ending 30 June 1929.
32  Scenery Preservation Board Minutes of Meetings, 4 October 1916.
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35  Peregrinator’s articles appeared in the _Examiner_: 28 February 1891, 4 March 1891, 11 March 1891.
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39  _Examiner_, 17 July 1921.
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46. Examiner, 30 March 1922.
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57. Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 30 June 1931.
58. Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 21 January 1919.
59. Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 30 May 1930.
60. Scenery Preservation Board, Report for the year ending 30 June 1934.
63. Scenery Preservation Board, Reports for years ending 30 June 1934; 1936, 1937.
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Chapter 5

Growing Conflict, Inadequacy and the Florentine Failure: The Scenery Preservation Board in the 1940s and 1950s

The values and beliefs that formed the basis of Australian society by the early 1960s were different in many ways from those that had dominated before the Second World War, and the change had significant implications for Tasmania’s national parks. National parks were vulnerable as increasing competition for natural resources, combined with government support for large industries, threatened to destroy national park values. The era when gentlemen members of tourist associations, naturalist clubs, and scientific or educational associations lobbied their contemporaries in parliament about reserves gave way to one in which governments were less inclined to allow natural resources to be ‘locked away’, and Tasmanian conservationists were less prepared than their predecessors had been to accept governments' 'develop at all cost' policies. It became increasingly evident that the politics of compromise on which the Scenery Board was based were no longer an appropriate basis for protecting natural values, particularly when the conservation cause lost Tasmania’s first major political national park conflict, and tensions mounted over the inadequacies of Tasmanian reserve management.

Drew Hutton and Libby Connors argue that the post-war years saw the end of the first wave of the environment movement, the end of the era in which men who were part of and shared common values with Tasmania’s social, political and professional elites formed the basis of the national parks movement. The movement’s second wave, that which had emerged by the 1960s, was quite different. The women and men who advocated for national parks within Tasmania were, from the 1940s, increasingly likely to hold values that challenged the dominant developmental ethos. They questioned the motives and the effects of industrialisation and they sought social change to resolve environmental problems. They challenged the right of industry to damage natural and cultural values, including those protected within national parks, and they challenged
governments not to sanction such damage. While conflicts of interest between conservationists and developers became evident during the 1940s and 1950s and exposed inadequacies in reserve administration and management, conservationists did not achieve significant reforms until the end of the 1960s. Mounting tensions, conflicts and awareness of the Scenery Board’s inadequacy created a prelude to change.

The development ethos that followed years of economic depression in the 1930s was so strong Castles has described it as emerging with ‘an aura of moral force’. It was, after all, a source of recovery, progress and security.³ And after the Second World War this development ethos was given additional impetus by the need for post-war reconstruction. In Tasmania, this meant that hydro-electric development, and dam construction was a high priority. By 1944, at which time people were optimistic that the war would end in victory, the Tasmanian government had obtained finance for a second-hand aluminum smelting plant to establish an aluminium industry. The project promised to help make Australia self-sufficient in aluminum products while consuming vast amounts of hydro electricity generated from dams in areas conservationists wanted protected.⁴ Developments in the State’s timber industry also promised an expanding market for the State’s hydro power and heralded opposition from timber interests to the protection of forest within national parks.

Post-war development foreshadowed an increase in housing construction and, in addition to the timber required for building and for railway rehabilitation, the demand for raw materials for pulp and paper production expanded rapidly.⁵ By the early 1940s Tasmanian and Victorian paper manufacturers had formed three major companies: Australian Newsprint Mills (ANM) that produced newsprint; Australian Paper Manufacturers (APM) producing wrapping paper and paper board; and Australian Pulp and Paper Manufacturers (APPM) that specialised in writing papers.⁶ Two of these companies began operations in Tasmania. APPM built a paper mill in 1936 at Burnie on the northwest coast. ANM commenced newsprint production at Boyer, not far from National Park, in 1941, after obtaining financial backing as well as a large timber concession from the Tasmanian government.⁷ Output from, and consequently input to, these mills
soared after the Second World War, due to the wartime cessation of paper imports combined with increased paper usage.

As the Tasmanian economy shifted towards secondary industrialisation after the Second World War, the Scenery Board drifted into a backwater in the government's priorities. Between 1941 and 1955 the total area of scenic and historic sites increased by 70,000 acres (28,328 hectares) after adjustment for revocations, though there was less than half that amount of growth during the following twelve years. Between 1955 and 1967 there was, Mosley argued, a strong reaction against the creation of large reserves - each of the eighteen sites reserved was less than 10,000 acres. Rejecting proposals for large new reserves, the Board claimed that priority should be given to consolidating existing reserves. But, Mosley wrote, there was ample evidence that the park agency’s powers were inadequate and that strained relations between the interests of industrial development and those of scenery preservation jeopardised the Board’s work.

The programme of expanding secondary industry through exploiting the State's mineral, timber and hydro-electric power resources that was pursued by a succession of State Labor governments meant that tourism became a relatively less important component of State economic policy, and there was less political support for protecting land within national parks and reserves. After the Second World War, proposed additions to the reserve system were more frequently and more determinedly opposed by Forestry and by the Hydro Electric Commission because of their potential for economic development. Reserve proposals blocked by the Forestry Commission during war and post-war years included the Zeehan-Corinna Road (1941), the Arthur River Reserve (1954), and the Gordon River Reserve extension (1957). And timber interests, backed by the Forestry Commission, were also responsible for three revocations to Hartz Mountains National Park between 1943-1948 in addition to the Mt Field National Park revocation of 1950. Given the widening gap between conservationists’ interests and those expressed by industry representatives on the Scenery Board, industry opposition to extending Tasmania’s reserve system created a situation headed towards conflict.
Townsley argues that, together with the influence of industrialization, education played a major part in the social change that took place in post-war Australia. Education also contributed to mounting tension between the dominant developmental ethos and the conservation ethic within Tasmanian society as more people were educated to understand aspects of the conflict between industrial development and environmental protection. The first state high schools in Tasmania were built just prior to the First World War. These were followed in the 1920s by high schools at Devonport, Burnie, Scottsdale and Smithton. No longer were children of parents who were able and willing to pay private school fees the only ones who could continue their education past the age of 13 or 14 years, through high school and possibly to university or college. A larger, and more socially diverse population of young people went on to learn and to question. Hutton and Connors suggest that the expansion of secondary and tertiary education, aimed at producing skilled personnel for industrial growth, was the most important contradiction of the post-war period. The education in critical thinking that the post-war, or ‘baby-boom’ generation received was intended to advance utilitarian science but Hutton and Connors argue that it inadvertently radicalised recipients who proceeded to challenge environmental and social policies they believed were harmful or unjust. Many of these people became involved in organisations such as field naturalists' and bushwalking clubs, and developed conservation interests that were not consistent with pro-development values. Higher wages, the new phenomenon of car ownership and increased leisure hours also meant that the number of Tasmanians with leisure interests such as skiing and bushwalking in national parks and reserves increased and these people exerted their influence as members of interest groups.

The momentum of the government-driven development ethos, combined with a growth in public interest, resulted in the poorly funded amateur boards which supervised Tasmania's national parks and reserves becoming subject to pressures for which they were inadequately resourced and inappropriately positioned to deal.
National park management is confronted by competing interests
The National Park and Cradle Mountain Reserve Boards, the membership of which represented a range of interests, were confronted by internal as well as external conflicts between the competing interests of preservationists and utilitarians, and between public interest groups and reserve administration. The significance of these sources of conflict became increasingly apparent from the 1930s through to the 1960s.

Disagreements between conflicting interests were, initially, mostly played-out in written correspondence between affected parties and were rarely brought to the public's attention. In the 1940s, however, skiers’ criticism of national park management was aired in public. Members of the skiing public attacked the National Park Board for failing to provide access to the snow-fields at Mt Field. A correspondent of the southern Tasmanian newspaper the Mercury complained,

> Winters come and go, and the National Park Board - presumably a body constituted to open up and develop that great inland part - prepares every Spring for the Summer tourist attractions of the area it controls. But apparently the Board, consisting of elderly gentlemen unable to bear the bite of Winter, ignore the potential Winter attractions of the park …

> The HCC (Hobart City Council) has had sufficient foresight, so I understood, to purchase a tractor-drawn snow-plough for the Pinnacle Road, Mt Wellington. I trust the National Park Board will follow suit and, with a small expenditure, procure a similar mechanical unit and open the winter attractions of the park to all.17

The Mercury newspaper gave the debate prominence during February 1942, adding its voice to the Board's critics.

> Tasmania is fortunate in having mountain areas admirably fitted for Winter sports. It is not so fortunate, as a correspondent of “The Mercury” points out, in its National Park Board, which has failed each year to take action to make such areas sufficiently available. As an example, he instances the lack of a snow plough to clear the roads leading to the snow areas of the National Park.18

In response Jack Thwaites, the Hobart Walking Club's representative on the National Park Board, pointed out that the Board had less than £1,000 each year with which to manage 400 square miles of park. There were, he said, simply insufficient funds to provide ideal access to the snow areas of the park in winter.19 The Mercury, however, retorted that it was the Board's job to press the need more emphatically on the government, not to plead poverty when asked for action.20
Another conflict between members of the Cradle Mountain Reserve Board arose from the divide between utilitarian and environmental interests as environmentalists became influential in the national parks movement. Ronald Smith, neighbor of Gustav Weindorfer and long-standing Secretary of the Cradle Mountain Board, had been the driving force behind extracting government money for the Cradle Mountain road. He had not made a secret of the fact that he had commercially valuable stands of King Billy pine on his land adjoining the reserve. Nevertheless, during the 1930s he resisted overtures from the timber contractors who approached him about the pine because of the impropriety of carting timber over the road for which he had lobbied for the purpose of tourism. He had thought of selling his timber on the basis that contractors would pay a government levy that could then be used for maintaining the road.21 But he was aware of opposition to the scheme - opposition from government and from a faction within the national park movement - and, seeing that his position as Secretary of the Cradle Mountain Board would be compromised, resisted the temptation to pursue the matter. In 1937 he wrote to the proprietor of the King Billy Mill, saying;

As regards timber, I am not giving it any consideration, as timber carting on the Cradle Mountain Road, over which it would have to be taken, is not allowed. If at any time the Government should desire the timber to be exploited I would go into the matter. As there is no prospect of business resulting I cannot advise you to visit the locality on that account, but a visit to see the scenery is well worth while when the weather is suitable.22

The Australian government wanted access to King Billy Pine during the Second World War for boat and plane building, and the State Government - a Labor government led by Robert Cosgrove - did grant permission for carters to carry the timber over the Cradle Mountain Road, subject to weight limits. By that time the politics of the national park movement had shifted substantially from 'wise use' or 'limited exploitation' to a more preservationist position and, when Smith permitted almost 10,000 feet (3,048 meters) of timber to be taken from his land for a defence contract, his action met with hostility from within the membership of the Cradle Mountain Board. Discussion, in Smith’s absence, resolved that the Chair should bring the cutting and carting to the attention of the Scenery Board and that the parent body be informed that the Cradle Mountain Board did not support the activity. In addition, the Cradle Mountain Board agreed to urge the Scenery Board...
to recommend that the government acquire private land in the area to add to the reserve.\textsuperscript{23}

Inconsistencies in park management’s support for different utilitarian interests were not lost on Smith who wrote, in a letter to his colleague Fred Smithies,

\begin{quote}
I would like you to make it clear at the Scenery Preservation Board meeting that personally I am not in favor of stopping the exploitation of timber on private property or Crown Land outside the Reserve …
\end{quote}

Perhaps it would be opportune while dealing with the subject to discuss the question of the justification or otherwise of establishing Hydro Electric works in or near the Reserve. Great damage has been done to the vegetation around Lake St Clair, and more damage to vegetation and some beauty may be done on the Reserve by future work if allowed. I myself think it is justifiable if it is for the good of the Country, but it is a debatable subject, and it would be interesting to discuss it.\textsuperscript{24}

The insinuation by Smith's critics that his campaign to upgrade the Cradle Mountain road amounted to his use of his position as Honorary Secretary of the Board to obtain money for roadworks in order to support his private business resulted in him offering his resignation in May 1947.\textsuperscript{25} The Scenery Board, however, encouraged him to remain in his position for another month, at which time the subsidiary boards were to be reconstituted. This enabled Smith’s supporters to ensure he was granted due acknowledgement for his contribution to the work of the Cradle Mountain Reserve Board prior to his retirement from it, despite the opposition that had arisen to his utilitarian approach. Ronald Smith was a product of his time but times had changed and the type of utilitarian view he represented did not sit well with the preservationist philosophy that rose to prominence in the post-war environmental movement.

The shift from a utilitarian philosophy to a preservationist one within the membership of the subsidiary boards was reflected in another issue that was debated during the early 1940s. The Cradle Mountain Reserve Board agreed, in 1938, to support the building of a motor road through the Reserve from Lake St Clair to Cradle Mountain.\textsuperscript{26} War broke out and the proposal was shelved until Ronald Smith put it back on the Board's agenda in 1944. Smith was very much in favor of the plan. He believed that the government had proclaimed the reserve for the benefit of the people of the State and thought that object would be achieved by
making the park accessible for the enjoyment of the greatest possible number of people. He rejected the arguments which were being used against the proposal, arguments such as;

- too many people of an undesirable class would visit the reserve
- it would become too crowded
- the vegetation would be destroyed.
- game would be frightened away
- timber would be exploited for profit.27

Smith believed that these arguments reflected an interest in the area being reserved for a select few and rejected them as valid reasons for restricting the reserve's availability, saying,

Surely the best way to preserve its beauties is to have thousands interested in it, and not limit it to hundreds ... surely it is a defeatist policy to let fears of what might happen act as a paralyzing brake on the development of the Reserve.28

By 1944, however, there was more opposition than support for the road proposal. The Tourist Bureau’s representative, Evelyn Temple Emmett, pointed out that people would miss most of the beauties of the reserve if they rushed through in a car. He said that, while he did not wish to 'lock up' the area for walkers alone, he believed that upgrading the track for horses and horse-drawn vehicles, and having two chalets along the route would provide for maximum enjoyment without incurring the far greater expense of a road.29

Other members of the National Park Board supported Emmett's argument, raising concerns about the impact of cars on native fauna and scenery, snow blocking the road for three months of the year and the cost of the road’s construction. Jack Thwaites promoted a policy proposed for Scotland’s reserves - to build roads only as far as reserve boundaries and to keep reserves as far as possible in their natural state.30 The Hamilton Municipal Council's representative received very little support for his letter advocating the construction of a road through the reserve. The Tasmanian Museum’s representative, Dr Pearson, pointed out that it could have been used as an alternative route between Hobart and Launceston at considerable cost to wildlife.31
The compatibility between Emmett’s view of the road proposal and that expressed by Jack Thwaites, the Hobart Walking Club’s representative on the Board, illustrated a commonality of interests shared by the Tourist Bureau and bushwalkers at the time. Indeed Emmett himself was both, for many years Director of the Government Tourist Bureau and the founder of the Hobart Walking Club. Emmett and Thwaites were joint editors of the Hobart Walking Club’s magazine *Tasmanian Tramp* which was published with financial assistance from the Tourist Bureau in recognition, Shackel suggested, of the assistance outdoor recreational groups provided in promoting the interests of the Tourist Bureau. Potential conflicts of interest between tourism and bushwalking were not conspicuous in the early twentieth century when views of development within national parks held by tourism interests were consistent with those of bushwalkers, and the two interest groups continued to work together furthering their shared interest in extending and preserving Tasmania’s scenic reserves.

Principles underlying a conflict of interests between ‘progress’ and preservation were occasionally aired publicly but in couched terms. A ‘Special Representative’ writing for the *Mercury* in 1941 - somebody who appears to have been well connected to, if not a member of the National Park Board and did not want to be identified - wrote about the beauty of scenic areas being despoiled, playgrounds for the people alienated and enjoyment of the outdoors marred under the heading of ‘progress’. The writer lamented the ‘confiscation’ of Lake Fenton, which was fenced off from visitors to National Park, and the diversion of water from the previously splendid Russell Falls in the name of the Hobart City Council’s water supply development. Then, according to the writer, there was the damming of the outlet to Lake St Clair by the HEC, where ‘soon the whole of the lake’s shores will be margined by a monument to progress - a line of dead trees’. ‘Industry must be served’, the writer acknowledged,

> There must be more hydro electric power, and more water. Rivers must be harnessed, lakes dammed, factory wheels kept in motion. But needful as this is, there is a danger that we may come to regard destruction of natural beauty as of no consequence and thereby lose our sense of the fitness of things.

This incipient conflict intensified in the postwar period, most visibly in controversy that arose later in the 1940s over the Florentine forest.
The Scenery Preservation Board perseveres with few resources

Colin Pitt was appointed Chair of the Scenery Board in June 1938 and, primarily because of his energy and commitment, a number of new reserves were declared during the years of the Second World War.\(^{34}\) They included reserves at the Hartz Mountains, Mount Barrow and Frenchmen's Cap as well as the Mole Creek Caves and a number of smaller reserves including Ferndene, Notley Fern Gorge, Cora Lin, strips along the Gordon and Pieman Rivers, along the Lyell Highway and along the Queenstown to Zeehan road. Pitt, unlike some previous Surveyors-General, had a genuine interest in scenery preservation. He worked closely with Allan Knight who was then with the Public Works Department. Knight was also interested in scenery preservation as long as it did not stand in the way of 'progress', especially hydro industrialisation.\(^{35}\)

Many of the proposals for new reserves came from sources outside the Scenery Board - local progress associations, and bushwalking and conservation groups. The Board had a limited budget. Its 1938 budget of £1,000 increased to £4,000 for 1947, then to £6,000 for 1949 but, especially during the late 1930s and early 1940s it resisted a number of requests relating to the development of reserves or new proclamations because of their cost implications. For example, the Scenery Board replied to the Portland Municipality's request for £10 to clear the track to St Columba Falls with the advice: 'not at present, but will consider 50/50 when financially possible.'\(^{36}\) The Frenchman's Cap reserve proposal initially met a similar reaction. A bushwalker, Ray Livingstone, first wrote to the Scenery Board recommending Frenchman's Cap as a reserve in 1940 and he offered to contribute towards the cost of a hut at Lake Tahune. The Board considered the area too inaccessible to proclaim under the Scenery Preservation Act though it resolved to request government funding for a track to the area with the intention of considering proclamation if that was successful.\(^{37}\) A track was constructed and a reserve of 23,600 acres (9,551 hectares), incorporating Frenchman's Cap, was declared in 1941.\(^{38}\) Unfortunately, Livingstone died as a result of an accident in the following year but his efforts to make Frenchman’s Cap accessible to walkers were followed through by others. At a Scenery Board meeting following Livingston’s death Colin Pitt moved that ‘The Livingstone Hut’ would be built when funds were available. Work proceeded on the Frenchman’s Cap track from...
1944 with funding from the Scenery Board for a week’s wages for two workers from the Public Works Department, plus bus fares and food for Hobart Walking Club volunteers.\textsuperscript{39}

Funding was an ongoing problem. The amounts allocated in State government budgets to reserve management were inadequate for the task but the Scenery Board was not in a strong position to argue for more public funding. Unlike extractive industries national parks and reserves did not generate direct income. Financing national parks and reserves was consequently contentious and, in Tasmania, opponents of public expenditure on parks could cite exceptional ratios between population, park size and public expenditure. In the early 1960s Australia averaged .33 acres (.13 hectares) of national park per person. In Tasmania, the ratio was 1.9 acres (.77 hectares) per person.\textsuperscript{40} In 1960-1961 Tasmania spent 2 shillings per head of population on its parks and reserves compared to Victoria’s and Queensland's 8 pence.\textsuperscript{41} And visitor numbers have not always compared favorably for Tasmania's parks. Over twelve months between 1959 and 1960, Tasmania's most popular national park, Mt Field, was estimated to have had 35,000 visitors and Cradle Mt-Lake St Clair National Park 20,000, compared to 115,000 visitors to New South Wales' Jenolan Caves and 80,000 to Minnamurra Falls, in 1960.\textsuperscript{42}

The idea of introducing park visitor fees as a means of boosting finances had the support of most Board members and of government but the matter was never satisfactorily resolved during the Scenery Board’s years largely because of practical obstacles. Eric Guiler, the Animals and Birds Protection Board’s representative on the Cradle Mt-Lake St Clair National Park Board, strongly opposed the idea of entrance fees, which he described as a form of double taxation for Tasmanian park visitors, and bushwalking clubs rejected fee proposals principally because of the contribution their members made to park management through voluntary work.\textsuperscript{43} Nevertheless, the Cradle Mt-Lake St Clair National Park Board appointed a sub-committee to consider entrance fees and that committee resolved that

… though they agree in principle that it would be equitable and proper to charge a fee for users of the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park, they have come to
The conclusion that the only method of implementing the charge would be to erect entrance gates at the northern and southern approaches and charge everyone entering the park a small fee; and under existing conditions this is not recommended; but this decision may be reviewed at a later date. 44

The National Park Board considered erecting a toll gate on the Lake Dobson Road for the purpose of collecting visitor fees, 45 and Tasman Peninsular Board joined the push, suggesting the erection of toll gates at Port Arthur, with everybody but locals to be charged an entrance fee. 46 Advice was received from the Solicitor-General, however, that special legislation was required before a road barrier could be erected on a public road, legal obstacles prevailed and the issue of entrance fees was deleted from Boards’ agendas.

Disagreements between subsidiary boards and their parent body arose over money on a number of occasions. Sometimes arguments over money had other underlying causes. The issue of hut fees, for example, created friction partly because it raised the question of whether the National Park Board or the Scenery Board actually controlled Mount Field National Park. The Scenery Board wanted to set uniform fees but members of the National Park Board wanted the fee lowered in recognition of clubs' work in advertising the park and their contribution to track clearing. 47 When, in 1952, the Scenery Board set the hut fee at £5 the National Park Board reduced it to £1. 48 The Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair National Park Board objected similarly when, in 1953, the Scenery Board instructed that subsidiary board to collect a hut fee of £2.10.0, a rise from one shilling in the previous year, from the Hobart Walking Club for use of the Rufus Hut. The subsidiary board objected to what it interpreted as the Scenery Board’s undermining of its authority and its failure to acknowledge clubs' contribution to parks development. 49

As the reserve system expanded issues relating to the employment of rangers posed a challenge to the expertise of subsidiary boards and to their relationship with the Scenery Board. Rangers were generally good bushmen, skilled at surviving in the bush, track building, bush carpentry and bush mechanics, but they were not trained as park managers and often lacked necessary skills in public relations. The problem of supervision was partly addressed by the appointment, in
the mid 1940s, of a Superintendent of Reserves but the position sat uncomfortably between the subsidiary boards, which appointed staff and wanted to direct them, and the Scenery Board to which the Superintendent was accountable. Issues such as pay rates, rosters, workers’ compensation and superannuation inevitably arose and the voluntary boards lacked the knowledge and expertise to address them properly. Rangers worked very long hours and, though no training was offered, the range of duties they and their wives, who ran the camping grounds and kiosks, were expected to perform grew increasingly complex. Staff became aware that their conditions lagged behind those in comparable areas of the public service and they agitated for improvements. The subsidiary boards were not equipped to manage the staffing issues that arose once the parks system had outgrown its infancy and conflicts over staffing issues contributed to pressures for structural change.

Members of the Scenery Preservation Board recognised that the body was not functioning effectively and they attempted to resolve problems through carrying out reviews and restructuring. Restructuring in 1947 transferred control of the southern section of the Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair Scenic Reserve from the National Park Board to the Cradle Mountain Board, integrated the position of Superintendent of Scenic Reserves in the structure of four subsidiary boards - the National Park Board, Cradle Mountain Board, Port Arthur Scenic Reserve Board and Northern Scenery Board - and expanded the interests and expertise represented on the subsidiary boards. At the same time, a review of reserve classification resulted in the six major reserves - Cradle Mt-Lake St Clair, National Park, Freycinet, Mt Barrow, Hartz Mountain and Frenchman’s Cap - being re-named and classified as national parks. The changes helped the Scenery Board to manage the increasing complexity of the reserve system but they did not go far enough to enable it to meet its responsibilities adequately or to successfully confront the conflicts it faced.

Undertaking another review in 1958, the Scenery Board appointed a subcommittee to consider administrative matters including, again, the future of subsidiary boards. The relationship between the Board and its subsidiaries remained a major point of contention. Pressure from subsidiary boards for money
to be spent on developing facilities in their respective reserves detracted from the
Scenery Board’s potential to fulfill a central planning and management role, and
the Superintendent, Michael Sharland, was placed in the midst of conflicting
interests. Sharland indicated sources of tension in his position in an article he
wrote for publication shortly before his resignation;

These subsidiary boards ensure some good measure of relations with the public, in
that their members are nominated by organized clubs or bodies interested in natural
history, conservation, walking winter sports, scientific research and so forth. Thus
there is a good representation of many interests directly concerned with park
development. The special duty of the Superintendent of Scenic reserves, who is a
member of each board, is to endeavour to co-ordinate expenditures and development
programmes to ensure that grants and revenues are spent as beneficially as possible
over all reserves. He is the planning officer for reserves generally. On him the
Scenery Preservation Board (the parent body) relies for recommendations …

Unresolved tensions and inefficiencies within the Scenery Board led Michael
Sharland to resign in 1961. Sharland had been a driving force behind the work of
the Scenery Board since his appointment in the mid 1940s, and his resignation
galvanised members into addressing some of its problems. The Scenery Board
established a sub-committee to prepare an amendment to the Act that would allow
for the election of a Chair by members, and it resolved to address the need to
engage specialist accounting skills. Jack Thwaites, who had represented the
Hobart Walking Club on the National Park and Cradle Mt - Lake St. Clair Boards,
then the Scenery Board from 1954, and who, like Sharland, had a personal interest
in the management of national parks and reserves, succeeded Sharland as
Superintendent of Reserves. Developments taking place outside the Scenery
Board itself, however, overtook the Board’s internal moves towards legislative
change during the 1960s.

Conservation interests lose the first major political battle over a national
park
A conflict that arose in the 1940s over the Florentine Forest, a conflict between
the interests of conservationists and the Scenery Board, and the pulp and paper
industry, clearly illustrated the Scenery Board's inability to protect an area under
its legislation if resources within that area were sought by industrial interests.
Australian Newspaper Mills established a pulp and paper manufacturing operation at Boyer in the wake of the 1930s depression. The scheme complied with the government's policy of hydro-based industrialisation. It had a vocal supporter in the Minister for Forests, Robert Cosgrove, the support of a parliamentary majority and, given the strength of the developmental ethos at the time, broad community support. The industry also enjoyed access to cheap hydro-power\(^54\), a generous forest concession\(^55\) and the absence of a strong environmental lobby to scrutinise its impact.

Concerns about high quality forests being made available to the paper pulp industry came to the fore towards the end of the Second World War when the Tasmanian Government commissioned the Commonwealth Controller of Timber, Stephen Kessell, to inquire into Tasmania's forests and forest administration. His report identified some major problems.

The two companies who are manufacturing paper in Tasmania required a great deal of the Tasmanian Government before they agreed to establish their works in Boyer and Burnie respectively.

It is not easy to strike a balance between the advantages that have accrued to the State by the successful establishment of these important industries and the concessions that the Government found it necessary to grant to secure their location in Tasmania. It is very apparent that bargains made in this connection have been largely at the expense of the forests and the Forestry Department.\(^56\)

In Tasmania, Parliament has seen fit to grant very large concessions to the paper industry to encourage its establishment in the State which involved the use of species of timber not previously used for this purpose in any part of the world. These concessions have meant, virtually, that large areas of forest have passed out of the control of the Forestry Department and that good-quality forest can be exploited almost without restriction for conversion into pulp products.\(^57\)

Not long after Kessell's report was released Australian Newsprint Mills approached the Premier about working the forests on the Field West slopes, forests that were believed to be part of the national park. The Premier referred the request to the National Park Board which unanimously opposed it. The newsprint company proposed to have the park boundaries altered in order to transfer 7,800 acres (3,157 hectares) of first class heavily timbered virgin forest at the western end of the park to its concession. In exchange, the company proposed to transfer from its concession to the park 7,700 acres (3,116 hectares) at the northern boundary and 1,230 acres (498 hectares) adjoining the park's southern boundary -
a total of 8,930 acres (3,624 hectares) of land described by the National Park Board’s sub-committee that examined the proposal as poor second class eucalypt and buttongrass country.58

Members of the National Park Board were aware that the newsprint company saw the forest as being of little value to the park because of its inaccessibility but people who wanted to keep the forest within the park saw its inaccessibility as a bonus for the purpose of preservation. On the basis that 'the forest areas held in trust by the National Park Board are alone the means of preserving the unique flora and fauna otherwise doomed to extinction', the Board resolved that it would be failing in its trust if it agreed to the newsprint company's request.59

Members of the Scenery Board supported the stand taken by its subsidiary Board and opposed the newsprint company's proposal.60 But the company did not give up easily, and made two further applications. In July 1947 the Premier wrote requesting that the Scenery Board agree to accept 12,000 acres (4,856 hectares) at Mt Hobhouse in exchange for the area in the Florentine Valley sought by Australian Newsprint Mills—but the Scenery Board held firm.61 In the following year the Scenery Board was offered control of an area in the Russell Falls Valley. Again it resisted, despite intense pressure.62

The State's Forestry Commission, which had the support of the State Labor Government led by Robert Cosgrove, maintained that Australian Newsprint Mill's proposal represented a reasonable utilisation of available timber given the importance of the newsprint industry. The Commission also held that the area sought was not of genuine scenic value and that the timber resource was too significant to hold as a specimen of virgin forest.63 The National Park Board, however, maintained that:

This Board is of the unanimous opinion that the application by Australian Newsprint Mills for exchange of forest areas should not be entertained. The Board points out that the smaller area offered in exchange is not equivalent in scenic value to the area applied for by the Newsprint Mills on the slopes of Mt Field West. The Board is not in accord with the opinion expressed by the Chief Commissioner of Forests in his report of 13th Jan 1948 that the area and timber resource are too large to hold as a specimen area of virgin forest conditions. The Board, on the contrary, is of the opinion that large forest areas of this nature are necessary integral portions of a
National Park to ensure the preservation of fauna and flora that constitutes such outstanding attraction to visitors.\textsuperscript{64}

The Scenery Board remained resolved:

That on consideration of all the facts and after having inspected the area concerned, the Board unanimously agrees it cannot recommend the revocation of an area comprising a valuable scenic asset held in trust for the people in exchange for the area specified in the Newsprint application.\textsuperscript{65}

After negotiations failed to secure the land for the newsprint company the Cosgrove Labor government intervened to over-ride the Scenery Board through the \textit{National Park and Florentine Valley Bill 1949}, legislation that confirmed the park's boundaries in the company's favor.\textsuperscript{66} Members of non-government groups, such as the Hobart Walking Club and Field Naturalists Club, tried to influence the debate but political lobbying was a new experience for most of them and they did not have a great deal of knowledge about how parliament worked.\textsuperscript{67} National park activism had moved outside the small circles of Tasmania’s political and social elite that had facilitated ‘gentlemanly accommodations’ into a more broad-based conservation movement, and this was the most important conflict over a national park that the movement had confronted.

The conservation lobby faced a huge challenge, not the least of which was the difficulty of promoting its case in words that would influence people whose focus was on commerce and money. As Castles has said, to oppose the development ethos in the 1930s and 1940s was akin to opposing common sense.\textsuperscript{68} There was very little evidence of public support for the forest that might have led politicians to believe that the conservation lobby represented a significant number of votes. Conservationists wrote letters to the editor of Hobart's newspaper, the \textit{Mercury}, some of which cited tourism as an argument for retaining the forest within the national park.\textsuperscript{69} One writer also raised questions about the industry's record with regard to reforestation and waste removal\textsuperscript{70}, and Kelsy Aves of the Hobart Walking Club wrote that 'the alienation suggested would deprive the people of the only large stand of eucalyptus regnans in any reserve in Tasmania', adding that 'its preservation is essential if a representative selection of our native bush is to be preserved'.\textsuperscript{71} Park supporters protested, too, about the precedent that would be established if the forest were to be alienated from the park. But, because the
government's developmental ethos had such broad community support at the time, these arguments were not enough to generate or sustain strong public pressure against the alienation and to block the passage of legislation that would allow it.\textsuperscript{72}

The government and its forestry arm did not assist outsiders who sought information about the proposed alienation of land. When a member of the Hobart Walking Club, Jessie Luckman, asked that the government reveal the acreage it planned to excise from the park, Cosgrove replied that to a certain extent the matter was \textit{sub judice} and refused her request.\textsuperscript{73} Snippets of information were leaked to conservationists, though, by ‘flies on the wall’ - sympathetic parliamentarians\textsuperscript{74} - and people who worked in government departments or at Australian Newsprint Mills.\textsuperscript{75} A conservationist who worked as a surveyor with the Hydro Electric Department produced maps on the basis of ‘inside’ information. Despite the vagueness of the park's western boundary his map was, apparently, so accurate that it shocked members of the government and of the Forestry Commission because it showed that conservationists knew more about the area and about what was to be removed from the park than they did.\textsuperscript{76}

Public servants risked their employment by supporting the campaign.\textsuperscript{77} After Cosgrove refused to tell Jessie Luckman how much of the national park was to be alienated she wrote a letter to the \textit{Mercury} proposing an acreage that had come her way through leaked information, and she challenged the Premier to confirm or deny it.\textsuperscript{78} Being closely linked to the newsprint industry the newspaper had been publicly supporting the alienation, citing advantages such as capital investment and jobs, and the editor did not publish the letter. In that week the managing director of Davies Brothers, the company that owned the \textit{Mercury}, gave an address to the Journalists’ Association on ‘The Freedom of the Press’, so Jessie Luckman sent the letter straight to Mr Davies asking that it be published ‘in the name of the freedom of the press about which he had spoken so eloquently’, and it was published. Cosgrove apparently ‘dashed around the block’ to warn an innocent Director of Tourism that it was as much as his job was worth to have given such information - information about the future of a public reserve that members of the public might have expected to be openly available.\textsuperscript{79}
The Premier’s stance on the Florentine issue showed his government to be closely aligned to the industry’s interests to the exclusion of being accountable to the interests of conservationists. And, in order to advance the pulp and paper industry’s interests, the government prevented its own agency responsible for national parks and reserves, the Scenery Preservation Board, from acting to protect an important part of the national park under its jurisdiction. Not all parliamentarians supported the government’s action - Labor’s Neil Batt, Justin O’Byrne and Dr. R.J. ‘Spot’ Turnbull, and the Liberals’ Rex Townley - expressed doubts but, like the conservationists, they had little influence over the outcome.80

Parliament appointed three committees of inquiry to inquire into and report on the provisions of the National Park and Florentine Valley Bill 1950 before passing the legislation. The initial committee of inquiry failed to agree on the boundary and parliament was dissolved before a report from the second committee was considered. The government determined that the aim of the inquiries was limited to establishing the National Park's western boundary and, though witnesses raised a number of different concerns, including the forest’s high conservation value, the Chair, Eric Reece, who was later nick-named 'Electric Eric' because of his pro hydro stand, maintained the proceedings' singular focus on the boundary issue.81

The Forestry Commission, New Norfolk Municipal Council and Australian Newsprint Mills all submitted evidence in favor of the alienation though a much larger number of submissions were lodged by Tasmanian and inter-State conservationists in protest against the proposed alienation and against any realignment of the park's boundary to the East.82 Stephen Kessell, by this time Managing Director of Australian Newsprint Mills, had, in his earlier position as Commonwealth Controller of Timber, expressed concern about the fact that the Tasmanian pulp and paper industry was given access to high quality timber. Yet, as Manager of the Boyer operation, he was head of a company that lobbied the government in order to pulp one of the highest quality stands of timber in the State.

In October 1950 the third and final Joint Committee of Inquiry submitted its report in favor of Australian Newsprint Mills. The Committee recommended a new boundary to the east, excising 3,680 acres (1,489 hectares) from the park. In
exchange, the newsprint company was to surrender 4,000 acres (1,619 hectares) to the south, in the Russell Falls Valley. As additional compensation, in recognition of the increase in its income from timber royalties, the government made a commitment to increase the Scenery Preservation Board's budget for park development. The legislation was finally passed in the early hours of the morning of 1 December 1950, having been deferred and reintroduced when the public gallery and many Legislative Councilors had gone home.

**After the Florentine**

The Scenery Board emerged from the Florentine debate with a larger budget but the defeat confirmed that its power to protect natural values within national parks and reserves was limited. The Board could, it seemed, achieve reservation of lands of scenic or historic interest, including land with visual appeal that related to natural values other than monumental features, as long as government-supported industry interests did not want the land for other purposes; and the Board could retain land under its jurisdiction as long as politically powerful opposing interests did not seek its revocation. The Florentine defeat emphasized the Scenery Preservation Board’s inadequacies as a land conservation agency.

The Scenery Board lacked the resources required to successfully confront the challenges it faced, including that from the conservation movement. The fight for the Florentine was a turning point for Tasmanian conservationists and it was actually in the aftermath of the Florentine campaign that a group identifying itself as a conservation movement emerged. Prior to that campaign various scientific, patriotic, natural history and bushwalking clubs had worked together to achieve common nature conservation goals, such as the State's first national park, and members of some of these groups fought for the Florentine but their members had not identified as a single entity. The National Park Association, which brought members of the tourist association and nature conservationists together to secure a national park, was an exception. But that Association ceased to exist when the National Park Board was established. After the Florentine, however, activists involved in the Florentine campaign initiated the Flora and Fauna Conservation Committee to watch over and advocate on behalf of the State's natural resources and national parks. Conservation-minded representatives of groups which
included the Hobart Walking Club, the Field Naturalists Club, the University Mountaineering Club, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Australian Ornithological Union and the Youth Hostels Association, joined together to form the new organisation.\(^8\) While the number and range of conservation groups in Tasmania expanded, notably from the 1960s, the organisational base of the State’s national parks movement remained closely affiliated with the origins of the Flora and Fauna Conservation Committee until the advent of the Wilderness Society in the 1980s and the Tasmanian National Parks Association in 2001. The need for such a group was evident. Legislation had failed to protect what conservationists believed to be an outstanding *Eucalyptus Regnans* forest within Mt Field National Park. Government leadership had supported the forest’s destruction and the Scenery Board had been ineffective in protecting it. In the aftermath of the Florentine debate it was not only shared values and concerns that brought the groups together with a common purpose but a new awareness of their marginalized position within the political power structure.

Tasmanian conservationists and national parks supporters witnessed their government alienating part of a national park containing magnificent forest - the last big stand of *Eucalyptus regnans* in Tasmania, an almost pure stand of the tallest flowering trees in the world - for pulpwood. Political and social support for industrial development was so dominant at the time that the conservation effort had very little chance of success. The odds were so strongly against the conservation cause it was remarkable that the conservationists' protest did actually achieve the compromises, in terms of land exchanged and a budget increase for the Scenery Board, that it did. The newsprint company had the advantage of being able to promise industrial development and jobs. And it had the backing of the local newspaper. Added to these advantages, which already gave it a leading edge in the debate, it is possible that bribery was involved. In a private conversation just after the matter was resolved, a prominent public figure told Jessie Luckman that, 'too much money had changed hands for the transaction to be stopped'.\(^8\) Given that the Cosgrove Government had been the target of other corruption allegations, the suspicion of corruption over the Florentine would have made the loss of the forest particularly galling for conservationists.\(^8\) To ensure that, in
future, the natural values national parks were intended to protect had a public advocate and ‘watchdog’, the Tasmanian Fauna and Flora Committee began to meet regularly.88

The Scenery Board received a severe rebuke over the Florentine issue. The Cosgrove government, which remained in power until 1958, sent a clear message that it did not support the Board’s efforts to protect natural values within national parks and reserves in the face of claims industry might make on them. The Board did, however, have a legislative mandate to ‘acquire and preserve’ lands of historic interest and members were aware of a need for action to be taken to preserve some of the State’s built heritage. Being Australia’s second oldest colonial settlement, Tasmania had many fine examples of colonial architecture but post-war wealth combined with a desire for modernisation meant that many older buildings were threatened with demolition. The Scenery Board was pressed into action though, again, its limited resources restricted its achievements.

**The Scenery Preservation Board Pursues an Interest in Architectural Heritage**

Tasmanians’ postwar upsurge of interest in preserving historic sites reflected a broader movement throughout the western world, including Britain where membership of the English National Trust rose markedly in the postwar years. In 1947, the same year that legislation was passed in the USA to incorporate its National Trust for Historic Preservation, New South Wales formed a National Trust body, followed by South Australia (1955), Victoria (1956), Western Australia (1959), Tasmania, in 1960, then Queensland.89 Prior to this, promotion of Tasmanian history and protection of Tasmanian relics had been the preserve of the Tasmanian Society, which formed in 1935. Then in 1945 the Royal Society formed a historical body - the Tasmanian Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. A group that called itself the National Trust of Tasmania formed in 1954, and the Scenery Board also assumed responsibilities for the protection of Tasmanian relics and architectural heritage.90 These bodies all lacked the regulatory powers and financial resources necessary to ensure preservation of Tasmania’s historic buildings and sites, and there was some rivalry between non-government bodies that discouraged collaborative action.91
Davison and McConville argue that the idea of the past as a national ‘trust’ or ‘legacy’ to be passed on to future generations appealed strongly to a generation that had witnessed the devastation of war, and that the movement, with its emphasis on ideas of ‘veneration’ and ‘tradition’, anticipated a role defending those values against the ‘spiritual dangers’ of postwar affluence and materialism. And, Davison and McConville noted, the preservation of old buildings was often closely allied to conservation of the natural environment, appealing to a similar vein of anti-modernist but nationalistic sentiment. Preservation of historic buildings was also linked to tourism which was connected bureaucratically and politically to national park administration.

Some members of the Scenery Board and its subsidiaries, notably Evelyn Temple Emmett, Frederick Smithies, Colin Pitt and Alan Knight had a personal interest in old buildings and historic sites, an interest that was shared by Superintendents Michael Sharland and Jack Thwaites. When Pitt became Chair in 1938 the Scenery Board had just three historic sites under its jurisdiction - Port Arthur, Isle of the Dead and Risdon Cove - but by his death in 1953 there were thirteen. As the government body ‘in charge of old buildings’ the Scenery Board had responsibility for the preservation of historic sites and in this role it received government support in principle if not in adequate funding.

Supported by the Premier Robert Cosgrove, the Minister for Lands and Works, Edward Brooker, convened a meeting on the preservation of historic buildings and sites with representative bodies, in 1945. The bodies agreed to support the Scenery Board in its task and subsequently submitted lists of sites considered worthy of preservation. The Scenery Board then focused on choosing a property to acquire as a 'national house'. 'Entally', at Hadspen near Launceston was purchased and placed under the Board's jurisdiction in 1948. Sharland wrote that:

It was hoped that the acquisition of Entally would set an example in preservation of historic buildings; that owners of other buildings of similar age might somehow become enlightened to the value of their historic properties and therefore be persuaded through sentiment or otherwise to care for them and retain their early character, to realize that these old Georgian structures were an important element in the scenic fabric of the State and gave it a peculiar appeal.
Nearly 19,000 people paid for admission to ‘Entally’ within the first twelve
months of its opening. The Scenery Board considered a number of properties
near Hobart, including New Town Park, Narryna, Turiff Lodge, Prospect House,
Secheron House and Runnymede, hoping to establish a 'national house' in the
south of the State to complement 'Entally' in the North but was unable to secure
the necessary finance. Nevertheless, administration of historic sites - those at
Port Arthur, Richmond Goal, which had come under the Board’s jurisdiction in
1945, ‘Entally’, the Shot Tower, from 1956, and less visited sites such as Risdon Cove, George III Monument, Tasman Monument, Sarah Island, Waubadebars Grave and Yorktown - absorbed a large amount of the Scenery Board's attention. Details such as the setting of entrance fees and alterations to catering services at ‘Entally’ were dealt with by the Board, though their apparent triviality might have been a source of irritation to some observers.

The vacuum that existed in both cultural heritage policy and management, for
which the Scenery Board attempted to assume responsibility, became obvious in
1955. That year, the owner of historic stables at 'Shene', Mangalore, proposed
converting the farm building to a house though, he said that he would,
alternatively, be prepared to transfer the land and the building to the Crown for the

Entally House, 1950
(Source: Archives Office of Tasmania, NS 1029/102)
cost of building a dwelling. Allan Knight suggested an amendment to the Scenery Preservation Act that would have allowed the Board to assist in preserving privately owned heritage buildings but the government did not support his recommendation and the Scenery Board was powerless to intervene. Setting a good example as the owner of a heritage building was not enough. If the Scenery Board was to effectively administer preservation of the State’s heritage buildings it needed a mandate in the form of legislation and appropriate financial resources. Consequently, when the Minister for Lands wrote to the Scenery Board about the preservation of heritage buildings a few years after the ‘Shene’ incident, the Board replied that work could expand in that direction only if more funds were available. Though the Scenery Preservation Board was the official government body in charge of old buildings, its members had grown increasingly aware that they lacked the resources, in the form of legislation, finance and expertise, to perform the role adequately.

Conclusion

The Scenery Board appeared to have little interest in developments in park policy and management that were taking place outside the State. The USA hosted the first World Conference of National Parks in 1962 but the Scenery Board failed to send a delegate. By this time international and national developments in national park policy and administration had established new environmental benchmarks for park management. The public interest groups that represented Tasmania’s national parks movement supported these developments and they advocated for Tasmania to adopt more scientifically based reserve management in line with examples being set elsewhere. The Board’s governing legislation focused on the protection of scenery and historic sites, responsibilities more closely connected to governments’ tourism function than to land management and conservation functions, however, and during the 1960s the Scenery Board was more involved with historic buildings than with scientific natural resource management.

The Board’s failure to keep abreast of, and respond to, international developments in reserve management contributed to its growing irrelevance as a national park agency. In contrast, public interest in land use issues and conservationists’ knowledge of national and international developments in national park policy.
grew. Public pressure for a professional national parks authority with a directive and mandate to protect parks’ environmental values increased and, as conservationists applied the political skills they had learned through the Florentine conflict to achieve their goals, the politics of parks shifted in favor of fundamental change to Tasmania’s arrangements for national park administration.
Endnotes: Chapter 5


2. ibid., pp.92-144


7. ibid.


9. ibid, p.165

10. ibid, p.161.

11. Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 7 November 1941.


19. ibid.

20. Archives Office of Tasmania, NS234/19/4: Smith Family Papers Collection, Item 265.

21. ibid, Item 181.

22. Cradle Mountain Board, Minutes of Meetings, 2 March 1944.

23. Archives Office of Tasmania, NS234/19/4: Smith Family Papers Collection, Item 42.

24. Cradle Mountain Board, Minutes of Meetings, 1 May 1947.


26. Cradle Mountain Board Minutes of Meetings, 6 May 1944.

27. ibid.

28. National Park Board Minutes of Meetings, 12 July 1944.

29. ibid.

30. ibid.

31. ibid.


35. ibid.

36. Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 22 June 1939.

37. Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 30 January 1940.

38. Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 6 March 1941.


42. National Park Board Minutes of Meetings, 9 October 1946.

43. Cradle Mt-Lake St Clair National Park Board, Minutes of Meetings, 17 September 1952.

44. National Park Board, Minutes of Meetings, 8 February 1965.

45. Tasman Peninsular Board, Minutes of Meetings 23 September 1965.

46. National Park Board Minutes of Meetings, 15 October 1952.

Cradle Mountain Board Minutes of Meetings, 13 February 1953.
National Park Board, Minutes of Meetings, eg. 9 April 1947; 21 January 1948; 15 March 1950.
Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 2 May 1947.
Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 22 May 1961.
ibid, No.45, p.12.
National Park Board Minutes of Meetings, 9 October 1946.
ibid.
Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 6 December 1946.
ibid., 11 July 1947.
ibid., 3 February 1948.
ibid., 18 February 1948.
ibid.
National Park Board, Minutes of Meetings, 20 February 1948.
ibid.
*Mercury*, 29 June 1948.
Minutes of Meeting, State Executive of the Country Women's Association of Tasmania, 8 September 1950, for example, illustrates that, though the CWA protested against the alienation, it was agreed not to take any further action after correspondence was received from the Forestry Commissioner and the Scenery Preservation Board.
Correspondence, J. Luckman, 24 January 2002.
ibid.
Interview with J. Luckman, 4 February 2002.
Correspondence, J. Luckman 24 January 2002.
ibid.
ibid.
Interview with J. Luckman, 4 February 2002.
ibid.
Correspondence, J. Luckman, 24 January 2002.
ibid.
98 ibid, p.7.
99 Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, recurrent topic of discussion at meetings during the 1950s.
100 Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 7 July 1955.
Chapter 6

The 1960s: The Beginning of Modern Environmentalism and Fall of the Scenery Preservation Board

The conflict of interests over national parks that was increasingly evident in the 1940s and 1950s became more intense with the rise of modern environmentalism in the 1960s. After the Second World War the number of people visiting parks increased and public interest in the State’s national parks, reserves and historic sites rose. With the rise of an environmental ethos in Australian society the national parks movement elevated nature conservation to the status of national parks’ primary role. The Scenery Board, because of its composition, its legislation which gave it a mandate to protect scenic and historic sites but not environmental values per se, lack of expertise and inadequate resources, was no longer able to perform successfully as a park management authority in this changed environment. Under pressure from conservation interests it was replaced by a new authority, under new legislation, in 1971.

Kevin Frawley argues there have been three eras in evolving environmental visions in Australia since 1788; exploitative pioneering, national development and ‘wise use of resources’ and, from the 1960s, modern environmentalism. The challenges that Tasmania’s national parks movement mounted during the 1960s to the dominance of an unquestioning acceptance of the environmental costs of economic and material 'progress' reflect the emergence of the third of these eras.

During the early twentieth century members of Tasmania’s national park movement adhered to a philosophy of ‘wise use utilitarianism’ which led them to advocate for the protection of areas of natural beauty and value from indiscriminate destruction but not from discerning use. During this era, Frawley argued, people involved in the national parks movement moved beyond a world view that supported the uncontrolled resource exploitation characteristic of the earlier pioneering period but they did not necessarily challenge the developmental ethos per se. Assumptions that permitted environmental degradation in the cause of material development were
rarely questioned and the focus of the national parks movement was to preserve some areas of outstanding natural beauty within a materially developing society.

The third era of environmental vision, that of modern environmentalism, arose, Frawley argues, in the 1960s. From that time, he writes, there was a growing cynicism of the professed ‘scientifically based’ wise management of resources practiced by government departments in charge of forestry, mining and agriculture. Most of these agencies were development oriented and acted as facilitators rather than regulators of the industries in their charge, a pattern that educational, professional and social linkages between staff of the regulating agencies and their respective industries nurtured. Public faith in professional, scientific management was, Frawley wrote, undermined in the early Cold War period of the 1950s during which nuclear military technology raised fundamental ethical questions about the application of products of science and technology - the kinds of questions that were exposed by the publication of Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring* in 1962. Carson’s book exposed the dangerous effects of synthetic pesticides, especially DDT, on the food chain, and the collusion of ‘independent’ scientists and industry. *Silent Spring* sold well and was widely read throughout the Western world, acting as a catalyst for public debate about the environmental impact of pesticide usage, and establishing a concept of the inter-dependence of nature in the public’s mind. At the same time, Australian society was becoming more diverse, better educated, less dependent on natural-resource based occupations and more subject to the international flow of ideas.

Drew Hutton’s and Libby Connors’ work links Frawley’s eras of environmental vision with phases in the Australian conservation and national parks movements. Hutton and Connors argue that the ‘first wave’ of the conservation movement declined after the Second World War. The scientists and resource managers who had been influential in the early conservation movement had been incorporated into the bureaucratic structures of the movement’s making, while members of the movement’s ‘second wave’ recruiting ground - outdoor recreation groups - were experiencing a temporary decline while the novelty of motor-car trips competed successfully with bushwalking. In addition, Hutton and Connors argue, the Cold War restricted legitimate spheres of citizen action to the extent that social criticism was
interpreted as communist subversion and, in response, members of the national parks movement restricted themselves in their immediate goals and concentrated on defending pre-war gains. In Tasmania, however, the ‘first wave’ of the State’s national parks movement declined as an active interest group at an earlier point than Hutton and Connors identify, at the time of the First World War when the Scenery Preservation Board was established and conservationists placed their trust in the new administrative structure. With this proviso, Hutton and Connors’ argument applies to Tasmania.

Hutton and Connors, like Frawley, identify responses to environmental problems caused by developments of the post-war period, notably the pollution crisis that affected Western industrial centres in the 1950s and 1960s, as giving rise to modern environmentalism and the ‘second wave’ of the environment movement. But, they argue, the remobilizing of the environment movement was a painful process, both internally and externally. The structures that ‘first wave’ environmentalists had fought for, structures such as the Scenery Preservation Board, proved inadequate against the resource demands of powerful companies and State authorities. The polite deputations that had resulted in success for the early national parks movement no longer swayed governments as the political opposition presented by industrial and developmental interests increased. Conservationists were forced to adopt a strategy of educating the Australian electorate in moral arguments underpinning environmental and national park issues, popularising environmental issues and engaging governments in public debate about them. The transition generated conflict within elements of the conservation movement as old strategies and, by implication, their supporters, were rejected and new more confrontational strategies adopted. The language of the ‘old’ movement, terms such as ‘conservation’ and ‘preservation’, were inadequate to respond to emerging problems such as chemical contamination. The new activists began to identify themselves as ‘environmentalists’ and the focus shifted from isolated campaigns, such as new national parks or changes to game laws, to an over-arching concept of ‘ecology’, a newly popular term used to refer to interrelationships between environmental factors, particularly relationships between plants and animals and their environment.
As society’s understanding of ecological principles developed, environmentalists and national park activists grew aware of the importance of preserving habitats in order to preserve species. Emphasis on game laws gave way to a realization that, in order for any species to survive, areas that contained other plants and animals to which they were interconnected - ecosystems - had to be preserved. In many cases these areas needed to be large because unless the ecosystem was a perpetuating unit it would not preserve wildlife in the long-term. The push for reserves that contained varying habitats, including forest, and sizable reserves, inevitably led to conflict between the national parks movement and industries such as timber and mining which opposed the prospect of ‘locking up’ areas of land and denying industry access to its resources. It also resulted in pressures being placed on governments that were, increasingly, having to make land-use decisions in the context of conflict between environmental and industrial demands that frequently did not lend themselves to compromise.

Readings from *The Last of Lands*, a collection of papers from a Summer School on national parks and nature conservation published in 1969, gives some insight into Australian thinking on the problem of nature conservation and implications for national park systems in the 1960s. The book’s Introduction encapsulates the shift in perspective that had taken place. Conservation, its author wrote, came to be regarded as a world-wide problem only in the previous century;

Before that time the living world had consisted of rather few men and a lot of what was collectively called ‘nature’. Nature was seen as an enemy to be subjugated to the greater good of mankind, and if a little of it was destroyed as a result, there was plenty left. In our time we have come to realize that, as a result of the fantastic rise in population during the last century, there are today a lot of men, and rather little of nature.

A contributor to the publication, Max Day, who was at various times an entomologist with CSIRO and chairman of the Australian Academy of Science’s Committee on National Parks and Reserves, argued that three major themes with relevance to national parks emerged from this shift in balance between nature and human population. These themes, he wrote, were the need for habitat preservation in order that species of plants and animals might survive despite increasing pressure to exploit land and its resources, increasing competition for land and its resources, and a greater awareness of the importance of the recreational value of natural areas.
the 1960s not one of these three themes was being adequately addressed by Tasmania’s Scenery Preservation Board.

As environmental pressures exerted by the interests of industrial and economic development increased, a national parks movement emerged with a different perspective from that of its predecessors. The Tasmanian national parks movement that accompanied the rise of the environmental movement in the 1960s aspired to a State national park system that reflected ecological principles, managed by a professional national parks service that was not subservient to industry interests.

**Pressure mounts for changes to the management of Tasmania’s national parks**

In the period from the late 1950s to the early 1970s national park systems were reevaluated throughout Australia. Victoria passed a new National Parks Act in 1957 while conservation bodies in NSW prepared a case for new national park legislation, the Queensland government investigated the nature and extent of that State’s reserve system, and there was a call for national coordination and consistency in national park legislation. Throughout Australia there was a trend towards improving environmental management of national parks and nature reserves.

The national parks system in the USA, to which members of the Australian national parks movements looked for inspiration, also changed during the 1950s and 1960s as a result of similar influences that impacted on Australian national park systems. Ronald Foresta wrote that, early in the twentieth century, most Americans were still optimistic about civilisation, concerned about development in inappropriate places but, generally, not concerned about implications of development itself. During the 1950s and 1960s however, that benign view of civilisation lost adherents within the membership of conservation organisations. Belief in limits to civilisation's potential to completely dominate nature lost ground to a view that, left to its own devices, ‘progress’ would result in a completely human-controlled environment. This new perception foresaw nature being completely destroyed unless the development ethos was successfully challenged. ‘The task for environmentalists,’ Foresta argued, ‘became not so much one of guiding development into its proper locations, but rather one of opposing development wherever it would take place at nature's expense.’ Consequently, he wrote,
The 1960s and 1970s saw the Park Service attempting to adjust to changed circumstances. During these two decades the agency found its traditional goals devalued, the processes on which it had built past successes and managed the Park System rejected, and its relationships with its traditional sources of support either eroded or reordered.17

Foresta attributed the growth of a strong national environment movement to the activist movement of the 1960s joining the long-established conservation movement. The membership of California's Sierra Club, for example, rose from 3,500 at the end of the Second World War to a national membership of 30,000 by 1965, and, by the following decade, to twice that number. The political strength of the new environment movement achieved legislative change, including the *Wilderness Act 1964*, and influenced the policies and practices of USA governments' environmental agencies.18 It also influenced and inspired national park activists outside the USA, including Tasmanian conservationists.

Papers presented to the First World Conference on National Parks, in 1962, reflect the kinds of challenges confronting parks services throughout the world at the time. In his paper Max Day wrote that, while many fine parks had been established in Australia they were being inadequately maintained, 'the main aim has been’, Day said, ‘to encourage more visitors, with little realisation that the increasing numbers are now destroying the very things that people come to enjoy’.19 Day suggested that, while most conference participants would consider scientific reasons for reserves to be over-riding, to the majority of Australian State governments it was the economics of the tourism trade that commended the use of land for national parks. And, he argued, though biologists particularly saw the need to protect a variety of habitats, Australian reserves, notably those in Tasmania, were predominantly high mountainous areas that were established to protect their scenic features. Priorities for change in the Australian reserve system were, he argued, the protection of a broader range of habitats, an expanded ranger service backed by adequate legislation, and better interpretive services.20 Day was one of a number of Australian scientists who argued in the 1960s that national park management should be based on environmental principles. Their views influenced community-based national parks movements and largely, as a result of public pressure, the State governments that controlled national park administrative agencies.
The national shift in thinking towards making the protection of a range of natural habitats a primary goal of national park systems created pressure for change in Tasmania. Tasmanian national parks activists and supporters of the Tasmanian movement, such as Geoff Mosley who researched the Tasmanian system in the 1960s and advocated for change, called for a more scientific and professional national parks service, and one that reflected an appreciation of the wilderness value of the State’s south-west. The Scenery Board, however, was partly unable and partly unwilling to respond to pressures for change.

The Scenery Board’s governing legislation directed it to ‘provide for the acquisition and preservation of lands of scenic or historic interest’\(^{22}\). Its governing legislation did not give it a mandate to become a conservation land use agency without major legislative and structural change. Also, Mosley argued that the departmental representatives and voluntary members of the Board lacked time to devote to its expanding business and that basic matters such as policy and planning were neglected.\(^{23}\) The interest and sympathy of the Board’s Chair and ex-officio members were not guaranteed and, following the death in 1953 of Colin Pitt, a Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands who was interested in the Board’s functions, the Board lacked committed leadership. Despite some calls for the position of the Board’s Chair to be made elective the position remained with the Surveyor-General and, following a short period under Edgar Blackwood, the position was assumed by Frank Miles in 1955. Gerald Castles wrote that Miles appears to have resented the extra workload involved in administering the Board and that he thwarted attempts by its officers to implement policy and assert some independence from what had become a stifling relationship with the Lands Department.\(^{24}\) Mosley argued that the Scenery Board’s composition and part-time nature did little harm in the early period of its history, when its primary task was identification and acquisition of reserves from the extensive domains of freely available Crown land but, as competition for Crown land increased, the Board’s composition limited its independence to the detriment of the reserve system.\(^{25}\) Tasmania’s wildlife agency, the Animals and Birds Protection Board, more closely resembled the type of agency that conservationists argued was required to manage the State’s national parks.
Progressive Wildlife Management: the Animals and Birds Protection Board

While the Scenery Board struggled to perform its role effectively during the 1950s and 1960s the Animals and Birds Protection Board - the Fauna Board - developed as a scientifically based nature conservation authority. Joseph Pearson who, from 1933, represented scientific bodies on the Fauna Board, was joined by a second scientist in 1953, zoologist Eric Guiler. Guiler was appointed as government representative following pressure from conservation interests - the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club and the Tasmanian Flora and Fauna Committee - for more scientific representation on the Board.26 Shortly afterwards, in 1955, the Agriculture Department's Chief Veterinary Officer was appointed, which increased the number of scientists on the Board to three, and Michael Sharland also joined in 1955 as a representative for the Game Acclimatisation Society. By the 1960s the number of scientists and conservationists sitting on the Board was seen to balance the traditionally strong representation of hunters, skin merchants and farmers which, though it appears not to have greatly weakened the Board's protectionist stance, was of concern to some conservationists.27

The Fauna Board and the conservation movement shared a common interest in protecting wildlife habitat. Realising that its reserve system was inadequate the Board reviewed it in 1958. The review concluded there were too many small sanctuaries - larger areas were needed to adequately protect fauna - and that the reserve system failed to represent the full range of habitats within the State. To extend opportunities for the Board to protect threatened habitats it introduced a fourth category of reserve, the fauna reserve, established a committee to investigate possible sites for a large reserve and, in order to meet an obvious habitat ‘gap’, made a serious effort in the 1960s to obtain a large reserve of a land type typically used for farming.28 Freycinet Peninsula, the Musselroe Bay-Ansons Bay area, Little Swanport and Mount Picton were investigated. West Coast sites were not because they would have failed to meet the criteria of mild climate, good visitor access and accommodation, in addition to suitable fauna habitat.29 When members of the subcommittee flew over Maria Island they were impressed by the variety of habitats it offered.30
It had a wide range of habitats ranging from open grassland to rain gullies and mountain tops. It did not require fencing nor was it subjected to poaching. The climate was equable and some accommodation could be made available for tourists. The fauna did not contain all of our native species but this was a minor drawback in contrast to the virtues of the island. Above all, there was no other controlling authority to be consulted over decisions about running the place.  

The Board approached the government about acquiring the island as a National Fauna Reserve and it was spurred into acting on the recommendation when an area of private land, the Coleman estate, was offered for sale in 1964. The government authorised the Board to acquire the land for £250, with the future financing of other resumptions to be decided later. As grazing leases on the 11,000 acres (4,452 hectares) of Crown land on the island came up for renewal they were converted to a single lease with an annual tenure, in order that the Fauna Board could use grazing to maintain open land until the numbers of native animals increased sufficiently to maintain a desired balance. The 13,000 acres (5,261 hectares) or so remaining were, like the Coleman Estate, privately owned. Once it became known that the Fauna Board was interested in buying land on the island landowners began to express interest in selling. By 1967 a major property at Darlington and a second small property had been purchased, and negotiations were underway for a further four properties. Most of the acquisitions went smoothly but there was conflict between the Fauna Board and the Aero Club of Southern Tasmania over an airstrip at Chinaman’s Bay, the beginning of a private accommodation development which the government had allowed to proceed contrary to the Fauna Board’s plans for the island. Ultimately the lease was not granted, compensation was paid to the Aero Club and a single airstrip was sited at Darlington, the Fauna Board having successfully dissuaded the government from acting contrary to Board policy. The airstrip was one of three development proposals unacceptable to the Board that it stopped at the time land was being acquired; the other two were plans for a hotel and golf course at Long Point, and a two-acre shack block subdivision at Chinaman’s Bay.  

The Fauna Board stationed temporary rangers at Maria Island in 1967 and the first permanent ranger, Rex Gatenby, was appointed in 1968 in anticipation of the island being proclaimed a Sanctuary once land resumptions were completed. Between 1969 and 1971 the Board imported animals to the island with the aim of providing
habitat for species which may not otherwise have had adequate protection. Among the marsupials introduced were: 45 Forester kangaroos, 127 Bennett’s wallabies, 28 Flinders Island wombats, 15 brush-tailed possums, 61 ring-tailed possums, 136 potoroos, 123 bettongs, 43 echidnas, 16 marsupial mice, 42 brown bandicoots and 13 pademelons. Emus, various species of ducks, black swans, brown quail and Cape Barren geese were also taken to the island.37

The Fauna Board’s Chair, Eric Guiler, was proud of the Maria Island achievement.

The Maria Island concept of multiple land use was well in advance of any other project at the time, combining flora and fauna viewing, pleasant beaches, mountain climbing and walking with a rich historical background. The Board viewed Maria Island as a place where adults as well as school parties could observe the natural history and human activities in a ‘hands on’ situation whilst at the same time having an adventure holiday. It is an unhappy thought that the Board did not survive to see the fruition of its efforts but the Members derived much satisfaction from the results of their concept.38

The process of land resumption complete, Maria Island was declared a Sanctuary under the Animals and Birds Protection Act in 1970.

Not long after the Fauna Board had decided on Maria Island in preference to the Musselroe Bay-Ansons Bay area as its priority for a fauna sanctuary, the Tasmanian Farmers’ Association approached the State government stating concern about the scale of land clearing in North-Eastern Tasmania, the threat this posed to the Forester kangaroo and the need for a reservation.39 Populations of Forester kangaroos, the State’s largest marsupial and the only kangaroo found in Tasmania, were known to have experienced a significant reduction in their numbers and their range. The Fauna Board, aware of the case for establishing a reserve, surveyed the region and concluded that an area extending inland from the coast at Big Musselroe Bay-Ansons Bay to Mt William would be most suitable.40

A large part of the area being proposed for a reserve was, however, in the hands of the British Tobacco Company. In an agreement between the State government and the Company in 1963, 130,000 acres of Crown land in the Gladstone district, between Great Musselroe River and the coast north of Eddystone Point, had been transferred to subsidiaries of the British Tobacco Company for development. Apparently the land was to be developed and an agreed portion then sub-divided and
offered for sale at a price to be agreed upon by the government and the Company. By mid-1968 the land, ‘of marginal potential unless some millions of dollars could be spent on it’, was being developed at a rate of 6,000 acres a year and it was anticipated that, within a decade, 80,000 acres could be under pasture as a result of the project.

During the late 1960s when agitation against the land development project was growing within the local farming community, the Fauna Board recommended that the government acquire land in the area including some of that allocated to the British Tobacco Company, for the purpose of a reserve. By 1969 the Board’s attention was focused on 10,000 acres (4,047 hectares), a minimum size considered necessary for a reserve to protect the Forester kangaroo, within the Mt William area. The Fauna Board submitted a proposal for land resumption to the government in that year, and re-submitted it in the 1970-1971 financial year with the addition of a further 3,000 acres (1,214 hectares) to allow for creek boundaries at the southern and northern ends of the proposed reserve. The power to negotiate the land transaction on the Board’s recommendation rested with the Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands. In the case of Mt William, the amount of concern shown by the conservation movement, notably the Australian Conservation Foundation, and the interest and participation of the Board’s Minister, Eric Beattie, elevated consideration of the issue to Ministerial and Cabinet level. Government restructuring of scenery and wildlife administration then intervened and removed the issue from the Fauna Board’s jurisdiction as that Board was subsumed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

While the Fauna Board improved the adequacy of wildlife reserves it pursued another interest that it shared with the conservation movement, that of placing reserve management on a more scientific footing, which it did through conducting wildlife conservation programmes such as researching Cape Barren geese, black swans and the Tasmanian Devil. Nevertheless Eric Guiler, who chaired the Board during its later years, said that conservation groups, notably the Tasmanian Flora and Fauna Conservation Committee, were vocal in their criticism of the Board whenever something happened to incur the wrath of what he described as an increasingly
protectionist conservation lobby. The Macquarie Island sealing dispute of 1959 was one example.

Macquarie Island was proposed for reservation as a wildlife sanctuary by Sir Douglas Mawson and H.G. Wells, when media reporting of seal and penguin slaughter on the island created public outrage early in the twentieth century. The Fauna Board became involved in the sanctuary proposal when in 1932 it requested Mawson, who was planning to embark on a southern voyage, to provide it with information on the island’s fauna. Again Mawson recommended that the island be declared a sanctuary and he forwarded correspondence between himself and the government, correspondence in which the Premier stated that the sanctuary would lack supervision and therefore would be of little value, to the Fauna Board for comment. The Board, dismissing the Premier’s views, proceeded to declare the island a sanctuary in June 1933.

Believing that Macquarie Island was secure as a sanctuary and Antarctic base the Fauna Board was taken by surprise when, in December 1958, members were told confidentially by the Minister about the impending granting of a license to a Melbourne-based company intending to resume sealing at the island. Members of the Fauna Board were alarmed by the proposal and annoyed that negotiations had reached an advanced stage before the Board was taken into the government’s confidence. However, the Board was reminded that it did not have jurisdiction over seals since an 1875 amendment to the Sea Fisheries Protection Act had removed seals from the province of the Fauna Acts and placed them under the Sea Fisheries Act. The Fauna Board had little power, but it used what little it had to obstruct the project. The Board’s limited powers came from its authority over killing methods - it could forbid the use of any ‘engine’ used in the killing process within a sanctuary - and its jurisdiction over land dedicated as Fauna Sanctuary. Despite heavy pressure the Board refused to revoke part of the Sanctuary as a base for the operation, though it did agree to ‘consider’ leasing one area knowing that it was too small to be practical.

While the Board did what it believed it could to oppose the sealing licence it was unable to defend itself against public criticism for doing too little, including accusations that it actually supported the granting of sealing rights, because of a
Ministerial ban on public statements. The Flora and Fauna Conservation Committee, which lobbied the government after receiving ‘leaked’ information about the proposed license, was particularly critical of the Board’s apparent lack of protest. Happily for the seals, the government withdrew its support for the project following the public outcry that resulted from conservationists’ protests, the close proximity of an election possibly having something to do with the Premier’s about-turn.55

By the 1960s the Fauna Board had progressed far more than had the Scenery Board towards being a research based conservation management body. Guiler said the Fauna Board did not believe that the Scenery Board was, in comparison, doing a good job primarily because governments did not permit it to do so. Members became uneasy about the future of reserves under the Scenery Preservation Act, he said, and requested that the Fauna Board make Mt Field a sanctuary under the Animals and Birds Protection Act in order that it could not be revoked without the permission of both houses of parliament. Though the request came too late to have possibly saved the Florentine forest, the Fauna Board was happy to cooperate and Mt Field was declared a sanctuary in 1957.56 Despite the sanctuaries under the Fauna Board’s jurisdiction including two large national parks, Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair which was declared a sanctuary in 1939, and Mt Field, the State’s system of wildlife reserves did not, for historic reasons, reflect wildlife conservation requirements and therefore the system was open to valid criticism by conservationists. And the conservation movement continued to perceive the Fauna Board as failing to adequately represent all of the groups interested in wildlife. For these, and other reasons, the Fauna Board was subject to the conservation lobby’s push to replace both Board structures with a new authority to assume control of national parks, reserves and wildlife conservation.

The Scenery Preservation Board neglects park expansion

After the 1938 to 1941 period of reserve expansion, during which a number of mostly tourism oriented reserves were proclaimed under Cosgrove’s Labor Government, active members of the Scenery Preservation Board focused on the preservation of historic sites, while much of the Board’s attention went to administering the Defacement of Property Act and dealing with internal tensions. The Board had little desire to extend the size of the reserve system for which it was
responsible and it failed to support new reserve proposals generated by bushwalking and conservation groups.

The Hobart Walking Club requested that the Board declare an area around Lake Pedder a reserve in 1954. Lake Pedder national park was subsequently declared—but with boundary amendments to accommodate the future possibility of the HEC damming the Serpentine River.57 Two years later the Club urged the Board to consider proclaiming a reserve incorporating the Arthur Range and Federation Peak, but failed to gain the Board's support for that proposal.58 A Melbourne based conservation group, the Fauna Protection Council, wrote to the Premier of Tasmania in 1959, following the furore over the State government's near issuing of a sealing license, suggesting that Macquarie Island be declared a national park. The Premier referred the suggestion to the Scenery Board which opposed it on the grounds that the island was already a fauna sanctuary and because difficulty of supervision would mean there was no advantage for the island in national park status.59

Bushwalkers began to visit the south-west of the State more frequently from the late 1950s, largely because of the advent of light aeroplane flights that brought walkers and supplies to Lake Pedder and, later, Port Davey. The Hobart Walking Club prepared a track plan for the south-west which it submitted to the Scenery Board. Though the Board agreed to support a survey and costing for the plan it would not agree to divert any of its funds to building the track, despite demands that resulted from increasing visitation to the area.60

The Scenery Board was not interested in the potential of Maria Island as a reserve, either. The Fauna Board primarily intended Maria Island as a fauna sanctuary but it made no secret of its intention to encourage visitors, including school parties, to the island for recreational and educational purposes.61 The proposal clearly intruded on the Scenery Board's territory, yet there was no constructive response from the Scenery Board when, in 1963, the need for conservation work on historic buildings at Darlington was brought to its attention.62 In 1965 the Federation of Field Naturalists of Tasmania recommended the declaration of Maria Island as a national park, and the Scenery Board responded, 'Cabinet had the future of Maria Island under consideration and therefore the matter was out of the Board's hands' .63
The Scenery Board's inaction over a reserve proposal for a national park or scenic reserve in the area known as the Walls of Jerusalem, was also notable. The Launceston Walking Club recommended the area for reservation in 1962 and the Scenery Board agreed to refer the proposal to the Forestry Commission and Hydro Electric Commission (HEC) for comments. Then, in July 1963, the Board received a letter from the Field Naturalists Club supporting the walking club's recommendation that the Walls of Jerusalem and, in addition, Meander Falls, be declared scenic reserves. The Scenery Board referred the proposals to the Forestry Commission and HEC for their views and sought a report from the Northern Scenery Board. The HEC's response, which was eventually tabled in June 1965, was that it planned to propose that the whole of the Central Plateau above 3,000 feet (914 meters) be reserved for water storage purposes. The Scenery Board saw this plan as an alternate way of preserving scenic values and providing fauna protection, and consequently advised that, while the government was considering alternate proposals for the area's protection it was not in a position to proclaim it under the Scenery Preservation Act.

Despite the Scenery Board’s resistance to expanding the State’s reserve system during most of the 1940s through to the end of the 1960s, some new reserves were proclaimed. The largest of these were Rocky Cape National Park, proclaimed in 1967, and the South West National Park which was gazetted in 1968. A flora reserve of 200 acres had been proclaimed in the Rocky Cape/Sisters Beach area in 1912, primarily for the purpose of preserving Banksia serrata. This small reserve was not transferred to the Scenery Board's jurisdiction and it appears that public awareness of the reserve lapsed. Members of the Burnie Field Naturalists Club took a protective interest in the area, however, and advocated for its proclamation as a scenic reserve. The Superintendent of Reserves put a reserve proposal for the area to the Scenery Board in 1965. This proposal recommended two areas, one of 7,500 acres (3,035 hectares) and another of 746 acres (302 hectares), the main objects of interest being coastal vegetation, scenery and the existence of Aboriginal caves. The Scenery Board discussed the proposal. The Forestry Commission's representative suggested that the 746 acre area would be sufficient, somebody else said that the coastline, at least, should be reserved in order to prevent shack development, and a decision was postponed. A smaller but nevertheless significant area of 4,000 acres
(1,619 hectares) adjoining the coast between Rocky Cape and Sisters Beach was subsequently proclaimed in June 1967.\textsuperscript{70}

**Conservationists’ criticism of the Scenery Preservation Board intensifies**

During the late 1950s and 1960s bushwalkers and members of conservation organisations became increasingly involved in issues of park management and scientific approaches to conservation. The Hobart Walking Club established a National Park Policy Sub-Committee which developed, ahead of the Scenery Board, a system of functional park classification.\textsuperscript{71} By the late 1960s conservationists were clearly articulating their criticisms of the Board's approach to reserve acquisition and management. Geoff Mosley completed his doctoral thesis 'Aspects of Geography and Recreation in Tasmania' in 1963. In his thesis, which served as a basis for published articles and public statements, Mosley addressed issues relating to national park acquisition and management, presented a critical analysis of problems with Tasmanian reserve management and recommended major changes. He pointed out that there had been no attempt to assess the Tasmanian reserve system as representative of major biotypes. In addition, he argued that the Scenery Board had failed to develop policy relating to criteria for site selection and there was no comprehensive mapping of the State's vegetation types on which a review of the State's reserve system could be based.\textsuperscript{72} He drew attention to the reserve system's failure to include either a geological or an archeological site, the limited protection that the Scenery Preservation Act offered reserves against conversion to other uses and the limited extent to which reserves could offer real protection to fauna because of a shortage of rangers.\textsuperscript{73}

In an article published in the Hobart Walking Club's journal *Tasmanian Tramp* in 1966, Mosley wrote;

> During the past few years the main Australian park user societies have become increasingly aware of the deficiencies of the State park systems, and there is widespread feeling that rationalisation is long overdue. It is argued that there is room for improvement in all aspects of park selection and management which should be based on a better knowledge of user requirements and park resources. It naturally follows that before the State park agencies can become more active in research and planning they will need more money, more trained staff, and greater independence.\textsuperscript{74}

Unfortunately, he argued, State governments were slow in responding to these criticisms and they appeared to be happy continuing to leave site suggestion and park
system review to voluntary bodies. Though voluntary bodies were fulfilling these tasks as best they could, their proposals naturally tended to emphasize the special requirements of the interest groups they represented, which could not be expected to result in a rationally balanced park system. And voluntary bodies’ proposals were not necessarily given serious consideration by the relevant government authority, the Scenery Preservation Board. Mosley observed that, despite the Board's limited financial and technical resources, rule-of-thumb planning and policy of making each park available for all park users, the system was successfully performing a number of diverse roles. However, he argued, that success was mainly due to low intensity of use and the absence of major claims for alienation and it was unlikely that the system could continue to function satisfactorily in a context of increased demands without major changes in administration and management. He noted that, despite a widespread overseas trend towards the adoption of better informed and stronger approaches to park management, ‘there is no evidence that the Tasmanian government is aware of its possibilities', and he argued for change:

The rationalisation of the Tasmanian national parks system would of course require many changes, including strengthening of the status of the central park agency, the amendment of legislation to provide for explicit statements of park objectives, classification, definition of categories of reserve, and possibly control of fauna sanctuaries and national parks by a single body.76

Mosley also drew attention to the potential of south-west Tasmania - the largest roadless tract of land in temperate Australia - as a reserve that held outstanding value for wilderness recreation.77

Like Mosley, Bruce Davis identified serious weaknesses in the administration of Tasmania’s reserves in his thesis ‘National Park Administration in Australia: A Critical Assessment’, which he submitted in 1966. Davis argued that the Scenery Preservation Board was ineffective for reasons that included outdated legislation and a lack of clear definitions, aims and policies, the use of part-time administrations, lack of trained staff, inadequate finance, unenlightened government attitude and negativism within the Board itself.78 And, Davis wrote, judging by numerous letters to the daily press expressing dissatisfaction with the Board’s services, he was not alone in his criticism.79 Davis concluded that legislative reform was needed and recommended,
Lake Pedder defeat

Conservationists’ opportunity to achieve major change in the State’s reserve administration arrangements came when a State election was called in 1969, in the midst of political controversy over the fate of Lake Pedder. Lake Pedder, in Tasmania’s south-west, was an icon for bushwalkers and nature lovers. Situated in an area of outstanding beauty, the lake made a deep impression on those people who visited it. One of the first Europeans to view Lake Pedder recorded,

... we were much struck with the landscape and conceive that the most careless observer cannot observe Lake Pedder with the hundred peaks of the Frankland Range without admiration and almost amazement. 81

More recently, after the lake was flooded, conservationist Bob Brown wrote,

Lake Pedder was one of earth's special places. It nestled in the remote mountain heartland of Tasmania's wilderness. Though famous for its three-kilometer-long beach and Serpentine River drainage, Lake Pedder held an attraction for people which transcended geographical description. Beyond its gentle beauty was a moodiness and mystery which evoked great human attachment. 82

Lake Pedder was a natural lake about two miles square, situated in a valley of button-grass surrounded by mountains. The lake used to have a quartzite beach up to half a mile wide extending two miles along its eastern shore, a beach that was said to have had no comparison in Australia. 83 Besides its beauty, the lake area was home to abundant wildlife including wallabies, wombats and native cats, the tracks of which used to form patterns on the beach. At least seventeen plant and animal species, many of which were shore dwelling species which would not have survived the lake's flooding, are known to have been endemic to Lake Pedder and its shores. 84

Until 1947 only a few Europeans, mostly surveyors, prospectors or piners visited Tasmania's south-west. The start of food-drops by light plane in 1947 and, later, small planes landing on the shores of Lake Pedder delivering walkers and supplies, opened the area for exploration by bushwalking parties and the level of public interest in Tasmania's south-west increased. The first proposal for a national park in
the south-west, a proposal that was at least partly motivated by the problem of dogs being abandoned by hunters in the south-west of the State, was put forward by the Country Women’s Association but dismissed by the Scenery Board in 1947. Then, in 1953, bushwalkers became suspicious that the HEC was planning a dam in the region when they noticed the authority had 'quietly' installed river flow recorders on the Gordon River. This prompted the Hobart Walking Club to propose, in 1954, that an area surrounding Lake Pedder - defined by lines joining Mt Solitary, Mt Giblin and Mt Sprent - be proclaimed a scenic reserve. The Scenery Preservation Board invited Lloyd Jones, a pilot who was flying walkers and supplies to Lake Pedder, to screen slides of the proposed reserve at one of its meetings and, on 8 March 1955, the Board formally declared a 100 square mile (25,899 hectare) Lake Pedder National Park.

Threats to the integrity of the south-west continued to create unease among an increasing number of walkers who visited the area. In 1958 the Hydro installed another automatic river-flow recorder on the Gordon River, followed by the construction of a vehicle track to the Serpentine River and installation of a river flow recorder there. By 1961 it was clear that the HEC was interested in the Gordon River area though the HEC Commissioner, Allan Knight, maintained that 'the possibility of power development in this area in the foreseeable future is remote'.

Aiming to create greater public awareness of the south-west and to promote coordinated planning for conservation and development in south-west Tasmania, conservationists formed a new group, the South-West Committee, in 1962. Foundation members included representatives of the Launceston, Hobart and North-West walking clubs, University of Tasmania Mountaineering Club, Aero Club of Southern Tasmania, Tasmanian Field Naturalists Association, Federated Walking Clubs of Mainland States, Canine Defence League and the Youth Hostels' Association. In addition, Margaret King, wife of Melaleuca tin miner Denny King, represented residents of the south-west through her active involvement in the committee. The committee's membership changed over time in response to changes in the participating organisations' membership and focus, and by 1976 the South-West Committee comprised representatives of the Blandfordia Alpine Club, Climbers' Club of Tasmania; Hobart, Launceston and North-West walking clubs,
Residents of Port Davey, Tasmania University Mountaineering Club, Scrub Club, 
Society for Growing Australian Plants, Southern Caving Society, Tasmanian 
Caverneering Club and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust.  

Ron Brown, a parliamentarian representing the Huon constituency and at the time 
Deputy President of the Legislative Council, was the Committee's inaugural Chair. 
Brown believed that the entire south-west should be declared a national park;  

Somewhat naively, the Committee members thought that since this magnificent area 
was very little used, it could be made into some sort of wilderness reserve, and if there 
were to be any commercial exploitation, at least it should be rational development… 
People believed they could discuss their plan with the politicians as reasonable, 
intelligent men. 

The Reece government, however, failed to acknowledge conservationists’ case while 
it gave the HEC its full support. 'This will be a process,' Reece said, 'not of tearing 
down, but of building up an asset which has for a long time contributed very little to 
most of us'. In need of funds to finance an access road the HEC prepared, on behalf 
of the State government, a submission to the Federal government seeking a grant of 
£2,500,000 to build an access road to the Middle Gordon. The submission, which 
detailed the HEC's intention to build a dam as well as citing tourism, mining and 
forestry potential for the road, was not made public. It was, however, successful, 
and road construction began in 1964. Later that year Reece announced his intention 
to set-up an 'Inter-Departmental Committee', comprising representatives of the HEC, 
Forestry Commission, Mines Department and the Scenery Board to oversee 
developments in the State's south-west, to ‘handle arrangements and recommend 
reserves to protect the region against undue damage’. The South-West Committee 
wrote to the Minister for Lands about the need for the government's proposed 
committee to include representatives of conservation interests and offered to submit 
a panel of names for consideration but was advised that, 'after due consideration the 
government had decided not to extend the membership'. 

As the Gordon River Road pushed further into the South-West it became more 
difficult for the government and the HEC to maintain public denial about intentions 
for hydro development in the south-west. Finally, in June 1965, Reece issued a press 
statement about HEC activities in the area, admitting that there would be some
modification of the Lake Pedder National Park. The South-West Committee subsequently submitted a comprehensive proposal for 'rational development and conservation' of the south-west but Reece refused to discuss it. Instead he pointed out that Tasmania already had a larger proportion of land in reserves than did any other State and added that very few Tasmanians would have been to the south-west which he described as having 'a few badgers, kangaroos and wallabies, and some wild flowers that can be seen anywhere'.95 Reece reassured the public that an interdepartmental committee was watching all aspects of development in the south-west: water potential, forestry and mineral resources and 'what area in the early future should be dedicated a reserve'.96 In April 1966 the government proclaimed a South-West Faunal District of 1,073 square miles, an action that conservationist Les Southwell described as the government pretending to protect fauna whilst authorising the destruction of its habitat.97 The proclamation resulted from negotiations between the South-West Committee, the Fauna Board and the HEC. The South-West Committee’s preference was for the area to be proclaimed a sanctuary but the Fauna Board’s Chair, Eric Guiler, explained that, given the need to develop parts of the south-west for HEC or mineral purposes, the lesser protection of a Faunal District was acceptable to all parties while the greater protection afforded to a sanctuary would not have been.98 This comment of Guiler’s reflects the divergence between the government’s view of national parks and reserves and that of the emerging wilderness lobby, to which such compromise was unacceptable.

Although the public was still not officially informed about the Hydro's plans for Lake Pedder, surveying work was continuing and by early 1967 it was obvious that Lake Pedder was threatened. Conservationists formed the Lake Pedder Action Group, a more militant and more outspoken organisation than the South-West Committee, to promote their case. Soon afterwards the government released the Inter-Departmental Committee's Report which endorsed the HEC's plans for the Gordon River area and recommended that a large national park, with boundaries that met the requirements of mining, hydro electricity and forest interests, be established after completion of Hydro works in the Middle Gordon.99 On 1 May the HEC presented to parliament its proposal, which included submerging Lake Pedder under fifty feet (approximately fifteen meters) of water. The proposal for hydro
development on the Gordon River was finally made public on 25 May 1967 and on 31 May the Inter-Departmental Committee's Report was tabled in parliament.

The South-West Committee responded to the Inter-Departmental Committee's Report by publicly criticising the absence of impartial examination of important factors involved in the proposal and called for an inquiry. The Legislative Council, the majority of which were Independents, subsequently appointed a select committee to examine implications of and possible modifications to the Gordon River Power Development proposal, and any incidental matters. The Government did not, however, wait for the select committee to report before introducing the Hydro-Electric Commission (Power Development) Bill 1967 to parliament. The Legislative Council put the legislation aside pending the select committee's report but that committee had not been in a position to meaningfully address alternative schemes that might have saved the lake because alternatives were not disclosed by the HEC in time.

In the absence of full information, the select committee recommended that the Legislative Council give its assent to the HEC's proposal along with the establishment of a new South-West National Park of approximately 897,000 acres (363,003 hectares) and the creation of a new authority under the direction of a government minister to integrate control of all national parks. Responding to broader issues of environmental management, the Select Committee also recommended that future power developments be referred to a joint committee of both Houses for detailed examination prior to legislative approval, and it proposed new legislation to control air pollution. The government's Inter-Departmental Committee subsequently halved the area recommended for a South-West National Park, excluding the Davey River catchment area (because of HEC interests), New River Lagoon (mining interests) and east of New River Lagoon (forestry interests). The Inter-Departmental Committee's recommendation did, however, include the existing Lake Pedder National Park of 588,105 acres (237,988 hectares) in its proposal for an enlarged South-West National Park, and this formed the basis of the 473,511 acre (191,623 hectare) reserve that was proclaimed in October 1968.

The Lake Pedder conflict, like the Florentine conflict that preceded it, revealed a government which was aligned to the interests of industry to the exclusion of conservation interests. In defending the HEC’s interests the government concealed from the electorate information which should have been publicly available and

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circumvented the Upper House’s review function. These undemocratic actions, added to the prospective flooding of Lake Pedder, angered members of the State’s conservation movement, who were soon to go to the polls to elect a new State government.

**The saving of a Huon Pine forest**
While attention was focused on Lake Pedder, one Tasmanian conservationist, Lithuanian born Olegas Truchanas, was engaged in a solo campaign to save a Huon pine forest on the Denison River. Huon pine is extremely slow-growing, requiring between 500 to 1,000 years for a tree to reach maturity. Being virtually rot-proof and easy to work, the timber was in strong demand for building sailing ships and most of the accessible stands along the major rivers and their tributaries in the State’s South-West were logged by the mid nineteenth century. In the twentieth century helicopters and chainsaws threatened remnant stands that had until then been protected by their isolation and, in the late 1960s, logging was proceeding upstream from the Denison Gorge. Truchanas, determined that an area of Huon pine should be protected from this final assault, began to campaign for the reservation of a Huon pine stand that had been found by a group of prospectors in 1928 and documented by one of the party, Hadmar Sticht.105

In November 1968, Truchanas wrote to the Australian Conservation Foundation outlining his case for the reserve, saying, ‘the pine stand on the Denison River has been the only such Huon pine forest in existence. I doubt that even before the pining began, around 1830, has there been a forest of almost exclusively Huon pines growing in a forest of their own, like they did on the Denison’.106 Almost a year later, in September 1969, Truchanas addressed a meeting of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and, as a result, Louis Shoobridge, a member of the Legislative Council and of the Trust and a grandson of Louis Manton Shoobridge who initiated the Russell Falls Reserve, arranged a meeting with the Forests Minister, Eric Beattie. Beattie agreed that, if an inspection confirmed that the Huon pine forest warranted preservation, its reservation should definitely proceed. But the Forestry Commissioner, Alex Crane, advised against the reserve, saying that pining on the Denison River should not be interrupted. Crane recommended an alternative site for
a Huon pine reserve and the Minister delegated the Commissioner to deal with any further negotiations on the matter.  

Truchanas doubted that a significant stand existed in the area proposed by Crane as a reserve and no cooperation was forthcoming from the Forestry Commission to help clarify its potential. Knowing that the HEC was carrying out helicopter investigations in the Gordon River area, Truchanas approached the Hydro Commissioner, Allan Knight, for assistance with an air survey of Crane’s proposal. Knight, who was an active member of the Scenery Board in addition to being the Hydro Commissioner, agreed, and the HEC shared costs with the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Scenery Board. The reconnaissance, undertaken by the Forestry Commission’s chief photo-interpreter, the Secretary of the Scenery Board and Truchanas, who represented both the Conservation Trust and the HEC, confirmed there were virtually no Huon pines on the site Crane had recommended. Accompanied by second HEC employee, Brian Collin, Truchanas embarked on another helicopter expedition to locate the Huon pine forest described by Sticht. The forest they found was nearly all Huon pine, up to 140 feet high (42.67 meters) and 1,000 years old, stretching over half a mile along the western bank of the Denison River, and 300-400 yards (275-366 meters) in depth. Having mapped out a reserve to include the grove of trees and a buffer, the two men ‘unhesitatingly’ recommended that the area be set aside as a scenic reserve. National park status was considered but Truchanas believed that taking the matter to the Scenery Preservation Board’s meeting of 27 February 1970 would be the quickest method of saving the trees. With logging crews active in the area, chainsaws could possibly settle the issue before the case for a national park was made. The reserve was gazetted on 5 August 1970, approximately 1,000 acres (405 hectares) then known as the Denison River Huon Pine Reserve. The reserve, which was subsequently protected within the Wild Rivers National Park and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, was re-named the Truchanas Huon Pine Forest in 1990 as a tribute to Olegas Truchanas who died at the Gordon River in 1972.

Cooperation between the HEC and conservation organisations over the pine reserve at a time when the two interest groups were engaged in intense public conflict over Lake Pedder illustrated some the complexities of the development versus
conservation debate. Truchanas was a conservationist who was employed by the HEC. Knight, who was head of the HEC, also had conservation sympathies and, as a member of the Scenery Board, not only supported protection of heritage buildings but also advocated for a number of nature reserves. Both men agreed with aspects of conservation and development, not in identical ways but, in the case of the Denison Pine Reserve where the HEC’s interests were not directly threatened, in ways that made cooperation between the HEC and conservation organisations possible even in the midst of conflict.

A New Parks Service emerges from the Lake Pedder conflict

The Scenery Board initially participated in the process of reforming its governing legislation. The Scenery Preservation Act was revised in the form of the Scenery Preservation Bill of 11 October 1966, which members saw as a step forward and they welcomed the additional administrative resources that it foreshadowed. Changes contemplated by the Bill included the appointment of a Director of National Parks and other employees on the basis of recommendations from the Board, election of a chair by members of the Board, substitution of Board members who represented government departments and widening of the Board's functions. Conservationists’ agitation about the Scenery Board however, brought to a head by the Board’s failure to fight for Lake Pedder and a sizable South-West National Park, overtook the intended process of legislative change. By 1970 members of the Scenery Board were no longer being consulted in the drafting of the National Parks and Wildlife Bill as the Board became marginalised in the restructuring process.

Tasmanian voters went to the polls in 1969 and the Labor Party lost office partly as a result of the Lake Pedder controversy and the issues it had raised. The two major political parties presented hydro power as a priority in their election platforms, both because of its role in the State's economy and because they knew that a prospect of power rationing, such as that imposed following drought in 1967, would not be popular with the electorate. And both parties promised to introduce new arrangements for managing national parks. The Liberal policy promised to support current and future power developments, though it also addressed some conservation concerns. In the Liberal Party policy speech the party leader, Angus Bethune,
responded to the electorate's growing environmental awareness and public concern about the absence of comprehensive advice to government on conservation matters. He promised air pollution legislation as well as the establishment of a National Parks and Wildlife Service to manage national parks, scenic and historic reserves, fauna reserves and sanctuaries, wildlife and game. An Advisory Board comprising representatives of community groups concerned with conservation would, he said, support the National Parks and Wildlife Service.\textsuperscript{113}

The State Labor Party's election platform failed to respond to community pressure for more sophisticated environmental management. In contrast to the Liberal Party’s promise of an independent National Parks and Wildlife Service, Labor planned to make reserves subservient to tourism in its government’s administrative structure. Reece promised to establish a new tourism ministry that would incorporate national parks, the Scenery Preservation Board and the Animals and Birds Protection Board.

The Director General [of Tourist Services], subject to the direction of the Minister, will not only assume administrative control of the existing activities of the Tourist and Immigration Department but also will be the authority to embrace a number of other sport activities which are related to tourism. These include the Publicity Section, the State Publicity Officer, the Government Film Unit, the Scenery Preservation Board, National Park, Animals and Birds Protection, the National Trust, Botanical Gardens, Museums, Art Galleries and Inland Fisheries. The supervision of the Minister and the Director-General in relation to such activities will be exercised subject to existing powers and duties of Boards and Trustees, where applicable.\textsuperscript{114}

The Liberal and Labor Parties each won seventeen seats and the election outcome was determined by the Centre Party’s Kevin Lyons, who was personally committed to park management reform\textsuperscript{115}, aligning with the Liberal parliamentarians. Though the outcome of the 1969 election did not save Lake Pedder, it did lead to changes for the State's national parks system as the new government moved quickly on the drafting of legislation for a National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Parliament passed the National Parks and Wildlife Service Bill in 1970 although it was not promulgated, and the new authority did not commence operations, until 1 November 1971.\textsuperscript{116} After the legislation was passed applications were called for the position of Director. Peter Murrell, whose qualifications included a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Forestry and who, in addition to having forestry experience, had held the position of Chief Operations Officer with the National Parks and
Wildlife Service of New South Wales for five years, was appointed and assumed the position in June 1971. Murrell was regarded as a competent, dedicated and personable manager with an outgoing personality and a sometimes fiery temperament.117 His duties under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970 included,

Responsibility for use and development of land for conservation purposes and the preparation of management plans for same, the carrying out of research and other activities relating to the conservation of flora and fauna, the promotion of educational facilities and enforcement of regulations under the Act.118

The final meetings of the Scenery Preservation and Animals and Birds Protection Boards took place on 25 and 26 October 1971. At the Scenery Board’s meeting, tribute was paid to past Chairmen who were commended for having achieved a great deal on shoestring budgets since the Board's inception in 1915. Referring to the Board's demise it was said that, 'there was no shame involved in the transfer to the National Parks and Wildlife Department, as this was an indication of the growth in the importance of conservation and the need to replace a part-time service with a full-time expert administration'.119 The Fauna Board’s final meeting was a full-day affair. Reflecting on that Board's achievements it was noted that the number of sanctuaries had risen from 17 at the Board's inception to 61 and that the Board had developed into a scientifically-based wildlife service successfully incorporating research, land holding and game control functions. Though members of the Fauna Board did not deny disappointment at that body’s demise they recognised that change was necessary - the Fauna Board’s activities had grown to a point at which it could no longer manage successfully within existing levels of staff and resources.120

The end of the Scenery Preservation and the Animals and Birds Protection Boards meant the end of an era when part-time committees were responsible for the selection and management of national parks and reserves. The formation of the National Parks and Wildlife Service meant more staff, a new position within government administration, a new outlook, updated legislation and more funds - reflecting government recognition of the significance of national parks and reserves’ conservation role to a vocal, if not sizable, section of the electorate.

Tasmania’s National Parks Movement shifts from ‘conservationist’ to ‘environmentalist’
The dispute over Lake Pedder's fate took place at a time when the dominant view held by members of Tasmania’s conservation movement was changing. It was shifting from a utilitarian 'wise use' approach that had previously lent support to activities such as timber getting within national parks to a more ecological and preservationist environmental view.

The Flora and Fauna Conservation Committee was conspicuous during the 1960s as a voice for public interest in national park matters, until its role as an ‘umbrella’ conservation organisation was assumed by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust which formed in 1968. Bushwalking clubs provided a significant component of the Flora and Fauna Conservation Committee’s membership and support base. Not all the members of bushwalking clubs were, however, environmentalists. They were not necessarily concerned about the maintenance of ecological sustainability or the preservation of wilderness areas—and did not necessarily challenge the right of the HEC, forestry or mining interests to encroach on unspoilt areas so long as some areas remained where they could pursue their interest in bushwalking.121

Like the Bushwalking clubs, members of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Association held a range of utilitarian and environmental values. While the Association was active in pushing for extensions to the reserve system, often specifically for purposes of fauna and flora preservation, the achievement of ecological benchmarks in nature conservation was not, at that time, a primary goal for the Association’s members. There was concern about fauna and flora preservation that was reflected in the Association’s advocacy for sanctuaries and reserves but members of field naturalists associations also promoted the development of visitor facilities in national parks despite the environmental impact of visitation. For example, in 1966 the Federation of Field Naturalists Clubs of Tasmania issued a press statement calling for more money to be spent on developing visitor facilities such as tracks and huts in Tasmania’s national parks and reserves because, the Federation said, if it were not, tourists would choose to visit better run parks in other States and in New Zealand. And, the Federation warned, if plans to flood Lake Pedder were to proceed then not only would the lake and surrounding area be spoiled, but the only airstrip in the middle south-west for visiting tourists would be destroyed.122
The Tasmanian national parks movement did not, in this period, confront the developmental ethos, and the State governments which supported it, with a clearly articulated environmental challenge. That challenge was growing, as is evidenced by the push by some Tasmanian conservationists, and Geoff Mosley, for a new professional national parks and wildlife service that would undertake research and planning aimed at achieving an ecologically representative reserve system. But the Tasmanian conservation movement had not then developed into a self-aware environmental movement with goals that stood in clear opposition to those of the capitalist developmental ethos. Hutton and Connors describe the conservation movement at this time by citing Judith Wright, a noted NSW conservationist and author who wrote, ‘there was caution, temporising, playing for advantage, and attempts to come to terms with, rather than face, opponents whose enormous power discouraged many’.123 This description fitted the Tasmanian conservation movement in the 1960s.

**Conclusion**

The Tasmanian conservation movement of the 1960s spoke out in favor of preserving Lake Pedder, it criticised the national parks service for its failure to protect parks’ conservation values and, by successfully ‘playing for advantage’ it achieved legislative change and a new National Parks and Wildlife Service. An environmental national parks movement was emerging but, before environmentalism assumed a dominant position, internal tensions between the interests of ‘wise use’ conservationists and those of environmentalists, which were less suited to compromise with the developmental ethos, had to be confronted.

While politics of compromise with industry demands determined national park boundaries the ability of the national park system to protect wilderness values was limited. Bob Brown described wilderness as a large tract of natural country;

> It is a region of original Earth where one stands with the senses entirely steeped in nature, or, alternatively, where one experiences a complete sensory deprivation of modern technology … there is no room whatever in wilderness for roads, quarries, buildings or machines.124
The future of south-west Tasmania as a wilderness area depended on it being proclaimed a reserve of at least national park status but, for this to eventuate, Tasmania’s emerging environmental and wilderness-oriented national parks movement faced formidable political opposition.
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2 ibid., p.67.
3 ibid., p.71.
4 V. Plumwood, Human Sciences Program, ANU, 'Australian Forest Services as Captured Bureaucracies', undated, unpublished paper.
5 K. Frawley, 'Evolving visions', 1994, p.71
7 ibid., p.89.
8 ibid.
9 ibid, p.90.
10 ibid, p.91.
11 ibid, p.8.
16 ibid, p. 61.
17 ibid, p. 59.
18 ibid, p. 69.
20 ibid., p.156.
22 Scenery Preservation Act 1915
27 ibid, p.9.
28 ibid, p.60.
29 ibid, p.61.
30 Maria Island is a small island a little over 19km (12 miles) long and almost 13 km (8 miles) wide at its widest part which can be reached by a short ferry trip from Triabunna on Tasmania’s East Coast.
31 ibid, p.61.
32 ibid.
35 ibid, p.65.
36 ibid.
40 ibid.
42 *Mercury* 16 September 1971.
45 ibid.
46 Correspondence, J. Hemsley to G. Mosley, 4 June 1971.
48 ibid, p.52.
49 Animals and Birds Protection Board, Minutes of Meetings, 14 March 1933.
50 Animals and Birds Protection Board, Minutes, 11 March 1959.
52 ibid.
53 ibid, p.56.
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64 ibid, 5 July 1963.
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M. Angus The World of Olegas Truchanas, 1975, p. 43.

Correspondence, Olegas Truchanas to Australian Conservation Foundation, 5 Feb 1970.


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PART 3
National Park Gains Lead to Conflict

Chapter 7
National Park Expansion during the 1970s

Tasmania’s new National Parks and Wildlife Service acted as a strong advocate for national parks’ conservation role and for expansion of the national park estate. Like the Scenery Board, the Parks Service was required to negotiate new reserve proposals with competing interests, notably the timber and mining industries and the HEC. If one of these interests objected to a new park proposal then opposition that would defeat the proposal could be expected within cabinet. During the 1970s the Parks Service negotiated successfully with competing interests, including local councils, to achieve significant expansion of the State’s national park system. The Parks Service’s position as an independent government agency that led Tasmanian national park policy and expansion through compromise and negotiation changed however in the 1980s as a result of political controversy over the HEC’s Franklin Dam proposal, the rise of the wilderness lobby and the Commonwealth Government’s intervention to successfully end the Tasmanian government’s political arrangements that kept national park expansion subservient to industry demands.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service began as a small government department, though staff numbers grew rapidly while the expanding agency increased the size and representativeness of the State’s reserve system and developed the State’s reserve management policies and practice to contemporary standards. The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970 stressed the Parks Service’s responsibilities relating to the establishment and management of national parks and other reserves, and the conservation and protection of the State’s flora and fauna. Consequently, the Service’s goals reflected the interests of the emerging environment movement, which came to dominate the State’s national parks movement at that time, and this facilitated a constructive relationship between the two.
The Parks Service’s conservation interests conflicted at times with those of industry, private developers and local governments but the Service’s Director, sometimes with the active support of the relevant State government Minister, negotiated those conflicts. The Parks Service was not, during its early years, at the centre of any major controversy involving a conflict of interest between nature conservation, powerful industry interests and the State government. Bethune’s Liberal government, which had established the new legislation applying to national parks and wildlife, remained in power for only three years. Eric Reece’s Labor government was returned to power in May 1972 and, in March 1975, William (Bill) Neilson assumed the Party leadership. Neilson’s leadership style tended towards non-combatitive problem solving. His Deputy, Doug Lowe, described him as having constructively weighed up alternate points of view on the Lake Pedder issue without intolerantly rejecting any of them as some of his Party colleagues had done. Following Neilson’s retirement from State parliament, Lowe led the Party until late 1981 when he resigned as the result of a protracted rift within the Party over the Franklin River controversy. During these years the Parks Service came under a succession of Ministers with shifting portfolio responsibilities - Agriculture, Tourism, then Education - until in 1977 it was placed under Michael Polley as Minister for National Parks and Wildlife. Lowe has written that Polley developed an affinity with the Parks Service’s Director Peter Murrell, which assisted the work of the Parks Service during the late 1970s. An absence of strong opposition to the Parks Service’s conservation goals, individual parliamentarians’ support for national parks, and the Parks Service’s commitment to its purpose of conserving the State’s flora and fauna resulted in the 1970s being a period of reserve expansion in Tasmania and progressive development of the State’s system of reserve management.

In establishing the new department in November 1971 the Parks Service absorbed the employees of both the Scenery and Fauna Boards and, to associate the new agency with an identifiable public image, staff chose a rangers’ uniform and an emblem featuring the Tasmanian Devil. With 55 members of staff, new accommodation had to be found. Initially about twenty staff worked in the Scenery Preservation Board’s ‘delightful’ but cramped headquarters at 161 Davey Street, while non-administration wildlife staff remained at the Animal and Birds Protection...
Board’s headquarters in Bathurst Street. In recognition of ‘the necessity to provide modern functional accommodation’, the government approved new office space at Magnet Court, Sandy Bay, to which all office based staff moved in 1972, bringing everybody together under one roof. Though the new office was functional, the employee who described it as ‘a cold soulless open plan concrete block building with no character’ was probably not alone in his assessment of the office’s architectural charm.

But people have a stronger influence on a working environment than does a building, and the early years of the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service were very positive. Peter Murrell was a good ‘people person’, a good leader and a pugnacious man, with a personality that galvanized a team which included a number of very committed, energetic and capable staff. The Scenery Board had been under-resourced with trained staff, so the new agency had to recruit. Because Tasmania did not offer the range of training opportunities in natural resource management that was available in other states, some staff were recruited from ‘the mainland’. The Parks Service’s early years saw a rapid increase in staff - between November 1971 and November 1973 the number of positions increased from 55 to 94. Many of the original staff were still with the service when it moved into the twenty first century, reflecting a high degree of commitment to the Parks Service and its goals.

The Parks Service was, however, never without some tensions.

To imply that life at work in those early days was a bed of roses would be wrong. It was a hectic time of rapid change, and the people both existing and recruited following formation of the Service were a mixed bunch from varying backgrounds. It was, I suppose, inevitable that clashes of personality and professional opinion would occur, human ego being what it is. … The three camps of Professional and Scientific staff, Clerical staff and Field staff rarely saw eye to eye, with varying forms of bureaucratic bull shit being the main form of discontent.

Tensions between field office staff and head office staff, which became more evident once group identification emerged from increased staff numbers, were aired in the STAFF BULLETIN. This was an ‘in house’ newsletter with a gossip column, ‘Devils’ Droppings’, articles about park histories, news and staff issues. The following extract from an article submitted by ‘The Night-watchman’ from Mt Field gives an insight into tensions between field and head-office staff.
A typical weekend at Mt. Field begins when most H.O. types are thinking of how best to spend a relaxing weekend, Friday tea-time. Visitors, or in the winter, skiers, begin to arrive seeking keys, information of roads, tracks etc. This continues until about 11pm. And we accept it as part of the privilege of being a Ranger though we would not knock back any pay for this work. During the next hour the unsuspecting type might hop into bed and be far away in the land of nod, as ten of fifteen cars roar over the bridge and into the Park, to enjoy a night drinking, disturbing the inhabitants, both human and animal, burning firewood (which recently when the money ran out was taking all the time free from clean up work to provide) and later if unchecked throwing it into the river. 12

Nevertheless, these tensions remained in-house as the Parks Service developed as an effective conservation land-use agency with a reputation for engendering high staff morale.

The new Parks Service expands national parks and reserves

The Parks Service assumed responsibility for managing State Reserves, including national parks, covering 6.22% of Tasmania’s land surface. Tasmania had a higher proportion of its land area in this type of reserve than did any other State. Conservation Areas, formerly Fauna Sanctuaries, amounted to a further 8.53%, making the Parks Service responsible for approximately 14.75% of the State’s land surface. Fauna Sanctuaries, which included some private land, were subject to weaker controls than were State Reserves - wildlife within the sanctuaries was protected but its habitat was not - so upgrading the status of important sanctuaries was one of the Parks Service’s early priorities.

Macquarie Island and Maria Island were both granted the status of Conservation Area in 1971 on the proclamation of the National Parks and Wildlife Act. In order that Maria Island be given maximum possible protection it was, on 14 June 1972, proclaimed a State Reserve known as Maria Island National Park. 13 Macquarie Island was also upgraded to a State Reserve in 1972 and, in 1978, was renamed Macquarie Island Nature Reserve. 14

Conservation organisations continued their interest in reservation of land in the Mt William area, and the Parks Service assumed the Fauna Board’s interest in the project. Complaints of an alleged conspiracy associated with the British Tobacco Company’s plans to develop and sub-divide land in the area, near Gladstone, led to a court inquiry in 1971. The inquiry revealed an absence of written documentation
giving effect to the agreement, breaches of the Crown Lands Act and on-going breaches of law in connection with the project.\textsuperscript{15} The case was dismissed because of insufficient evidence but ill-feeling over the issue of corruption under the earlier Labor government possibly influenced the Bethune Government to support the Parks Service’s interest in resuming 6,880 hectares from the British Tobacco Company’s allocation. In addition the Parks Service sought 3,290 hectares of leased land between Ansons Bay and the British Tobacco Company lease.\textsuperscript{16} Some of the proposed reserve lay within the timber concession licensed to Tasmanian Pulp and Forest Holdings and the Commissioner of Forests protested the extension of the reserve boundary south of the 41° parallel. He reminded Murrell that, ‘on relinquishing their rights to a portion of the Pulpwood Area, to permit the bringing down of the North East Land Development Act 1972, Tasmanian Pulp and Forest Holdings Ltd were given a firm assurance that no further revocations from their Concession would be entertained’.\textsuperscript{17} Consequently the boundary of the 8,640 hectare Mt William National Park, declared on 3 October 1973, extended only as far as the 41° parallel, excluding the section of Tasmanian Pulp and Forest Holding concession. After examining the contested area, however, the Forestry Commission and the company acknowledged its timber value to be marginal and the land in question was subsequently excised from the company’s licence.\textsuperscript{18}

Initially, Mt William National Park excluded Mt William, and the Field Naturalists Club suggested the reserve be re-named ‘Cape Naturaliste National Park’.\textsuperscript{19} The Service successfully sought extensions to the reserve and Mt William was eventually included. Other additions followed, including neighboring private land, in 1974 and 1980, and blocks of government owned land to the south of the park, in 1977 and 1986.\textsuperscript{20}

There was disappointment in some quarters about the reserve. Hunters and duck shooters with shacks at Musselroe Bay were disappointed to realise that the reserve had been proclaimed for all fauna.\textsuperscript{21} There is a note of sadness in a letter written to the Director of the Parks Service by one of these men who offered his shack for sale because, he wrote, he built it for shooting and fishing in the company of his dog, which he could no longer do.\textsuperscript{22} The Portland Council expressed concern about the alienation of rateable rural land to which Peter Murrell responded, displaying his
ability as a political lobbyist by pointing out that some of the reserve had previously been non-rateable timber concession, that the increased number of tourists visiting the reserve would far outweigh the “loss” of 3,211 hectares from British Tobacco, and that ‘the Council’s view of the purchase is obviously very narrow if it cannot see intrinsic value in the conservation of the only species of Tasmanian kangaroo’.

By June 1986 a national park with a total area of 13,805 hectares had been created, encompassing Mt William and the 5,200 hectare Eddystone Lighthouse Reserve. While the reserve offers scenic coastline, some popular short walks and historic buildings, Mt William was probably the first sizeable reserve in Tasmania to be established first and foremost for conservation purposes, not because of scenery-based tourism potential.

Mt William was not the only addition to the reserve system during the 1973-74 financial year. A 3,200 hectare Cape Pillar State Reserve was proclaimed, Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park was extended by 1,214 hectares (the Mt Rufus extension) and the Gordon River Scenic Reserve was extended by 1,342 hectares. Also, land was purchased to expand the Lavinia and Logan’s Lagoon Conservation areas, for a State Reserve at Pegarah on King Island and as a basis for the proposed Asbestos Range National Park. These acquisitions were assisted by the Commonwealth government’s provision of funds from its newly established National Estate Programme.

**The Commonwealth Government assists reserve acquisition**

During the 1970s the Commonwealth Government became involved in national heritage conservation, an involvement which assisted the states in financing their conservation responsibilities but also impinged on what had previously been a solely State jurisdiction. The Parks Service’s Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 1974 was optimistic about the potential for expanding the reserve system because, with the appointment of an Investigations Officer, the Service had improved capacity to investigate reserve proposals, and the Commonwealth Government’s provision of funds for land acquisition that followed the National Estate Inquiry promised more opportunity to obtain land for reserves.
Labor led by Gough Whitlam won the 1972 federal election with a strong reform agenda including an emphasis on government intervention to secure social justice and to promote economic development. Roger Green recalls the optimism of Tasmanian conservationists who were, at the time, fighting to save Lake Pedder against the State government’s and HEC’s united opposition, a political battle in which the new Parks Service did not become openly involved:

In 1972 there was the starting of some sort of nationhood for Australia, some kind of pride. Lake Pedder was very much part of it. It was recognizing the Australian landscape. It was at the forefront of this awareness of the value of the landscape in Australia. 1972 was that fantastic time prior to the election of the Whitlam Government. There was a terrific feeling of hope. Clearly we weren’t going to get anywhere at the State government level.

Prior to the 1972 election Whitlam, then leader of the Opposition, had proclaimed that, ‘the Australian government should see itself as the curator and not the liquidator of the National Estate’. Soon after Labor assumed office Whitlam commissioned an Inquiry, led by Mr Justice Hope, which aimed to define the ‘national estate’, survey the extent and condition of the nation’s ‘heritage’, and specify methods of fostering its ‘conservation and presentation’. The Inquiry duly recommended the establishment of an Australian Heritage Commission which would have the role of researching, listing, funding, maintaining a register of ‘significant’ items and general oversight of matters relating to the National Estate including education programs and the enactment of protective legislation. John Mulvaney wrote that,

Probably no country has surveyed and evaluated its total heritage resources as comprehensively as that attempted during 1973-74, when both the natural and the built environments, together with Aboriginal places, were included within the definition of the National Estate. This attempt surely constitutes a benchmark in the developing cultural maturity of the nation …

The Australian Heritage Commission Act became law in June 1975. It defined the National Estate as ‘those places, being components of the natural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations as well as for the present community’. The National Estate Grants Programme was established as a means of financing efforts to protect aspects of the National Estate.
Greg Middleton, who was appointed the National Parks and Wildlife Service’s Investigations Officer in 1973, remembers the National Estate Programme as making a ‘fantastic’ difference to the parks service. Previously, the environment had been a State issue but now there was a formal avenue for Commonwealth Government interest in conserving aspects of national heritage, including the protection of natural areas. With a few exceptions, conservation initiatives had, for many years, received little support from State governments, either Labor or Liberal. The acknowledgement and support of heritage values represented by the Register of the National Estate was welcomed and the Parks Service proceeded to nominate Tasmanian reserves for the Register.33

One of the early acquisitions made possible by the National Estate Grants Programme was that of Partridge Island, a 103 hectare island situated in D’Entrecasteaux Channel close to the south coast of Bruny Island. Partridge Island was compulsorily acquired with a National Estate grant and the active support of the Parks Service’s Minister, Neil Batt, following an acrimonious public debate about the island’s future. The island’s owner, Dr Ham, and his supporters wanted the island cleared and developed as a private reserve. The Parks Service and its supporters believed, however, that the island should become a public reserve administratively attached to the South Bruny Reserve.34

The compulsory acquisition of Partridge Island was soon followed by another compulsory acquisition that involved a conflict between the Parks Service and interests relating to the retention and development of private land. This time the battle ground was in the North of the State, at Asbestos Range. The Asbestos Range area, which embraced one of the few significant stretches of undeveloped coastline along the central part of the State’s northern coast, was surveyed by the Fauna Board as a possible reservation for conservation purposes in 1970.35 A general reference to the need for a park in the area was made in the Tasmanian Regional Master Planning Authority’s Online Development Plan of 1971 and, in 1972, conservation groups approached the Parks Service advocating a bird sanctuary and regional park in the vicinity of Asbestos Range - Port Sorell Estuary and surrounding shores.36 Subsequently a wide range of interest groups - the Conservation Trust (Northern Branch) with co-operation from the Tamar Regional Master Planning Authority,
Lands Department, Beaconsfield Council, Beaconsfield Rotary Club, Launceston Walking Club, Launceston Field Naturalists Club, Devonport Field Naturalists Club and the Royal Society of Tasmania - submitted a formal proposal recommending a multi-purpose regional park in the Asbestos Range area extending from Port Sorell to West Head on the Tamar to York Town on West Arm and inland to the Dazzler Range Fire Tower.\(^{37}\)

The submission pointed out that,

\[\text{… the Asbestos Range is one of the few relatively undeveloped areas left in Northern Tasmania, and presents an excellent opportunity to establish a Park containing such a wide variety of features: - beaches, cliffs, coastal plains, to natural bush on the surrounding hills.}\(^{38}\)

The Town and Country Planning Commissioner refused permission to the Sydney-based Company, Denison Corporation of Australia, for sub-division of the property ‘Springlawn’ behind Bakers Beach, in 1971. The Commissioner, Noel Lyneham, personally supported preservation of the area as a natural landscape and he believed the area should be acquired as a national park in order to protect its ‘rural value’.\(^{39}\) Lyneham consistently refused subdivision approval but feared he would eventually have to give approval unless the area was made a reserve, and he pressed Murrell for a decision on its acquisition.\(^{40}\) The Parks Service had to find money, which was provided by an exceptionally large grant of $141,500 from the National Estate Grants Program, with the addition of $30,000 from the Parks Service’s resources. After difficult negotiations with the landowner, the 2,585 hectare farming property ‘Springlawn’ was compulsorily acquired as a basis for a National Park, an acquisition that was ‘universally applauded’ with the exception of some bike and horse riders who had previously had access to the area.\(^{41}\)

The purchase of ‘Springlawn’ exhausted funds available to the Parks Service. Freehold land to the east, including frontage onto Badger Beach and West Head, was bought by a developer and in April 1974 the Tamar Regional Master Planning Authority alerted the Parks Service to the fact that West Head had been sold and could be subject to ‘development contrary to retention of the area in its natural condition’.\(^{42}\) Having previously identified the area as a potentially valuable addition to the reserve\(^{43}\) the Parks Service sought to acquire it, compulsorily if necessary.
While awaiting confirmation of funds from the (Commonwealth) Department of Environment and Conservation, Peter Murrell sought the Minister’s approval for Notice to Treat to be served on the landowner, Mr Small, who was proceeding to clear the land. The Parks Service also sought the assistance of Beaconsfield Council through refusing any further sub-division applications for West Head/Greens Beach, and selling the block of land it had acquired at Badger Head for addition to the national park.

Beaconsfield Council, which had initially supported the creation of a reserve in the region, objected to the proposed western extension. The Council did not wish to lose a block of land it had acquired at Badger Head or to end the option of a wharf being constructed on the eastern side of West Head with a pipeline connecting an off shore discharge point to a proposed refinery and, possibly most significantly, it wanted the Greens Beach settlement to expand westward to allow for greater cost efficiency in the provision of services and amenities. In view of the strength of the Council’s objection the Parks Service was prepared to compromise on the Greens Beach boundary, given there was no further development along the waterfront and that, if this was achieved, the rest of the proposal would be accepted.

Landowners fought the proposed acquisitions. At a meeting convened by the Beaconsfield Council in June 1975, 50 landowners passed a unanimous resolution opposing acquisition except in the Sandhills and West Head areas. The Council Warden said that Council did not oppose a national park, but that it did oppose the acquisition of private land at Badger Head and Greens Beach. Mr Small, whose 400 hectares had been acquired, said he was concerned about the large area of land that was being purchased and that, ‘there must be a distinction between what is wanted for conservation and what is required’. Some residents of Badger Head said they had no objections to the area being declared a national park so long as there were guarantees given to freehold owners, such as no restrictions on their property rights, their access to areas of the park and, especially as many were keen horse riders, their right to keep pets. Following the meeting organized by the Beaconsfield Council a petition with 700 signatures was forwarded to the Minister from landowners opposing the park being established between Greens Beach and Badger Head. Like Mr Cunningham who wrote to Murrell about selling his shack at Mt William, these
residents fought to preserve not only their property rights but also aspects of a lifestyle associated with the land that they enjoyed but would end when the land became subject to provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Peter Murrell urged the Minister, Neil Batt, that, with the exception of a compromise on the Council’s wish to adjust the proposed park boundary to allow some expansion of the Greens Beach settlement further west, the objections not be upheld because;

The park as proposed contains an invaluable sample of north coast vegetation and habitat types. The only other State Reserve on the north coast of Tasmania, Rocky Cape, is small and entirely different in character.

The situation has probably been reached in this part of the State that all that we reserve in the next couple of years is all that will ever be reserved. For diversity of values (recreational, scenic, natural, educational) and ease of access from main centres in the north, the West Head – Port Sorell area is unsurpassed. This is the most significant reserve Tasmania is ever likely to have on its north coast.

The viability of the park - its ability to retain its natural conditions and withstand human usage – is to some extent dependent on its size and the suitability of its boundaries to limit the extent of external injurious agencies.
Beaconsfield Council appears not to have taken these factors into consideration in raising the above objections to the proposal. 52

The government supported Murrell and the Parks Service, and compulsory land acquisitions proceeded, including that section of Bel Respiro’s property between West head and Badger Head which the company fought a rearguard action to retain for the purpose of sand mining. 53 Beaconsfield Council’s block at Badger Head was eventually purchased and, despite timber interests expressing concern about the number of areas in the State that the Parks Service wanted excised from timber concessions, the industry agreed to relinquish some areas set aside for its use for addition to the reserve. 54

The first section of Asbestos Range National Park, 3,330 hectares, was proclaimed on 7 July 1976, and the Badgers Beach area, which extended the park eastward toward West Head, was added later, in 1978. The Parks Service’s interest in reserving this area of coast prevailed over the interests of local landowners, developers and the Municipal Council, and it gained the support of timber interests that initially resisted relinquishing land for the purpose of a national park. This result reflected the commitment of Parks Service Staff to achieving conservation outcomes, sufficient support for national parks within the State parliament for conservation
goals to compete successfully against parochial interests, and a degree of cooperation between the Parks Service and other government agencies, notably the Forestry Commission and Public Land Use Commission. Though it met resistance from some local residents, the Asbestos Range National Park was a peoples’ park. It provided opportunities for visitors to enjoy a partially altered but aesthetic coastal environment, coastal flora, fauna and beaches, in addition to the reserve’s role in conserving a section of coastal habitat.

Another significant reserve proposal that the National Parks and Wildlife Service pursued during its first decade involved the Walls of Jerusalem, an area in the western section of the State’s Central Plateau that had been frequented mostly by shepherds and possum snarers prior to its popularity as a bushwalking destination. On this occasion the service did not have to rely on National Estate funding or to fight a protracted battle against organised opposition to the reserve proposal.

‘The Walls’ popularity with bushwalkers grew after Reg Hall, a Launceston solicitor and member of the Launceston Bushwalking Club following its formation in 1946, visited the area in 1928. Hall promoted the area’s beauty and submitted biblical names for its features to the nomenclature Board. In 1962 the Launceston Walking Club recommended reservation of the area to the Scenery Board but the matter lay in abeyance after the HEC advised the Board it was proposing that the Central Plateau be made a water storage reserve.

The advent of mass transport increased the number of visitors to the Plateau and this increase, combined with a growing concern about the possible environmental impact of activities such as cattle grazing, led to studies of the Plateau’s environment and discussion about appropriate conservation measures. The Lands Department published a Management Plan for the Central Plateau in 1977. The Central Plateau Conservation Area was proclaimed in the following year, followed by the declaration of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park in 1981. Though some residents of surrounding areas challenged the decision to end traditional land uses such as grazing, snaring and horse-riding within the reserve, from the perspective of the Parks Service and the State’s environment movement it provided a measure of environmental protection for an outstandingly beautiful part of the State.
The amount of land in national parks and reserves subject to the National Parks and Wildlife Act increased significantly during the 1970s and early 1980s. The Parks Service was initially responsible for the control, planning, development and management of around 425,125 hectares of land in State Reserves (including National Parks), 514,450 hectares of Conservation Areas, and the maintenance of around 200 buildings. By 1987 the amount of land under the Parks Service’s jurisdiction had virtually doubled to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Reserves</td>
<td>902,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Parks</td>
<td>851,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Sites</td>
<td>793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Sites</td>
<td>1,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game Reserves</td>
<td>2,779</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Particularly in the case of State Reserves, this increase resulted primarily from the Parks Service’s focus on increasing the size and representativeness of the reserve system, combined with the personal dedication of many of the Parks Service’s officers. The Parks Services’ efforts were backed by an environmental movement that supported its goals and priorities, assisted by some sympathetic parliamentarians and the absence of any major conflicts between the interests of the State government and the Parks Service.

**The Parks Service confronts limits to growth**

As the land area in national parks and reserves expanded during the Parks Service’s early years, staff numbers also increased. By 1979 the number of employees had increased from 55 to 199 (including part-time and temporary staff and trainees), plus two National Estate and two South-West Resources Survey workers. 59 In 1979, however, the Lowe Labor Government instigated a ‘zero growth’ policy for the public sector. In 1980 the Parks Service reported a decrease in staff numbers and from this time it had to work more with less money and fewer staff.

By 1981 the Parks Service was also responding to the State government’s ‘user pays’ policies that required it to generate revenue by charging entrance fees to national parks. With or without entrance fees, national parks make an indirect contribution to the State’s income through tourism;
Nevertheless, national parks supporters as well as their detractors perceived them as being ‘on the back foot’ in terms of revenue raising.61 Unlike the forestry and mining industries, the Parks Service was unable to demonstrate significant direct moneymaking capacity and some personnel believed that, if national parks generated a direct contribution to consolidated revenue, the Parks Service would have a stronger basis from which to argue for increased government funding.62

There was some public opposition to the introduction of national park user fees, stemming from a belief that national parks are public parks and should be open to the public free of charge. Towards the end of the 1970s, however, the government’s adoption of a ‘user pays’ policy created support for, and pressure on, the Parks Service to institute a system for collecting entrance fees from visitors to some parks regardless of the public’s views. During 1980-81, the Parks Service introduced fees for the South-West National Park and Mt Field: $12.00 yearly for all parks; $10.00 yearly for a specific park, or $2.00 each visit for a specific park. In the following year it extended fee collection to Ben Lomond, Cradle Mt-Lake St Clair, Freycinet, Maria Island and the Hastings Thermal Pool. The Parks Service tempered public reaction to the ‘generally unpalatable fees’63 by appointing a Public Relations Officer and, over time, the fees have become an established, if not fully accepted, aspect of park visitation.

**Wildlife management is incorporated with parks management**

Prior to its amalgamation with the Scenery Board the work of the Fauna Board extended to wildlife management throughout the State, including but not restricted to the sanctuaries under its control. Following its incorporation in the new National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1971 this work continued. The close association between wildlife research and national park management within the new structure facilitated scientifically informed environmental management of national parks and reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The new association between the State’s reserve management and wildlife functions also encouraged an increased emphasis on researching and understanding animal habitats – including the distribution and characteristics of vegetation types - within national parks and protected areas, and throughout the State. Like the work of the park management
section of the new agency, aspects of the wildlife section’s work were political and involved negotiation with opposing interests but these conflicts of interest were mostly successfully negotiated.

New reserves declared during the 1970s, notably Mt William, Maria Island and Macquarie Island, greatly increased the land area secured as wildlife habitat. As the number of staff and the range of expertise within the service’s wildlife section grew, the scope of projects undertaken by the Wildlife Division in the interests of protecting the State’s fauna and flora expanded. In 1972, shortly after the National Parks and Wildlife Service assumed the Fauna Board’s responsibilities, the service had ten staff dedicated to its Wildlife Division. This number increased to 22 full-time officers in 1978 although, between 1978 and 1986, the increase slowed substantially.

The activities of the Wildlife Division reflected its aims which included, but were not limited to, environmental management of national parks and reserves;

- To conserve wildlife through protection, research, management, education and enforcement.
- To permit legitimate activities of the community which involve wildlife including hunting of game species, research, nature study and aviculture.
- To provide farmers and foresters with effective ways of controlling loss and damage to crops, pastures and forests by wildlife.
- To regulate the use of wildlife and wildlife products for commercial purposes including muttonbirding, game farms, wildlife parks and the trade in fur and meat.

Among the controversial issues that the Parks Service inherited were deer hunting and wildlife parks. Deer populations increased and caused farm crop damage under the Fauna Board’s jurisdiction when just male deer were hunted. Under the Parks Service’s jurisdiction the hunting of female deer was introduced and farmers sought access to wild deer to establish deer farms. Both these developments were contentious, but the Parks Service resolved the controversy by involving land-owners and deer hunters in the development of management policies. Wildlife parks were another controversial issue because the range of conditions in which animals were kept raised concern about animals’ welfare. The Parks Service, which was responsible for issuing licenses to keep native animals, developed a policy in conjunction with the Department of Tourism which limited the number of licensed
wildlife parks, established standards of practice and aimed to protect animals’ welfare and achieve the principles of rationalisation, specialisation and viability. Though the policy reflected the interests both of wildlife protection and tourism planning, and was strongly supported by individual wildlife park operators, it was opposed by new applicants. Challenges to the policy’s compliance with the National Competition Policy, with which the State government had to comply, rendered the policy on wildlife parks ineffective as wildlife officers lost the political support necessary to keep it going.67

Like the Fauna Board that preceded it, the Wildlife Division carried out research to inform its wildlife protection and management practices. During the mid 1970s, when the woodchip industry became an issue of major concern to environmentalists, the Parks Service with financial assistance from the Commonwealth government carried out research into the effects of the woodchip industry on Tasmanian wildlife.68 Other research included ecological surveys of national parks and nature reserves, studies of Tasmanian fauna, and rare and threatened species of Tasmanian flora.69 From 1980 marine conservation also received attention, with research findings illustrating the need for Tasmania to protect its offshore marine habitats, and successive whale and dolphin strandings identified an unmet need for the development of relevant policy and legislation in which the Parks Service assumed a leading role.70

Research examining the orange-bellied parrot was an example of one of a number of research projects focusing on endangered species that were undertaken by the Wildlife Division for the purpose of facilitating species’ survival. In 1980 the Wildlife Division, with financial assistance from the World Wildlife Fund, embarked on a major research project aimed at ensuring the survival of this parrot. Regarded as one of Australia’s most endangered birds, information on the bird was scarce, old records suggesting that it bred in western Tasmania, migrating annually to winter in coastal South Australia.71 With additional financial support from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, the project ascertained an indication of numbers, the mid-winter count of July 1983 recording just 100 birds in Victoria and 26 in South Australia. The Wildlife Division produced an ‘Orange-bellied Recovery Plan’ in June 1984 with recommendations for management covering South-
Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, where degradation of habitat in the State’s south-west and north-west coasts was identified as cause for concern.72

In addition to its research programme, the Wildlife Division developed a biogeographic information system - TASFORHAB - as a database for Tasmanian wildlife research. The Division continued the Fauna Board’s responsibilities in the areas of law enforcement, notably in response to deer poaching and wallaby shooting, and provided advice on reserve management, including land and wildlife management and pest eradication programmes. Its officers responded to an increasing demand from land managers in both the private and public sectors, including farmers and government authorities such as the Department of Mines, Main Roads, Environment and Lands, and Municipal Councils, for advice on the effect of development proposals and planning schemes on wildlife values, and advice to the public on rearing orphaned wildlife.73

From its inception in 1971, the National Parks and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife Division was involved in a wide range of programmes supporting national park and reserve management, wildlife management, conservation aspects of the work of other government agencies and outside bodies, as well as individual members of the public. The Division’s research identified some detrimental effects on wildlife caused by the actions of industry and other bodies and this led to recommendations for changes to practice. During the 1970s, these conflicts of interest were mostly managed ‘in house’ and they did not develop into major political controversies that were played-out in the public arena. Like other sections of the Parks Service, the Wildlife Division was not at the centre of divisive political controversy and it was able to function effectively within the government’s administrative structure.

The Parks Service assumes responsibility for Cultural Heritage

_The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970_ did not specify that the new agency would be responsible for managing the State’s historic sites in the way the Scenery Preservation Act had implied. The new legislation emphasised responsibilities over flora and fauna preservation and, although it did not specifically exclude parks service involvement in historic sites through its reference to responsibilities relating to ‘reserved lands’, the Act’s definition of the Parks Service’s responsibility for
cultural heritage management was minimalist. Section thirteen of the Act stated that land might be set aside for purposes that included:

(d) the preservation or protection of any features thereof, or buildings contained therein, being features or buildings of historical, archaeological, scientific, or architectural interest;

(e) the preservation or protection of any aboriginal relics thereon; 74

Under these provisions the Parks Service assumed responsibility for Aboriginal reserved lands and those historic sites and buildings of relevance to the early days of European settlement that had been acquired and managed by its predecessor, the Scenery Board.

The Parks Service retained the Scenery Board’s policy of charging visitor fees for entry to historic buildings. Old buildings are notoriously expensive to maintain, and managing them to both meet costs and preserve their integrity involves a specialised area of expertise that was not specifically required of Parks Service officers under the legislation. Added to this ambiguity there was, within the Parks Service, a degree of uncertainty about the degree to which its cultural heritage officers should focus on managing and interpreting the heritage values of natural areas as opposed to heritage properties.75 As well during the 1970s and 1980s, State governments grew increasingly reluctant to retain responsibility for the financial liability represented by historic buildings under the auspices of a land conservation agency such as the Parks Service.

The heritage properties under the Parks Service’s jurisdiction represented a collection of icons that had been acquired as opportunities arose, largely on the judgment of Scenery Board personnel in the absence of policy defining the role and aim of the Board’s cultural heritage portfolio. Nevertheless, the Parks Service achieved a sharp rise in the number of visitors to historic properties in its first year. Port Arthur’s Model Prison had the highest visitation rate of the three sites at which entrance fees - and thereby visitor numbers - were collected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Visitors</th>
<th>1971-72</th>
<th>1972-73</th>
<th>percentage increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entally House</td>
<td>34,515</td>
<td>51,646</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond Old Gaol</td>
<td>33,948</td>
<td>42,965</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Prison, Port Arthur</td>
<td>53,160</td>
<td>67,202</td>
<td>26.4% 76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Parks Service recruited a full-time ranger for Port Arthur early in 1972 and, in the same year, began developing a management plan, conducted a study of visitor behavior patterns and planned visitor facilities for the site.\(^7\) Significant progress was made with building restoration and stabilisation, archaeological and historical research, and interpretation of the site. But concern about finance was ever-present. In 1976 the Parks Service’s Director, Peter Murrell, reported that reduced federal finance had a very adverse effect on the programme to restore historic buildings, particularly at Port Arthur,\(^7\) though he stressed that

> The programme for the restoration of historic buildings at places such as Port Arthur, Darlington (on Maria island) and other sites of National significance must be continued, and although these works are frequently very expensive, it is essential that funds be provided at a scale adequate to ensure the preservation of sites that are of National as well as Tasmanian importance.\(^7\)

Funding for Port Arthur’s restoration and development was boosted in 1980, however, when the Parks Service secured joint Commonwealth-State funding of $9.2 million over seven years for the Port Arthur Conservation Project.

The Parks Service’s involvement in Aboriginal heritage matters increased during the 1970s. In 1975 the Institute of Aboriginal Studies located an officer and assistant who were recording sites of significance to Aboriginals, at the Parks Service’s Magnet Court office. In the same year the State parliament proclaimed the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975* broadening the Parks Service’s responsibilities in the area of Aboriginal cultural heritage and leading to the establishment, early in 1976, of the Parks Service’s Aboriginal Relics Advisory Council. The Parks Service’s archaeological section carried-out a programme of Aboriginal site recording, employed Aboriginal field and research assistants, and liaised with the Aboriginal community.\(^8\) By mid-1976 four Aboriginal sites, totalling 1,243 hectares, had been proclaimed reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

While the Parks Service had a clear mandate in its governing legislation to develop the area of Aboriginal site protection, its jurisdiction in the area of procuring and managing buildings from periods of early Tasmanian settler history remained unclear. The Parks Service continued the role of guardian over the heritage buildings acquired by the Scenery Board, and, having procured financial assistance from the
Commonwealth government, achieved significant improvements in the conservation of the Port Arthur historic site. Given the rising costs of managing heritage buildings, continuing the arrangement whereby a land conservation agency managed such sites was arguably not in governments’ financial interests, but Labor governments of the 1970s did not act to remove historic buildings from the Parks Service’s custodial role.

**Conclusion:**

**Changes to government support for the National Parks and Wildlife Service**

During the 1970s Tasmania’s Parks Service expanded the State’s national park estate and improved the conservation status of nature reserves and historic sites under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. Though national parks remained subservient to industry as governments’ preferred land use, the Parks Service’s advocacy achieved compromises, notably from the timber industry, that facilitated reserve expansion. The Service’s work was supported by the generally good relations between its officers and those of other government agencies with responsibilities for forestry, mining, recreation and tourism, which facilitated cooperation, including some collaborative schemes. Opposition to new reserves by residents of surrounding areas was overcome by the Parks Service and did not prevent reserve expansion, though conflicts of interest relating to social and cultural issues that emerged during this period remained unresolved. New reserves declared during the 1970s incorporated land that had been altered by the rural activities of European settlers but they expanded the range of habitat types represented within the reserve system and added coastal environments to the reserve system that offered both nature conservation and recreational opportunities.

While the 1970s might be described as a constructive period for the State’s national parks system, the Parks Service’s position altered during the 1980s largely as a result of political controversy and developments in both State and Commonwealth government policy. From 1979 staffing of the Parks Service was limited by State government policy restricting growth in the public service. Between 1979 and 1986 the number of staff increased from 199 to 258, a total which included 30 casual/part-time staff and 93 temporaries, 41 of whom were employed on World Heritage Area projects and 22 through the Commonwealth funded Port Arthur
Conservation Project. To fund the expansion of its responsibilities and projects the Service became increasingly reliant on funding sources from the Commonwealth Government, notably the National Estate Grants Scheme (from 1976) and, from 1984, World Heritage Area funding. The Annual Report for the year that ended 30 June 1986 made this explicit, stating that, ‘most of the year’s achievements were in projects funded from World Heritage Area grants or from compensation paid to Tasmania by the Australian Government in consequence of the cessation of work on the Franklin Lower Gordon Power Scheme’. Political ill-will generated by the Franklin Dam debate and a succession of Premiers and governments unsympathetic to ‘green politics’ marked the end of an era for Tasmania’s National Parks and Wildlife Service. In the 1980s the Parks Service’s independence was challenged by State governments and, under the Liberal government led by Robin Gray, it was, as the Scenery Board had been, placed within the Lands Department. The challenge arose through a major controversy between the interests of nature conservation and industrial development, and it resulted in an administrative re-structure that changed the form and status of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.
Endnotes: Chapter 7

1. Interview with G. Middleton, 3 February 2004.
16. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Director NPWS to Minister for Agriculture, 17 August 1972.
17. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Forestry Commissioner to Director NPWS, 5 July 1973.
18. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Forestry Commissioner to Director NPWS, 13 December 1973 and 27 February 1974.
21. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Member for Bass to Minister for Minister for Lands and Works, 8 January 1973.
22. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, J. Cunningham to Director NPWS, 28 April 1975.
34. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Minister for National Parks and Wildlife to Minister administering the Hydro-Electric Commission Act, June 1975.
35. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Devonport Field Naturalists Club to Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service, 23 March 1972.
36. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Director, NPWS to Minister, National Parks and Wildlife, 14 March 1975.
38. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Town and Country Planning Commissioner to Director, NPWS, 14 December 1973.
39. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Town and Country Planning Commissioner to Director, NPWS, 14 December 1973.
40. DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Director NPWS to Minister for National Parks and Wildlife, 14 March 1975.
Chapter 8

South-west Tasmania: the National Parks Movement
Conflicts with the HEC

Tasmania’s national parks movement clashed with the combined interests of industry and the State government in three major political controversies involving national parks between the late 1940s and early 1980s. Conservationists lost the first two - over protection of the Florentine forest and Lake Pedder - but, with support from the Commonwealth government and a final decision by Australia’s High Court, won the third, over the Franklin River. The national parks movement’s success in saving the river from flooding by the HEC came at a high price, however. It was followed soon afterwards by the State government restricting the power of the National Parks and Wildlife Service by placing it under the Lands Department in the State’s bureaucratic structure, and renewing governments’ focus on national parks and reserves’ tourism, as opposed to environmental conservation, role.

Both the Lake Pedder and Franklin River campaigns have been extensively documented by participating environmental activists and other authors, and this thesis draws from their writing. Les Southwell, a conservationist who has written about the Pedder campaign, said that when the Tasmanian parliament in 1967 approved the Middle-Gordon Power Scheme which would flood Lake Pedder, conservationists felt defeated and, for a few years, their efforts to save the lake subsided. But, he wrote, the issue refused to go away, and conservationists regrouped to continue fighting for the lake’s survival. The speed with which the government had acted, its reluctance to consider views contrary to those held by the Premier and the Hydro Commissioners, and the fact that alternatives were not disclosed until the decision was all but made, left conservationists feeling that they had been tricked out of something precious.1 Southwell recalled,

One summer evening in January 1971 a group of people were standing on the beach. The sky was aglow with one of those brilliant sunsets for which the valley was renowned, and the realization of the impending loss touched them all. Someone said ‘We can’t just let them go ahead without a fight!’ and plans were made there and then to rally support.2
Lake Pedder was attracting a large number of visitors. Over 1,000 people visited the lake on a single weekend in January 1971. Encouraged by the level of interest, a member of the Hobart Walking Club, Brenda Hean, approached a Member of the Legislative Council, Louis Shoobridge - who was also a member of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, and grandson of Louis Shoobridge who initiated the Russell Falls Reserve - seeking his support to re-open the issue in the Legislative Council. Unsure of the extent of public support for saving the lake at that stage, Shoobridge requested the proponents organise a public meeting. That meeting demonstrated mass public support as Hobart’s Town Hall overflowed, and Shoobridge proceeded to raise the issue in the Upper House. Conservationists established the Lake Pedder Action Committee which continued to campaign to save the lake. Members of that group, which included Richard (Dick) Jones, a senior lecturer in Botany at the University of Tasmania, Brian Proudlock, who was an engineer, and Brenda Hean, were determined to do their best to save Lake Pedder regardless, Southwell wrote, of whether or not their words and actions offended the government. Picking up from where its predecessor, the Save Lake Pedder Committee, had left off, the Lake Pedder Action Committee held public meetings and slide shows, and wrote articles and media releases about the lake and about those alternative power schemes that could have saved it. One Canberra supporter initiated a petition which, though signed by over a quarter of a million petitioners, was rejected by the Attorney-General because it was in conflict with government policy.3

Following the State election of 1969 a Liberal government headed by Angus Bethune assumed office with a relatively progressive environmental policy. The Liberal party, like the Labor party, strongly supported the HEC, however, and the Premier’s position on Lake Pedder was that, ‘the issue can be simply stated. It is the value of Lake Pedder, which is a matter of opinion, set against the value of power development, which can be assessed in real terms’.4 Roger Green, a conservationist and journalist who compiled conservationists’ personal accounts of the Pedder and Franklin campaigns, wrote that by the time the Tasmanian parliament’s Liberal/Centre Party Coalition collapsed early in 1972, conservationists were aware that issues such as Lake Pedder had little chance of success with the existing political parties. Consequently, members of the Lake
Pedder Action Committee organised a public meeting in Hobart at which conservation interests established Australia’s first environmental political party, the United Tasmania Group. The Group’s immediate aim was to gain the balance of power in the forthcoming State election, for which it had only a matter of weeks to campaign. Both the Liberal and Labor parties announced that Lake Pedder was not an election issue. Local media failed to support the Group and published advertisements paid for by the HEC which told Tasmanians that domestic power charges would be raised if they voted for the United Tasmania Group. No Group candidates were elected, there was a swing to the Labor Party and the Bethune government lost the election. Though no United Tasmania Group candidates entered parliament, some candidates came within a few hundred votes of being elected which meant they had come very close - close enough that the result encouraged conservationists’ political efforts.

By 1972 Lake Pedder was a national issue and the Lake Pedder Action Committee had become a national organisation backed by support groups throughout the country. Given the hostile political climate the Lake Pedder Action Committee faced within Tasmania it turned its attention to Canberra in the lead-up to the 1972 federal election. Conservationists established a presence on the lawn outside parliament house in a caravan and, throughout the election, the Lake Pedder Action Committee worked on key personnel within the Australian Labor Party for a commitment that, if elected, a Labor government would undertake a review of the Tasmanian government’s decision to support the flooding of Lake Pedder. The Labor Party did win the election and, according to Doug Lowe, a Tasmanian Labor parliamentarian, the new Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, was sympathetic to the Pedder conservation cause. Lowe says that Whitlam had been privately hostile to the Reece Government’s action four months previously when it prevented its Attorney-General, Mervyn Everett, from issuing a fiat to the Lake Pedder Action Committee that would have allowed the legality of flooding Lake Pedder to have been tested in the Supreme Court given that Lake Pedder was within a national park. Everett had supported the conservationists’ case for the fiat but Reece indicated that he would legislate to validate any illegality that the court might have determined. Everett resigned and Reece appointed himself Attorney-General.
Despite the possibility that Whitlam was personally sympathetic, the new Commonwealth Labor government was reluctant to confront the Tasmanian Labor government over Lake Pedder. The Lake Pedder Action Committee had to lobby the government in Canberra to honour its promises, including that of holding an inquiry into the Pedder issue. Moss Cass, who was Minister for the Environment in the Whitlam government, said that Whitlam backed away from the issue and told him to ‘stay out of Tassie’. Cass went to Tasmania, however, and visited Lake Pedder which was, by then, fast filling up with water. It was no longer a matter of stopping the flooding but of restoring it to its original level and giving it the opportunity to recover. Cass said that he wanted to act but Whitlam tried to prevent him: ‘We’re not interfering in the state’s affairs. There’s no head of power we can use to implement legislation or anything like that. Too bad. We can’t do anything about it’. Nevertheless, in February 1973, Cass appointed a committee of inquiry, the Burton Committee, to study the Lake Pedder case. The inquiry concluded that information provided by the Hydro was unreliable, particularly its estimates of Tasmania’s power needs. The Burton Committee’s report proposed a moratorium with a view to assessing the feasibility of restoring the lake, and federal funds to pay workers to rehabilitate the area. The proposal was defeated in the federal Labor Cabinet. ‘All the economic hardheads around the table’, said Cass, ‘were more concerned with development in those days and I didn’t get anywhere’. The Labor Party caucus, however, did not endorse Cabinet’s decision but supported the Burton Committee’s recommendation of a moratorium. Whitlam told Cass he was a ‘devious blighter’ going behind Cabinet’s back and lobbying caucus but the backbenchers won the debate and the Commonwealth government initiated attempts to negotiate with the Tasmanian government with the aim of saving Lake Pedder.

Premier Reece, after having refused to co-operate in the Burton Inquiry, rejected that Committee’s recommendations including the offer of $8 million to meet the costs of restoring Lake Pedder and modifying the Middle Gordon Power Scheme. Doug Lowe argues that Reece was not going to allow Canberra under any circumstances to impact on the sovereign right of the Tasmanian parliament to
The campaign for Lake Pedder was a political watershed that affected not only the national parks movement but, more broadly, Tasmanian society and the State’s political system. The controversy not only raised the public profile of nature conservation but it also raised issues relating to the roles of State and Commonwealth governments, and democratic processes. And effects of the campaign were felt beyond Tasmania. The issue had developed a national following of supporters and detractors and, because it had reached the national political sphere as a land use issue of national concern, it raised questions in relation to national as opposed to State responsibilities.

Reflections on Lake Pedder

Environmental politics in Tasmania changed over the course of the campaign to save Lake Pedder and the Lake Pedder National Park, from isolated attempts to protect environmental values within the political arena to a deeper and more clearly articulated awareness of the nature of conflict over environmental values within a liberal democracy and capitalist economy. After the Pedder campaign Dick Jones reflected that the campaign had identified a fundamental breakdown in the operation of politics in Australian society. Withholding of information - secrecy - prevented political representation of public views in parliament. Then, a semi-government agency, the HEC, used its funds to influence an election outcome and politicians who stood to benefit thought there was nothing wrong with that. The electorate accepted this behavior, Jones believed, because people accept that politicians are ‘crooks’ but, he said, by allowing it the electorate abrogated its responsibility of citizenship.

The apparent conflict between conservation and material gain became sharper and more socially divisive during the Pedder campaign. Jones observed that, at the time of the campaign, it was not uncommon for conservationists to be intimidated into silence. An academic himself, he commented;
It’s all very well for an academic to have a public conscience – academics have tenure, an assured job and a good salary, and are in a position to query society. But it is not possible for many people in private industry to make public statements, or wear stickers on their car or be candidates for election. They have been threatened with losing the company car, or company house, or even their jobs.\footnote{15}

It is possible that opposition to conservationists did not stop at threats. When the Lake Pedder Action Committee had exhausted avenues for having the flooding of Lake Pedder halted by the Tasmanian government and had mounted a national campaign, a Tiger Moth aircraft piloted by Max Price, with Brenda Hean as passenger, left Hobart to sky-write over the national capital. It set out on the morning of 8 September 1972 but failed to refuel on Flinders Island as scheduled. The plane’s pilot and passenger have never been found. A few days before the flight Brenda Hean told fellow conservationist, Kevin Kiernan, that she had received an anonymous ‘phone call, from a male who asked her if she was prepared to give-up the campaign. She replied “no” and the caller asked, “Mrs. Hean, how would you like to go for a swim?”\footnote{16}, and hung-up.\footnote{16} After the plane’s disappearance it was discovered that the door of the Tiger Moth’s hangar had been smashed open with an axe on the night before its final flight. The light of the aircraft parked beside Max Price’s plane had been turned-on, apparently to provide light for the intruder, and Price’s Tiger Moth’s survival beacon was found hidden in the hangar behind crates. The Minister of Police’s report on the ‘accident’ failed to mention the threat, the break-in or the re-location of the beacon, and the government refused to support an investigation of the incident.\footnote{17}

Conservation had become a serious source of social conflict over which the State government and its policing agency were considered by many people not to be independent arbiters.

The National Parks Movement

As the awareness of individual conservationists matured during the Pedder campaign the Tasmanian conservation movement, including the national parks movement, became more politically aware and better informed. It also shifted from retaining a ‘wise use’ conservation perspective to representing views more inclined to environment and wilderness preservation, which were less amenable to compromise than were the more utilitarian views of earlier conservationists. In
some ways it became more cynical but it also became more determined. Hutton and Connors argue that the movement adopted more confrontational tactics as it came to terms with the nature of the opposition it was facing and took its campaigns directly to the public, educating the public and debating with governments in the public sphere rather than in polite private meetings.\textsuperscript{18}

The radicalisation of conservationists fighting to save Lake Pedder had repercussions for the national environment movement. A national environmental organisation, the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), had started in 1965 with a committee of prominent conservationists and scientists who had established connections with, and funding from, government and business. But the ACF’s influence in high places was seen to come at a high price. According to Southwell, the ACF executive guarded its ‘terribly respectable’ image and was thus compromised and anxious to avoid controversies\textsuperscript{,19} Southwell described ACF in its early days as seeing itself as a ‘voice of informed scientific opinion, to enlighten the public rather than to influence the course of events’.\textsuperscript{20} Unlikely to ‘rock the boat’, the ACF adhered to a belief that ‘you can’t stop progress’, including rapid, sometimes mindless, change.\textsuperscript{21}

Given that the ACF had assumed the role of ‘the’ national conservation organisation, the Lake Pedder Action Committee appealed to it to issue supportive statements. But, Dick Jones said, they were not forthcoming. Curious as to why Australia’s premier conservation body was reluctant to take a public position, Jones and his colleagues examined the membership of the ACF Council and saw they were mostly top industry executives or senior public servants who, Jones realised, had conflicting interests and were unlikely to take an activist stand on an issue such as Lake Pedder.\textsuperscript{22} The Lake Pedder Action Committee did, though, have some supporters within the ACF. Milo Dunphy, who was a member of ACF Council, provided the Lake Pedder Action Committee with inside information about the ACF’s actions\textsuperscript{23} and, in the address he presented at the 1971 symposium, Dunphy told Tasmanians in the audience that they should, ‘kick the HEC out of the core of the South-west, their roads and works with them’.\textsuperscript{24}
Geoff Mosley was another supporter although, as a staff member of the Australian Conservation Foundation, he was prevented from expressing his point of view publicly. Mosley had written a doctoral thesis dealing with the history and recreational role of Tasmanian reserves and had produced numerous articles on the need for better protection of Tasmania’s national parks and wilderness. Knowing that the ACF membership wanted to take action on Lake Pedder, but that the Executive would not, the Lake Pedder Action Committee organised a coup. In the ACF Council elections of 1973 ‘new guard’ activists were elected to a majority of Council positions. Mosley was appointed to the position of Director, and the ‘old guard’ was forced to move aside for a new team.25

The Lake Pedder campaign also highlighted differences between the Lake Pedder Action Committee and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust. The Conservation Trust had been established in 1968 as a State-wide generalist conservation organisation. Southwell said it was seen, like the ACF, as the ‘conservatives’ camp’.26 According to Dick Jones, ‘the Trust wanted to be respected and respectable. Having cups of tea with Ministers was regarded as social advancement’.

There was a very big schism in the early 1970s between the Lake Pedder Action Committee and the traditional conservation movement. It was only people like Brenda Hean, who had a foot in all camps, that kept the peace at all. And she was regarded more and more by her colleagues in the Conservation Trust and the South-West Committee as rocking the boat. Activists were regarded by other people who held the same beliefs as not doing the cause any good. We were bad news.27

The schism was exemplified by the debate within the Tasmanian conservation movement over appropriate boundaries for the South-West National Park. Kevin Kiernan, who was secretary of the Lake Pedder Action Committee before forming the South West Tasmania Action Committee in 1974, said the South-West Committee, which had been formed in 1962, was ‘violently’ opposed to extending the South-West campaign north of the Gordon River.28 The South-West National Park proposal put forward by Kiernan and his ‘small band of rabble-rousers’ from the South-West Tasmania Action Committee was much larger than that agreed to by the South-West Committee.29 Kiernan remembers it sadly, ‘… it was such a bitter and unpleasant time. We ended up with the Big Park and the Small Park people. And that got just so *** vicious it was unreal’.30
This schism within Tasmania’s national parks movement that surfaced in the early 1970s was symptomatic of peoples’ differing responses to environmental problems. As Carl Moneyhon argued in the case of America, more than one interpretation of society and the environment developed during the late nineteenth century in response to evidence of diminishing natural resources. The three modes of thought identified by Moneyhon that contributed to Tasmania’s conservation and national parks movements - conservation, preservation and ecology - supported the national park idea but they differed in ways that precluded an inclusive reform movement. Whereas Moneyhon argued that, in America, conservationists’ domination of the ‘interventionist’ movement encountered a dilemma by 1900 because their piecemeal approach provided limited results, in Tasmania the ‘wise use’ conservation approach remained influential within the State’s national parks movement until the early 1970s. The premise of compromise based on ‘wise use’ that characterised the conservation approach was not displaced until the controversy over Lake Pedder and south-west Tasmania, when it was challenged by an environmental movement that combined elements of the preservationist approach and scientific ecology.

Another problem that confronted the South-West Action Committee in the wake of the Lake Pedder Campaign was that it was too focused on the south-west. Issues that concerned the group’s members arose in Freycinet, and there were other people interested in the western central plateau or the Norfolk Range. Consequently, at a meeting of the South-West Action Committee in 1976, Kiernan suggested the formation of a wilderness society that could embrace wilderness issues throughout the State. From that time the Tasmanian Wilderness Society (TWS) led Tasmanian environmentalists’ efforts to preserve wilderness values within the State’s national parks and reserves. During the organisation’s first decade its attention was focused on protecting the wilderness value of the State’s south-west.

**South-West Tasmania**

The South-West National Park declared in 1968 fell short of the hopes of a number of conservation bodies, by varying degrees. The South-West Committee pre-empted the anticipated release of the Parks Service’s draft plan by releasing
its own, in 1973, and proposals followed from the Australian Conservation Foundation, Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Federation of Tasmanian Bushwalking Clubs, the Tasmanian University Mountaineering Club, the University’s Geological Society, the South-West Action Committee (Sydney and Melbourne) and the United Tasmania Group.34

The proposal prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Service for the State government became available through a leak but its official release was postponed until 1975 following the resolution of the Precipitous Bluff court case. After what an officer of the Parks Service, Greg Middleton, described as ‘compromises’ resulting from ‘constant battles with Mines, Forestry and the Hydro’, the boundaries of the government’s proposal were conservative.35 The Australian Conservation Foundation was critical;

The contents of the document reveal complete subservience by its author(s) to the interests of commercial exploitation ... Its proposed boundaries are - with one tiny exception – all within the 1966 Conservation Area and follow arbitrary contours obviously arrived at by including those areas not the subject of inundation by future H.E.C. schemes, areas proposed for logging, and existing exploring and prospecting leases by mining interests … 36

The tenor of the government’s document was, in ACF’s view, best exemplified by three subject references - firstly that land vested in the HEC would be excluded from these extensions; secondly that the Gordon Road might have to be extended to serve HEC developments west of the park; and thirdly that, in order to add Precipitous Bluff to the South-West National Park, 2,300 hectares of forested land in the Hartz Mountains National Park would be revoked and made available for forestry purposes.

The Australian Conservation Foundation responded;

This is quite astonishing, and reveals the Tasmanian Government’s deplorable attitude to National Parks. If the Government fails to give no more respect than treating them like so many marbles to be swapped between school children, it is obvious that the lessons of Lake Pedder have not been learned.37

But, the organisation noted;

There is one good thing about the draft management plan… It proposes that the bulk of the park should be zoned as wilderness. This at least shows that the idea that the chief value of the South-West is as a wilderness area has finally sunk-in.38
The Precipitous Bluff controversy goes to court

Reference in the government’s draft plan to the revocation of 2,300 hectares of forested land in the Hartz Mountains National Park in order that Precipitous Bluff could be added to the South-West National Park related to a conflict taking place at the time between mining and conservation interests over the Precipitous Bluff area. Precipitous Bluff is a massive and spectacular rocky outcrop at the south-western end of the Southern Ranges which rises above the waters of New River Lagoon on Tasmania’s south coast. It is a popular bushwalking destination accessed by walkers from the south coast track. Limestone deposits near New River lagoon were first reported by a Department of Mines geologist in 1915, and in 1971 a Melbourne based mining company, Mineral Holdings, advertised its application for a Special Prospectors’ license for a site adjoining South-West National Park at Milford Creek, near Precipitous Bluff. Objections were lodged by a number of individuals and conservation groups including the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, the South-West Committee and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, all seeking to protect the area’s natural values. As Southwell said, mining at Precipitous Bluff would have involved quarries and tailing dumps, roads and power lines, pollution of the lagoon, probable bushfires and, possibly, a wharf.

Mineral Holdings challenged the legality of the objectors’ case on the grounds that none of them had any legal interest in the area. The National Parks and Wildlife Service, which the Bethune Liberal government had allowed to object to the initial advertisement, did, but with the change of government the new Premier, Eric Reece, who was also Minister for Mines, refused to allow the Parks Service to maintain its objection. The Mining Warden, however, set a heartening precedent for the conservationists by awarding them standing (that is, a formal right of objection) finding that

the evidence is quite overwhelming that any mining activity, and this includes activity limited only to prospecting and investigation - would have a deleterious effect upon the environment of the locality in question … the risk of fire in a fire free area would be substantially increased … the advantages of retaining the area in its present primeval and pristine condition far outweigh the nebulous benefits to be derived from the mining activities proposed.
Mineral Holdings, with the Premier’s support, subsequently appealed to the Supreme Court of Tasmania which ruled that the objections were invalid under the 1929 Mining Act because the objectors did not hold any ‘estate or interest’ in the area. The Full Bench of the Supreme Court upheld that appeal, prompting the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and the Australian Conservation Foundation to take the dispute to the High Court of Australia. Once again the decision went in favor of the mining company on the basis of the wording of the Mines Act. But the final decision was a political one not a legal one. The State government, under public pressure, agreed to include Precipitous Bluff as part of a 211,658 hectare extension to the South-West National Park. The legal issue concerning the adequacy of the Mining Act to protect environmental values that had been highlighted by the case remained unresolved. And a high price was paid for Precipitous Bluff. The decision to include it in the South-West National Park was conditional on the revocation of 1,850 hectares of Ash forest in the Hartz Mountains National Park to be handed to mainland-based timber company, Australian Paper Manufacturers, which had relinquished its concessions over 25,000 hectares in the Precipitous Bluff area. Subsequently, in January 1979, 2,150 hectares of forest within the Hartz Mountains National Park were revoked.

The Tasmanian government had, in the 1950s, allocated logging rights over most of the State’s forests to private companies. The government retained a legal right to revoke a concession area without compensation but, in the case of Precipitous Bluff, it chose to give the timber company logging rights over an area of prime forest within the Hartz Mt National Park in exchange for an area with marginal timber value, contrary to the opinion of its park management agency to which it denied a right of objection. What was seen as unjustified loss of forest was difficult for conservationists to accept, particularly for those activists who believed they witnessed some of the movement’s more conservative members compromising too readily in their dealings with the government.

**How to Manage South-West Tasmania?**

The Tasmanian government released its draft management plan for the South-West National Park in 1975, following the decision regarding the fate of Precipitous Bluff. In conservationists’ eyes the park boundaries proposed in the
plan bore no relation to physical or ecological barriers, the existing wilderness area or recreational zones. Areas of potential interest for forestry, mining and hydro-electric development had been excised from the South-West Conservation Area and the remainder formed the proposed South-West National Park. Creating a national park in such a manner would, they argued, cause management problems that would not arise if more conservation-sensitive boundaries were adopted.\(^\text{45}\) Neither did the draft plan persuade politicians that it was worthy of adoption, given the public debate and concern that it generated. Consequently the Minister for National Parks and Wildlife appointed a South-West Advisory Committee to re-examine relevant issues and recommend long-term solutions to conflicts about resource utilization.

The South-West Advisory Committee’s Final Report recommended that the Conservation Area be extended to include the whole of South-West Tasmania, and that a South-West Tasmania Authority be established to advise government on development proposals within the area. The committee was, apparently, convinced of the natural beauty and aesthetic value of South-West Tasmania but it had also received evidence of the dependence of the Tasmanian economy on forestry, hydro-electricity and mining and, given that the potential importance of these activities in South-West Tasmania had not been fully assessed, the committee concluded that it would be impractical and unwise to constitute the whole of South-West Tasmania as a national park forthwith.\(^\text{46}\)

In March 1979 Doug Lowe, who had replaced Eric Reece as Premier in 1977, announced that the government would appoint a South-West Committee as an authority to replace cabinet, and extend the South-West Conservation Area. The extension, of around 750,000 hectares, proclaimed on 1 July 1980, increased the South-West Conservation Area to 14,350 square kilometres, representing about one fifth of the State.\(^\text{47}\) Any new proposals for development within the area would go to the government’s South-West Committee and would have to come within restrictions imposed by the government. Conservationists interpreted the outcome as giving development interests continued opportunity to put forward proposals that would affect the area, subject to the discretion of the government of the day, and the movement’s response ranged from disappointment to condemnation.\(^\text{48}\)
The Franklin River Conflict

By 1980 those conservationists whose commitment to the protection of areas of outstanding natural value meant they were, consciously or not, part of the State’s national parks movement, were facing another major land-use conflict. Like Lake Pedder, the Franklin and Lower Gordon River area was threatened with the prospect of being flooded by the Hydro Electric Commission.

The HEC had been interested in the Franklin-Lower Gordon area for a long time. A survey of hydro potential of the Franklin River had been undertaken in 1916, and when the HEC released its plan to flood Lake Pedder, in its Report on the Gordon River Power Development Stage 1, it described the Middle Gordon dam as the first stage of a development that would later involve other sites on the Gordon river and its tributaries. These plans were down-played at the time by the HEC Commissioner Allan Knight. When he was queried about test drilling at Butler Island in the Lower Gordon, Knight said that there were no firm plans for a dam, yet the Lower Gordon River Reserve, which had been proclaimed in 1908 and later extended to Butler Island, had been ‘accidentally’ revoked in 1960 when Knight was an influential member of the Scenery Board - four years before drilling began in 1964.

Bob Brown, who became involved in the Tasmanian conservation movement soon after moving to the State in 1972, rafted down the Franklin River with Paul Smith, a forester and member of the Northern Branch of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, in March 1976. Smith was an amateur photographer whose photographs of the trip appeared in the Tasmanian press after their return, urging people to visit the area before it was ‘transformed’ by the HEC. The following year the HEC released its plans for flooding the Gordon and Franklin rivers - an ‘integrated development’ involving the construction of a dam on the Gordon River just downstream from its junction with the Franklin. Subsequently, dams would be built on the Middle Franklin at Mt McCall and on the King River near Queenstown. Further dams were proposed for the Gordon River, Jane River and Davey River further south.
The Wilderness Society geared-up for action. The Wilderness Society, and the Tasmanian environment movement in which it was a powerful influence from the late 1970s, did not aim to compromise its goals. Compromise had resulted in major losses for Tasmania’s national parks and wilderness areas for the benefit of industry interests. Environmentalists believed that they had to confront Tasmania’s politics of parks as residual land use in order to protect areas of significant conservation and wilderness value.

Regardless of the individual views of its officers, the Parks Service was restrained by its position within government from inciting conflict with government-sanctioned industry interests, and non-government environmental organizations led the campaign for a Wild Rivers National Park that precluded damming of the Franklin and Gordon rivers. The New South Wales branch of the South-West Action Committee, initially formed in 1974 to aid the Pedder campaign, refocused as a branch of the Wilderness Society fighting for the Franklin River. A Melbourne branch was established in 1979 and by 1983 there were about 30 branches throughout Australia. Other conservation organisations, notably the Australian Conservation Foundation, also threw their weight behind the Franklin campaign which took its message directly to the Australian public through newspaper articles, posters, stickers, films, journal articles, photographs, publications - including 4,000 copies of *The Franklin, Tasmania’s Last Wild River* (1978) - rallies and public demonstrations.51

In July 1979 the HEC released its multi-volume *Report on the Gordon River Power Development Stage Two*, complete with its own environmental impact statement. The Parks Service’s review of the proposal concluded that it failed to provide an adequate statement of environmental impacts, that its consideration of other practical options was inadequate and that, among other short-comings, it gave no consideration to alternative land uses including the long-standing proposal for a national park in the area.52 The HEC argued that the Parks Service’s response constituted ‘a substantial attack on the integrity of the Commission and some of its individual officers’, and advised that legal opinion was being sought on the extent to which it could be seen as defamatory of individual officers.53 The Wilderness Society criticised the HEC’s *Report on the Gordon River Power*
Development Stage Two for having failed to properly evaluate the effects of the project and the wilderness status of the project area. According to the Society, no inventory of the region’s flora and fauna had been completed and the environmental impact statement only addressed representation of dominant species. In addition, the Society’s response pointed out, the HEC’s document dealt with only one of three major dams proposed for the integrated scheme and no conservation groups were among the interested parties consulted.54

Conservationists knew they would have to fight effectively to save the Franklin. Peter Thompson, the Australian Conservation Foundation’s Campaign Officer based in Hobart, described the challenge.

A political satirist once commented that Tasmania had so much surplus electricity it made people’s hair stand on end. In 1895 Launceston became the second town in the world, after Niagara USA, to be connected to hydro-electricity. So began a love affair between Tasmanians and electricity which has continued ever since. Today Tasmanians are the highest per capita consumers of electricity in the world. Although Tasmania has only 3 per cent of Australia’s population it consumes 10 per cent of the nation’s electricity. The reason is the massive consumption of power by a few industries.55 … Growing up in Tasmania is an immersion in hydro-culture. The HEC has an effective publicity machine reaching into schools; the newspapers still extol the idea of creating wealth through power and politicians continue to go down on bended knee before the ideology they have helped to create.56

Peter Hay, lecturer in Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania, added:

In Tasmania, the dominant values find expression in a deep-rooted ideology of hydro-industrialisation, which, unchallenged for several decades before 1970, guaranteed election for a long succession of ALP governments. That party, having created the Hydro Electric Commission, held the electorally decisive mantle of the champion of its values. Its proffered vision of unlimited industrial wealth based on the supply of cheap hydro-electric power became an article of faith for several generations – the central unquestionable plank in what passed in Tasmania for political thought.57

History indicated that the HEC’s plans would proceed. No Tasmanian parliamentarian had ever voted against the HEC. Environmentalists knew that to stop the Franklin dam they had to challenge the HEC’s supporting ideology. To achieve that the movement needed public support, which it raised through a high profile public campaign. A survey in mid 1979 asked 1,000 voting-age Tasmanians whether they believed the Franklin and Lower Gordon Rivers should be kept in their natural state or dammed for a Hydro scheme. Fifty-three
per cent said they preferred the conservation option compared with 28% who supported the Hydro development, a result that was repeated in a similar survey conducted a year later. Though a public opinion poll conducted by the HEC in 1980 indicated majority support for a dam on the Lower Gordon River overall, the poll results did reflect a shift in Tasmanians’ thinking effected by the conservationists’ campaign.58

In response to the success of the conservationists’ campaign the pro-HEC lobby initiated efforts to influence public opinion. A Hydro-Employees Action Team (HEAT) was formed in 1980 with the aim of disseminating the HEC’s views to employees, the public and the parliament. Representatives of HEAT met with the Premier and warned him that, ‘HEC staff would regard any deviation from the HEC’s preferred development programme as being an act of gross disloyalty by the Government … likely to attract major repercussions at the next State election’59. Peter Thompson argued that the continued activities of HEAT illustrated the extent of the HEC’s political power, given that no Commonwealth or State government had previously tolerated a political action lobby by a group of public servants.60 High level HEC supporters formed another lobby group called the Association of Consumers of Electricity (ACE). This group included two former Premiers, Labor’s Eric Reece and the Liberal’s Sir Angus Bethune, former ALP Deputy Premier Roy Fagan, former Hydro Commissioner Sir Allan Knight and other prominent political figures.61 ACE and HEAT, together with a working committee of major bulk consumers from the Tasmanian Chamber of Industries, acted as an information network serving the interests of the HEC.

On 6 June 1980, 10,000 people took part in a rally and protest walk in Hobart in support of saving the south-west’s rivers. During the following weeks 80,000 letters opposing the HEC scheme arrived at State Parliament. Tasmania’s voting population at the time was 250,000. In July the Commonwealth government demonstrated its recognition of the significance of the Franklin River and its surrounds by adding South-West Tasmania to the Register of the National Estate.
At the same time the HEC warned Tasmanians that power bills could soar by 35% and that 3,000 jobs would be lost if the Gordon River Power Development was not allowed to go ahead, while the Parks Service submitted a proposal for a Franklin-Lower Gordon National Park. The park proposal was developed at the suggestion of the Minister, Andrew Lohrey, a relatively young parliamentarian who had not long previously been removed from his position as Minister administering the Hydro-Electric Commission Act. This had happened as a consequence of a deterioration in Lohrey’s relationship with the Hydro-Electric Commissioner after representatives of leading environmental organisations met with the Premier to discuss the subject in April 1979. To promote the reserve proposal, the Parks Service purchased $1,300 worth of advertising space in the *Tasmanian Mail*. A government instrumentality buying advertising space to publicise its cause was unusual enough to attract the attention of critics. Lohrey supported the Parks Service’s action, however, pointing out that the HEC had been using public funds to present its case, ‘without regard to anyone’, for months, and said, ‘if its good enough for the HEC, its good enough for the National Parks and Wildlife Service’. By supporting the national park proposal in this way, against the wishes of the HEC, Lohrey contravened political convention that had ensured national parks’ position as a residual land use option within the Tasmanian political system.

On 11 July 1980 the Tasmanian government decided to opt for a Wild Rivers National Park and a hydro-electric scheme. The Franklin and Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park of 195,200 hectares, and a 39,000 hectare extension of the South-West National Park were declared on 13 May 1981. The Wild Rivers National Park incorporated the former Frenchman’s Cap National Park, the Gordon River State Reserve and the Lyell Highway State Reserve. The proclamation created a continuous national park that extended from the South Coast to Cradle Mountain, including the Franklin River and recently discovered caves that contained evidence of human habitation during the Pleistocene era 19,700 years ago. The HEC scheme would have involved a dam across the Lower Gordon River above its junction with the Olga River, leaving the Franklin River intact. The government viewed this option as ‘the best available compromise between development and conservation in this
region’, given that it would help meet the State’s future energy requirements, provide for the employment of the State’s citizens, ‘preserve their way of life’ and properly recognise the value of wilderness.\textsuperscript{68} To support its decision to go ahead with the Gordon above Olga scheme the government pointed out that it would destroy only 9.2% of the south-west wilderness, or 6.5% of the total Tasmanian wilderness, compared to the 16.2% of the south-west wilderness, or 11.5% of the total Tasmanian wilderness the Gordon below Franklin scheme would have destroyed. Also in its favor, the Gordon above Olga Scheme would not destroy what had come to the nation’s attention as the last major wild river in eastern Australia, the Franklin, or affect the Sprent, Jane and Olga Rivers, as would the Gordon below Franklin Scheme.\textsuperscript{69}

The Gordon-above-Olga proposal, though less extensive than the Gordon-below-Franklin, was seen by environmentalists as another potential disaster for the south-west. By flooding 100 square kilometres, the project was seen as potentially ruining 500 square kilometres of the south-west wilderness by virtually splitting it in two and, having caused that damage, critics believed the dam would have provided for only four years’ increase in power demand.\textsuperscript{70}

The Olga Bill which was to have given effect to the Gordon-above-Olga option, having been agreed upon as a compromise by the lower house of the Tasmanian parliament, failed to gain the support it required from the upper house, the Legislative Council which was not dominated by political parties. The Legislative Council not only voted against the legislation but three of its nineteen members actually expressed approval for the Gordon-below-Franklin dam option. In an attempt to resolve the deadlock the government held a referendum, in December 1981, asking Tasmanian voters whether they supported the construction of a ‘Gordon below Franklin’ or ‘Gordon above Olga’ dam. The government did not intend to give a voice to those people who did not want either dam to be built. Conservationists mounted a ‘No Dams’ campaign, urging people who did not support either dam to write ‘No Dams’ on their ballot paper, and placed a scrutineer in every polling booth to ensure these informal votes were counted. The outcome was: Gordon below Franklin
47%; Gordon above Olga 8%; and 45% informal, including 32.25% who wrote ‘No Dams’.71

Harry Holgate challenged Doug Lowe’s leadership of the parliamentary Labor Party, Lowe resigned from the State branch of the Party and, at the time of the referendum, sat as an independent on the cross-benches with ex-Wilderness Society Director Norm Sanders. The Government Whip, Mary Wiley, resigned soon after Lowe, leaving Holgate with a minority government dependent on Lowe, Wiley and Sanders, who had promised not to force an election unless the Government introduced enabling legislation for the HEC’s dam.72 Following the referendum, which indicated to Holgate that, if he paved the way for flooding the Franklin, his government would probably fall at the ensuing election, but if he did not he would face the wrath of the pro-HEC forces that were his support base, Holgate prorogued parliament for the summer.

Arguments in favor of protecting the South-West rivers within a national park rather than exploiting them for Hydro power mounted. Peter Waterman’s 600-page South-West Tasmania Resources Survey highlighted south-west Tasmania’s natural values and raised issues about the HEC’s resistance to supplying information. The report of an economic study commissioned by Tasmania’s Business Association for Economic Power, a group representing small businesses disadvantaged by the HEC’s policy of charging lower rates to big businesses, was released in 1981. Its findings challenged the HECs predictions of growth in demand for power and questioned the economic advantages anticipated from meeting an unlikely surge in demand through building another dam rather than alternatives such as a thermal station, conclusions that were reiterated by the Commonwealth government’s select committee report that was released the following year.73

The Liberal party won the State election in May 1982. The new Premier, Robin Gray, in whose view, ‘for eleven months of the year the Franklin is nothing but a brown ditch, unattractive to the majority of people’,74 pressed ahead with the Gordon-below Franklin Scheme, dismissing compensation offers from the Commonwealth government. In December 1982 the Prime Minister, Malcolm
Fraser, successfully nominated South-West Tasmania for listing as a World Heritage Area, though he refused to intervene in Tasmania’s affairs by attempting to stop work on the dam through powers and obligations implicit in National Estate and in World Heritage listing.

At the time Fraser was refusing to intervene Australians indicated that there was national public support for federal intervention. Thirty thousand voters (42%) in the Flinders electorate wrote ‘no dams’ on their ballot papers in a South Australian election, 4,000 people marched in torrential rain in Sydney to demand Federal intervention and 15,000 people attended a ‘no dams’ rally in Melbourne. But in Tasmania the government had revoked the Wild Rivers National Park and road construction had begun. In December 1982 the Wilderness Society commenced a non-violent blockade of the construction site that resulted in a series of arrests, demonstrations and expressions of public support in the media and on the national stage. A total of 2,613 people registered as blockaders; approximately 900 Tasmanians, 650 Victorians, 600 people from New South Wales, 145 from Canberra, 142 South Australians, 73 from Queensland, 56 from Western Australia, 3 from the Northern Territory and 67 from overseas.

The blockade succeeded in keeping the Franklin issue in the public eye but it did not stop work on the dam. A Federal election called for March 1983 did, however, have the potential to achieve that. Environmentalists sought and gained assurances from the Labor Party that its leader, Bob Hawke, would intervene to save the Franklin, and the major Australian conservation groups formed a coalition to work for a Labor victory. In the absence of other options the environment movement set the precedent of adopting a blatantly partisan approach in an Australian Federal election. During February the environment movement ran an election campaign targeting marginal electorates throughout ‘mainland’ Australia and, in Hobart, 20,000 people took part in what Peter Thompson described as the biggest march and rally for nature conservation in Australian history. Labor won the election and, Thompson wrote, the dam was acknowledged as the issue that had swung the result away from the government to the Labor Party. The Hawke government’s executive council proceeded to pass regulations under the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act that would prevent further construction on
the Franklin dam. In Tasmania, construction work continued and the Premier announced a High Court challenge to the Commonwealth’s intervention. In July the High Court delivered its judgment - a four to three majority of judges upheld the Commonwealth’s power to stop the dam. The decision was based on legal principles and did not necessarily reflect acknowledgement of the natural values of South-West Tasmania’s wild rivers, but it meant that Tasmania’s Wild Rivers National Park was restored.

However, the conflicts of interest underlying the controversy remained unresolved. The political conventions that had provided big industry with powers of veto over national park proposals were destabilised, not only through federal intervention but also by Tasmanian parliamentarians acting against the HEC’s plans in a public controversy.

**Conclusion: Tasmania’s National Parks and Wildlife Service 1971-1987.**

By the mid 1980s the Parks Service had extended Tasmania’s reserve system to one that was not only larger but incorporated a wide range of habitat types, natural and cultural values. The value of wilderness - ‘a large tract of entirely natural country … a region of original Earth where one stands with the senses entirely steeped in nature’ - had gained currency and the amount of wilderness within national parks had increased through extensions to the South-West National Park and the declaration of the Wild Rivers National Park. The Parks Service’s capacity as a land conservation and wildlife management agency had expanded as a result of staff increases, particularly during its early years, staff training and the appointment of trained scientific officers. By 1987 Tasmanian park rangers were being trained through a newly established Park Rangers’ course offered through the Hobart TAFE (Technical and Further Education) College or through external enrolment in the South Australian Riverina College’s Diploma of Park Management.

Expansion of the reserve system and its management agency was not supported by all sections of the community, however. The timber and mining industries, and the HEC, protested proposals to establish or extend reserves because they wanted access to natural resources within reserve boundaries. Until the Franklin River
controversy, political processes that protected industry interests managed these tensions, but following environmentalists’ Franklin River victory, the management of these conflicting interests represented a new problem for the Tasmanian government. Some recreational, sporting and community interest groups also resented the way in which national park expansion restricted access to reserved land and, while these groups were not as politically or economically powerful as were resource extraction industries, their members were allies in the anti-reserve movement.

Probably not coincidently, the Parks Service’s open alignment with the conservation movement in the divisive battle for the Franklin River and the Wild Rivers National Park was followed by political threats to its bureaucratic independence. The alignment of a high proportion of Tasmania’s political elite with the pro-HEC lobby during the Franklin debate confirmed the strong link that existed between parliament and the interests of big industry within Tasmania. The effectiveness of the Parks Service and its ally, the politically powerful environment movement, in protecting areas of outstanding natural value rested uneasily with politically powerful competing interests and it was during the Franklin debate that talk of dismantling the Parks Service began.

In 1981 the State Labor government commissioned a Sydney barrister, John Mant, to review aspects of public administration, including land use management. Mant, reflecting a belief that efficiencies are achieved by amalgamating government departments into mega-departments, recommended that the departments of the Environment, Lands, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Town and Country Planning Commission and Local Government Office be combined into one department. The government gave its reasons for the merger as, firstly, to achieve better coordination between the Lands Department which had opened up public reserves on the East Coast and was responsible for reserves such as Trevallyn Park and the Mount Wellington Range, and the Parks Service. Secondly, the government argued that the merger would save costs by eliminating the duplication of existing resources. Observers believed there was another, perhaps more salient reason, which was to bring the National Parks and Wildlife Service ‘to heel’ by placing it with the Lands Department, a Department that
was seen to be more compliant and more accommodating of shifting government objectives.

While the Premier, Doug Lowe, argued that under the proposal none of the departments would have superior status to another, the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wilderness Society argued that it would destroy the integrity of the Parks Service and lead to severe down-grading of environmental protection. The Wilderness Society’s Director, Bob Brown, pointed out that the Parks Service had proved itself able and effective, and it was a vital counterbalance to the powerful Forestry Commission, Mines Department and HEC, all of which had their own Ministers (and, consequently, cabinet representation) and all of which were unscathed by the new proposals. The Wilderness Society cited a Tasmanian opinion polls survey commissioned by the *Mercury* in 1979 which had shown that respondents preferred Parks Service control of the south-west over Lands Department control, by an 8-1 majority. From this finding it was logical to extrapolate that the public felt much the same about all of the State’s national parks.

A Liberal Government led by Robin Gray assumed government after the 1982 State election. Though it was among the Liberal party’s election promises, Gray did not relocate the Parks Service within the bureaucracy immediately after that election. The Government’s plans to amalgamate the National Parks and Wildlife Service with the Lands Department re-surfaced, however, in 1986. Writing for the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Greg Buckman wrote:

> Tasmania may soon be without a government department devoted solely to managing our national heritage. As part of the recent mini budget, the Minister for National Parks, John Bennett, announced that the National Parks and Wildlife Service would be amalgamated with the Department of Lands. ... The Trust’s concern is that the abolition of an independent parks service is nothing more than an attempt by the Premier’s Department to tighten its grip around the service. It follows on from the prohibition placed on parks staff from seeing members of the parliamentary opposition or the conservation movement and last year’s gagging of National Parks’ submission to the woodchip Environmental Impact Statement.

According to Buckman, the Minister had refused to enter public discussion of the move other than to justify it on the basis of cost savings - a justification that was open to challenge, Buckman argued, on the grounds that the Victorian merger of
the Departments of Lands, Forests and Conservation three years previously indicated that the merger would be unlikely to save money.\textsuperscript{86}

In the early 1980s the Parks Service’s Director, Peter Murrell, identified internal problems affecting the agency. In 1981 Murrell stated that staff shortages were preventing the Parks Service from coping adequately with new and expanding work loads, and that additional planning officers and field staff were needed.\textsuperscript{87} Murrell commissioned the University of Tasmania’s Department of Public Administration to review the Parks Service and the ensuing report suggested that it was ‘poorly managed, suffers from low staff morale, is antiquated and in need of a major overhaul’.\textsuperscript{88}

This review’s findings served to support the government’s intention to dismantle the Parks Service as an independent body. The Parks Service’s achievements in expanding and improving the reserve system had helped to make it a political target, and its focus on protecting areas of outstanding natural value, rather than bureaucratic procedures and political survival had possibly contributed to its political vulnerability.

In October 1986 the Australian National Parks Council held its annual conference in Hobart. Delegates from throughout Australia heard evidence from States where bureaucratic mergers had proceeded which demonstrated the dangers of amalgamation for the conservation cause, and they voted unanimously to affirm the need for independent national parks services. The Tasmanian Conservation Trust vowed to continue to fight the State government’s plans to amalgamate the Parks Service with the Lands Department, its Director, Phillip Hoystead, saying that the amalgamation would, ‘save no money and lead to the watering down of the NPWS’s role and integrity as well as the legislation which protected parks and reserves.’\textsuperscript{89} The Gray government, however, proceeded with its planned amalgamation and, on 1 May 1987, the former National Parks and Wildlife Service became part of the new Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife. This ended the Tasmanian Parks Service’s initial era of bureaucratic independence.
Endnotes: Chapter 8

2. ibid.
3. ibid., p.25.
6. ibid., p.55.
9. ibid, p.72.
10. ibid., p.73.
11. ibid., p.74.
14. ibid, p.59.
17. ibid., p.28.
20. ibid, p.31.
21. ibid.
23. ibid.
25. ibid., p.64.
26. ibid, p.24.
29. ibid., p.90.
30. ibid.
32. ibid.
37. ibid.
38. ibid.
42. ibid.
47. ibid, p.91
53 DPIWE Archives: HEC Commissioner to Director NPWS, 20 May 1980.
56 ibid., p.99.
61 ibid, p.128.
64 DPIWE Archives: Correspondence: Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service to Minister for National Parks and Wildlife, 30 October 1979.
65 *Mercury*, 1 July 1980.
68 DPIWE Archives: Speech Notes - Gordon above Olga Hydro-Electric Development Bill.
69 ibid.
72 ibid.
73 ibid., p.54.
76 ibid., p.174.
78 ibid., pp.178-179.
81 *Mercury*, 4 April 1981.
83 *Mercury*, 4 April 1981.
84 *Mercury*, 6 April 1981.
86 ibid.
87 *Mercury*, 16 April 1981.
Chapter 9

Tasmania’s National Parks Movement Conflicts with Logging and Government Interests over Forest Reservation

By the 1980s Tasmania had an impressive national park estate but environmentalists were concerned by the lack of forest protected within it. Tasmanian forests include the tallest eucalypt forests in the southern hemisphere, rainforests and other forest types which environmentalists believed to be of high conservation value, but relatively little forest with potential commercial value was protected. Data from vegetation surveys illustrated that some forest types were afforded little protection, yet the Parks Service was unable to confront the logging industry and its government support-base to the extent necessary to alter the situation. While the HEC’s power to determine what might or might not be protected within Tasmania’s national parks system had been checked by the late 1980s in the campaign to save the Franklin River, that of the logging industry remained unabated. If the logging industry’s influence over forest reservation was to be challenged the non-government environmental lobby knew that the task was theirs.

The State’s timber-based industries had a clear interest in maintaining access to public lands with commercial quality forest. Timber interests had achieved major revocations of forest in the Mt Field and Hartz National Parks and successfully blocked a number of reserve proposals that involved land with potentially commercial forest timber during the era of the Scenery Preservation Board. The advent of Tasmania’s export woodchipping in the early 1970s increased the logging industry’s demand for timber and, when woodchip export licences were due for renewal in the early 1980s, environmentalists were aware that process would involve areas of forest with high conservation value. Environmental organisations launched a forests campaign to increase the amount of forests protected within the State’s national parks and formal reserves, a campaign that aimed to achieve the maximum protection of high conservation forests possible within social and political constraints. While the campaigners knew the result of their efforts would be a compromise, compromise was not part of their campaign which, through persistence,
achieved incremental increases in the amount of forest protected within the State’s national park estate.

Conflict between the politically powerful timber industry and the environmental movement seemed inevitable, given that the national parks movement aimed for an ecologically representative reserve system but ‘economically productive’ forests remained conspicuously under-represented in the reserve system. In an article published by the Wilderness Society in its journal *Wilderness* in 1981, David Bowman, a researcher in the Department of Geography at the University of Tasmania, wrote that Europeans had removed half of Tasmania’s forest cover since 1803. Of the forest that remained - 2.87 million hectares - 36% was privately owned, 44% was dedicated to production forestry and 4% was reserved in State Reserves for purposes other than timber production. And, Bowman argued, the 4% in State Reserves included very little tall eucalypt forest. Yet the State’s Forestry Commission announced a goal of continuing to claim State Forests from unallocated public land until a minimum area of 89% of all forested Crown land was reached. The combination of the timber industry’s plans for expansion and environmentalists’ concern over the amount of certain forest types protected within national parks led to another major political controversy involving a conflict of interests between industry and conservation over Tasmania’s national park estate.

In aiming to secure the protection of more forest within Tasmania’s system of national parks, World Heritage and National Estate areas, the environment movement faced a formidable political opponent in the State’s timber industry. Tasmanian governments have traditionally given timber interests generous access to what seemed, at the time of European settlement, almost limitless forest. In the process of establishing timber-based industries the big timber companies established themselves as major players in the politics of parks with control over large tracts of land and considerable influence over government decisions about what was and was not to be included in national parks and nature reserves.

The scene for major land use conflict over forests was set in the late nineteenth century. On the basis of a consultant’s report commissioned in 1898 by Sir Edward Braddon’s Free Trade government and intended to address the need to protect the
State’s timbered regions, the government decided to tempt large mill owners to establish in the colony by offering them resource security.⁴ Two companies were subsequently granted leases approximately ten times the acreage recommended by the consultant and, after operating in a manner said to be characterised by ‘waste, destruction and lack of concern for the future’, by 1930 they had both ceased trading with accumulated losses of £250,000.⁵

Though destruction of Tasmania’s forests was of concern to conservationists and motivated their efforts to secure reserves such as those at Russell Falls, Mt
Wellington and Mt Field, successive governments continued the policy of encouraging large timber operations. John Dargavel has explained that, after technological developments of the late 1920s made possible the use of eucalypt timber for paper production, three paper manufacturers set up in Tasmania. Australian Newsprint Mills produced newsprint using timber from its concession area in the Derwent Valley and Associated Pulp and Paper Mills produced writing paper using timber from that company's concession in the State's north-west. From the early 1960s Australian Paper Manufacturers also produced wood pulp at Port Huon, south of Hobart, for shipping to the company's paper mills on the mainland.

Forest management and timber usage remained a vexatious issue, and lack of forest protection remained a concern to conservationists. Stephen Kessell, engaged as a consultant to review Tasmania's forests and forest administration in 1944 wrote that high quality forest was being used for paper production:

> In Tasmania, parliament has seen fit to grant very large concessions to the paper industry ... these concessions have meant virtually, that large areas of forest have passed out of the control of the Forestry Department and that good-quality forest can be exploited almost without restriction for conversion into pulp products.6

Tasmanian governments encouraged the companies to expand their operations7 and from 1972 the rate of cutting of Tasmania's forests for the purpose of paper production escalated further with the advent of exporting woodchips for overseas paper production. The high volume of timber sought from Tasmania's native forests by the woodchip industry, combined with continuing demand for sawlogs8 and the State government's policy of granting large concession areas to logging companies, resulted in strong opposition from timber interests to new national parks or park extensions that would deny industry access to forest timber. Timber interests were able to exert influence over national park and reserve proposals through political structures and protocols. The Scenery Board was required to obtain approval from timber, mining and HEC interests prior to recommending an area for reservation and, to assist that process a representative of the Forestry Commission was included in the Scenery Board's membership from 1938. Like the Scenery Board, the Parks Service was required to accommodate timber, mining and HEC interests and respond to the concerns of other vocal interest groups prior to gaining ministerial approval for a park proposal or extension.
At the height of the Franklin River campaign, in the early 1980s, renewal of export licences of the three companies controlling the export woodchip industry in Tasmania - Associated Pulp and Paper Mills, Tasmanian Pulp and Forest Holdings, and Forest Resources - was imminent. Environmentalists knew that, in addition to other environmental and economic problems they believed were associated with the woodchip industry, the licence renewal process represented a direct threat to areas they believed warranted reservation including an expanded national park in the south and south-west of the State. Less than half of the area in the south-west identified by environmentalists as worthy of reservation - their Western Tasmania National Park proposal - had national park or world heritage status, and unreserved sections of the proposed national park contained forests of high conservation value. The southern and northern sections of the World Heritage Area, for example, were connected by a ‘neck’ less than 4 kilometres wide, and the forested banks of the Gordon River lay within a strip of national park only 800 meters from the river on either side. The Western Tasmania National Park proposal included the Gordon Splits, the Spires and, significantly in the context of woodchipping, the Southern and Lemonthyme forests.

Political support for the conservationists’ aim to protect the Southern and Lemonthyme forests by creating the Western Tasmania National Park and extending the World Heritage Area was conspicuous in its absence. The logging industry was politically powerful and woodchip exports had become an established Tasmanian industry. Tasmania produced a large proportion of Australia’s woodchips. Powell was correct in arguing that:

> The economy of that small state (Tasmania) has been dependent for generations on regular and irregular alliances between the ruling political parties and a monopolistic Hydro-Electric Commission which is often portrayed as the de facto government. That is a wild exaggeration: the influence of developmental interests is pervasive, but the HEC is not the only giant on the island. Extensive forest concessions granted to sawmillers and pulp and paper manufacturers have fostered even older political ties which originated in the nineteenth century.

The Commonwealth, however, had responsibilities under the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975* and the *World Heritage Properties (Conservation) Act 1983* in relation to National Estate and World Heritage areas, and the timber industry planned to log National Estate forests that environmentalists claimed warranted inclusion in
an extended World Heritage Area. Consequently the environment movement appealed to the federal Labor government not to agree to the woodchip companies’ and Premier Gray’s call to extend existing licences to a common expiry date in 1988 and waive the requirement of an Environmental Impact Statement.

The compromise achieved by the environment movement allowed the extension of operations to a common expiry date but required the companies to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. While the logging industry, with the State’s Forestry Commission as joint proponent, prepared its Impact Statement environmentalists launched a forests campaign in 1985. Environment groups, including the Wilderness Society, Tasmanian Conservation Trust and Australian Conservation Foundation established the Forest Action Network. With the involvement of regionally-based conservation groups the Forest Action Network researched national park proposals, forest management practices and economics, organized political action based on their findings and raised public support.11

The Forest Action Network was critical of the timber industry’s Environmental Impact Statement which called for a continuation of export licences for 2.8 million tonnes, to be increased if more wood could be found but conservationists argued, failed to objectively examine feasible and prudent alternatives to logging national estate forests. The industry’s failure to address alternatives to logging national estate forests was significant given that there was little doubt export licences would be renewed. The decision was about which areas of forest the Tasmanian government would protect from logging by reserving them in an extended South-West Tasmania National Park or World Heritage Area as a condition of the Commonwealth issuing the licences.12 The government did not allow the Parks Service to lodge a submission, but the Forest Action Network’s response to the draft Environmental Impact Statement, which was prepared with the help of over 60 supporters including anonymous public servants, academics, consultants and professionals in the forest industry, concluded,

The failings of the draft EIS are so severe that we do not believe they will be rectified by the preparation of a final EIS by the proponents. We therefore recommend that the draft EIS be rejected and a public Inquiry be instigated under the Environmental Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act.13
As environmentalists had anticipated, the industry did not produce an Environmental Impact Statement that adequately addressed the movement’s concerns. Instead, Dargavel wrote, it issued a supplement which rebutted, rather than made adjustments for, criticisms raised in the 460 submissions received on the draft, and argued that any improvements in the industry’s operations should be directed to economic growth rather than to reserving forests from logging.\textsuperscript{14} Despite demonstrations of public opposition to woodchipping national estate forests,\textsuperscript{15} and arguments for protecting more forest in the State’s national park and World Heritage areas expressed through the submission process, the Gray government proceeded with plans to log forests identified as having high conservation value. Barry Cohen, the federal Minister for the Environment, acting in accordance with the Australian Heritage Commission Act, recommended in October 1985 that logging be excluded from 22 national estate areas. Acting in a manner that reflected the conflict of interest that existed between conservation and industry at the national political level, the Minister for Primary industries, John Kerin, rejected Cohen’s advice, maintaining that the Commonwealth lacked the necessary power.\textsuperscript{15} In December 1985 federal cabinet decided to extend the licences for fifteen years, increase the volume by 64,000 tonnes to 289,000 tonnes and allow woodchipping in 87% of Tasmania’s National Estate forests with the Commonwealth’s views being ‘taken into account’ by the Tasmanian government in the preparation of management plans.\textsuperscript{16} Environmentalists’ arguments for increasing the amount of forest protected within national parks failed to produce tangible results at either State or Commonwealth government levels.

Within a week following the Tasmanian State election of February 1986 that saw the Gray Liberal government returned to power, the Forestry Commission commenced road building through the South-West Conservation Area. The route lay between Hartz Mountains National Park and newly nominated World Heritage Area towards World Heritage Area to the south, providing access to planned logging coupes recommended for reservation in the Western Tasmania National Park proposal. Conservationists mounted peaceful protests aimed at stopping logging on two fronts, one in the Lemonthyme Valley, just east of Cradle Mountain, and the other at Farmhouse Creek, 300 kilometres to the south, at the site proposed for a bridge to carry logging machinery to the southern forests. In mounting their protest
conservationists believed they reflected the public interest. An opinion poll conducted in December 1985 showed that just 10% of the Tasmanians surveyed supported logging of National Estate areas. Nevertheless, according to Bob Brown, loggers assaulted conservationists at both sites while police looked on. The police had, Brown said, been given orders from above - from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Police - not to intervene, and images of conservationists being manhandled by loggers subsequently confronted the nation via the media.

The Hawke Labor government intervened after the Gray government announced its intention to log the Lemonthyme, and approved logging in the contentious Jackey’s Marsh-Quamby bluff area. The Commonwealth government established, and forced a hostile State government to acknowledge, a legal commission of inquiry into the Lemonthyme and Southern Forests. The aim of the inquiry was to determine if there were ‘feasible and prudent’ alternatives to logging Tasmania’s National Estate forests, and whether the National Estate forests under contention were worthy of World Heritage listing. But whether that was the sole aim of the exercise was brought into question by the constitution of the panel appointed to determine the matter. It consisted of a retired Equity Court judge, an economist and just one person in the panel of three with a background in environmental assessment relating to national parks. If the forests’ conservation values were to be adequately examined and an expert, rather than political, decision was sought, an expert body such as the Australian Heritage Commission or the International Union for the Conservation of Nature might have been a better choice of arbiter. Instead, the constitution of the panel indicated that the federal government was possibly at least partly motivated by a desire to quell the conflict until after the impending federal election.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Commission of Inquiry failed to resolve issues of contention. Commissioners Helsham and Wallace, the retired judge and the economist, concluded that 10% of the area in question was worthy of World Heritage Area status while the third Commissioner, Peter Hitchcock, lodged a dissenting report stating that the entire area under discussion, including the Douglas-Apsley area on the State’s east coast, plus some additional areas, totaling 115% of the Inquiry area, were worthy of nomination. Nine of the eleven consultants hired by the commission aligned themselves with Hitchcock’s conclusions, the Australian
Heritage Commission also rejected the majority conclusions, and so many protesters attended a forests rally at Hobart’s Casino there were fears the Casino’s carpark would collapse.20 The federal Minister for the Environment, Graham Richardson, said he had no choice other than to advise cabinet to overturn Helsham’s recommendations. Had he not, Richardson said, the Labor Party would have lost the green vote and, more importantly ‘every piece of available evidence showed that virtually the whole of the Lemonthyme and Southern Forests area would qualify for world heritage listing’.21

Being strongly influenced by pro-development interests, and forest management theories arguing that the trees in old-growth forests were about to die and would benefit from the intervention of logging followed by fire in order that they might regenerate, cabinet needed persuading.22 Richardson said he encouraged the environment movement to make a ‘deafening roar’ about the decision while he influenced cabinet. With the backing of the chief economic minister, Paul Keating, Richardson finally gained the support of the Prime Minister and cabinet for a compromise that 70% of the area be nominated for World Heritage listing.23

Environmentalists were not as elated as might have been expected because their analysis showed that just 30% of the forests in question had been protected while the 70% included ‘all of the buttongrass plains, the bare mountaintops and the sand dunes’.24 For the environment movement the process had involved a huge amount of lobbying, campaigning and protest effort for limited conservation gains that did not include success for national park proposals, notably those for an expanded Western Tasmania National Park, which was to have encompassed the Lemonthyme and Southern Forests, and the proposed Douglas-Apsley National Park. In addition, the Tasmanian Forests Agreement that resulted from the inquiry presented further barriers to environmentalists achieving protection of forests within national parks and the World Heritage Area. Those barriers included an approved increase in pulpwood production, continued logging in Tasmania’s National Estate forests, no more unilateral World Heritage List proposals by the Commonwealth and no more forestry inquiries.25
In 1987 a controversy arose over a proposed paper mill at Wesley Vale that was not directly a national park issue but affected national parks’ political environment. The mill’s potential requirement for large volumes of timber posed a direct threat to forests which environmentalists wanted protected within national park and World Heritage areas, and the political controversy that ensued raised the profile of green politics in Tasmania prior to a State election which subsequently assisted the national park cause. Though a paper industry did have the potential to provide more jobs than a woodchip industry because of down-stream processing, the conservation protest was joined by thousands of Tasmanians, including farmers and fishermen who believed that the harm done by a large pulp mill using the chemical process proposed outweighed the scheme’s professed economic and employment benefits. Though the mill concept was supported by both State and Commonwealth governments, in response to public protest the Commonwealth government eventually intervened by strengthening environmental regulations under its powers relating to foreign investment, leading to the withdrawal of foreign equity and the mill proposal.  

In the period leading up to the 1989 State election bulldozers were moving into the south-west, preparing the way for the logging of National Estate forests. This time it was with the agreement of the Commonwealth government. At the State level, however, Wesley Vale was still on people’s minds. Conservation-minded Tasmanians were concerned about what they saw as inappropriate development including the construction of a road near the Hartz Mountains National Park for the purpose of logging forests in areas proposed for World Heritage Area listing within the proposed Western Tasmania National Park. The election resulted in three more Green Independents - Christine Milne and Di Hollister, both of whom had been active in the Wesley Vale campaign, and peace activist, Lance Armstrong, joining Bob Brown and Jerry Bates in State parliament. The Liberal Party won seventeen seats, the Labor Party won fourteen and the Greens held five seats. Neither of the major parties held a majority to form a government without the Greens’ support. Concerned about the possible effect on logging profits that the Greens, if aligned with Labor, could wield, Edmund Rouse, Chairman of the logging company Gunns, attempted to bribe a Labor member, Jim Cox, to cross the floor. In the midst of the
bribery scandal, the push for a second election collapsed and the Labor-Green Accord assumed office.28

**National parks expand under the Labor-Green Accord**

Given the restrictions of the Parks Service’s political power, the Greens’ ascendency to parliamentary power represented a new avenue of political support for the State’s national parks system. Though the Labor-Green alliance was fragile from the start because the Greens’ philosophy and aims were fundamentally different from those of the Tasmanian Labor Party on most issues, it offered a ‘window of opportunity’ for national parks. In return for negotiated commitments from Labor, the Greens undertook to support the minority Labor government, to pass its budget and supply bills, attend all parliamentary sittings and not to support any Opposition motion of no confidence in the government.29 In return, Labor made commitments on a number of environmental and social issues that were of importance to the Greens, including an extension of Freycinet National Park by the addition of the Friendly Beaches, the site of a proposed sand mining operation.

A great victory for the national park movement was the declaration of the Douglas-Apsley National Park, protecting the last large undisturbed area of dry sclerophyll forest remaining in the State.30 The Forest Action Network had prepared a proposal for a 14,800 hectare Douglas-Apsley National Park in 1984. Subsequently, a block of land that provided access to the southern end of the proposed park was donated to the Wilderness Society and a block at the northern end was purchased by supporters of the park proposal. Under pressure from east coast residents a case for protecting the Douglas-Apsley was included in the Helsham Inquiry’s brief. It was not until the Labor-Green Accord, however, that the area achieved reservation status as a national park. The 16,080 hectare reserve that was proclaimed under the Accord exceeded the Wilderness Society’s earlier proposal by 1,200 hectares.

Also under the Accord, the Denison Spires area was declared a national park, thereby widening the narrow neck of reserve that had previously connected the southern and northern parts of the World Heritage Area. It was agreed that the Little Fisher Valley in the Upper Mersey would be gazetted as a national park, mining in national parks
was banned, and Labor’s Agenda for Reform during its first term of office included the creation of marine parks. Threats to forests as yet unreserved were eased by agreement to abandon the proposed Huon Forests Products venture, confirmation that plans for a pulp mill at Wesley Vale would not be resurrected, cessation of logging in National Estate areas not already approved under the Federal-State forestry agreement, and limitation of the State’s export woodchip quota to 2.889 million tons per annum.

After what Bob Brown described as difficult negotiations with Labor, the Greens succeeded in tying the Accord to a substantial increase in the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness, an increase of 80%, from 765,000 hectares to 1,384,000 hectares, incorporating much of the proposed Western Tasmania National Park including a number of pre-existing national parks and reserves. Among the areas incorporated in the World Heritage Area extension were Liffey Falls, Meander Falls, Dry’s Bluff, the Little Fisher Valley and Marakoopa State Reserve in the State’s north-west, sections of the Lemonythme and Southern Forests, the Central Plateau Protected Area and Hartz Mountains National Park.

The Labor-Green Accord achieved significant expansion of the State’s national park estate and World Heritage Area before it collapsed in October 1990. Though it was not the only cause of tension, pressure from the logging industry precipitated the breakdown. Contrary to the intent of the clause in the Accord limiting the quantity of woodchips that were to be exported from Tasmania, the Premier, Michael Field, and his Minister for Forests, David Llewellyn, developed ‘forest reform’ legislation to ensure ‘resource security’ for the woodchip companies, removed the export woodchip quota and provided the companies with access to the State’s remaining unprotected forests. The Liberals won the following State election, in 1992, with a two seat majority, Labor lost two seats and the Greens held their five.

Tasmania’s national park estate is expanded further by a Green and Liberal Alliance

A second era of national park expansion resulted from the Greens holding the balance of power, this time aligned with the Liberals, after the 1995 State election. Again, the alignment was fragile. The new Liberal Premier, Ray Groom, had shown
where his sympathies lay in the forest conflict when, at a loggers’ picnic day at Farmhouse Creek he won the ‘chuck a greenie’ contest, defeating the previous government’s Forests Minister, David Llewellyn, by five meters and future Labor Premier, Paul Lennon, by two meters. Nevertheless, the Liberal government did expand the State’s national parks system. The Party’s election policy supported the creation of a South Bruny National Park, and the Party had also agreed to reserve about half of the recommended areas for protection identified by environmentalists in the export woodchip review process during the late 1980s. These recommended areas for protection totalled 200,000 hectares of forest areas around the State, some of which, including the Savage River and Sumac rainforest in the Tarkine, the Pedder and Wild Wave forests, and additions to the Hellyer Gorge State Reserve, were declared permanent reserves under the Liberal government.

The Liberal government’s Minister for National Parks, Peter Hodgeman, enabled the passage of a pre-existing proposal for a South Bruny National Park. The idea of creating the park, by linking Labillardere State Reserve and Fluted Cape Reserve with adjoining unallocated Crown Land in one reserve, originated from a Tasmanian Coastal Environment Study undertaken by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and the Hobart Walking Club. The report of that study recommended that the area between Cloudy Bay and Tasman Head be added to the Fluted Cape Reserve. The Parks Service investigated the proposal in 1980 and concluded that the area’s scenery, with its long stretches of beach and striking dolerite cliffs backed by substantially unmodified native vegetation, was spectacular and should be made a national park. The Parks Service recommended that the park incorporate not only the existing State reserves and unallocated coastal Crown land but that, in addition, some private land should be purchased. The Gray government considered declaring the park but a political deadlock arose over whether or not the State government should, or would, buy two blocks of land on Cloudy Bay Split which, together, would have cost around $160,000. A Bruny Island lobby group and other park supporters, including Labor and Green members of parliament, pushed for the purchase but the Minister for Lands, Parks and Wildlife strongly opposed it. The issue was not resolved and a proclamation did not proceed. By 1996, when the proposal was resurrected, the Forestry Commission had indicated its intention to revoke 800 hectares of State Forest at the southern end of Fluted Cape State Reserve, subject to
the area being proclaimed national park. The area had no commercial forestry values and the Commission suggested it would be more appropriately managed as part of the proposed South Bruny National Park. When the Minister re-considered the proposal it represented 5,040 hectares, including the 560 hectare Fluted Cape Reserve and 2,332 hectare Labillardere State Reserve, 800 hectares of State Forest and approximately 500 hectares of unallocated Crown land.43 In the absence of strong political conflict over the re-invented proposal, the South Bruny National Park was declared in 1996.

During Hodgeman’s term as Minister for Environment and Land Management, a 22 hectare reserve at Howden, south of Hobart - the Peter Murrell Reserve - was dedicated to the Parks Service’s first Director. Declared in October 1997, the reserve was created to provide habitat to rare flora and fauna, notably the 40-spotted pardalote. It was also to provide recreational opportunities such as walking, mountain-biking, fishing and horse-riding. The Huntingfield Pony Club, of which Hodgeman was a founding member, was granted a 20 year lease on 25 acres at the southern end of the reserve.44

**National Parks are reviewed through the Regional Forest Agreement**

For Tasmania’s national parks system 1997 was significant as the year of the Regional Forest Agreement. The Agreement process had the potential to secure most, if not all, of Tasmania’s remaining high conservation value forests within national parks and conservation reserves. Though the outcome fell short of environmentalists’ goals, the process did result in an increase in the amount of forest protected within Tasmania’s national parks and formal reserves.

In 1995 the Commonwealth government made an agreement with the States aimed at achieving forest management that would be seen to conserve biological and cultural values while allowing for a sustainable but also economically competitive forest industry. As a basis for the State-based agreements the Commonwealth government defined criteria for a ‘comprehensive, adequate and representative’ system of conservation reserves. Targets applying to the criteria were that a minimum of 15% of the pre-1750 distribution of each forest ecosystem should be preserved. At least 60% of existing old growth forest was to be protected for each
forest ecosystem, and at least 90% of high quality wilderness areas. Resources made available through the Regional Forest Agreement process resulted in more scientific data enabling a more systematic approach to biodiversity conservation and land reservation on the basis of vegetation types. It was, consequently, possible for land management authorities to designate reserves in a less ad hoc manner than had been the case prior to the mid 1990s. By the 1990s conservation of species and natural environments - biodiversity - had become a major focus of the environment movement and of national park philosophy and management. While forest conservation has traditionally been motivated not only by science, but also by sentimentality and spirituality, a factor illustrated in the Wilderness Society’s forest campaign promotional material, by the 1990s forestry politics, including the Regional Forest Agreement process, focused on conserving biodiversity and was conducted within a scientific discourse.

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust calculated that the system of reserves required to protect Tasmanian forests according to the criteria adopted for the purpose of the Regional Forest Agreement would represent 2.8 million hectares of which about 1.6 million hectares were already reserved. The remaining areas that required protection included .9 million hectares of forest and .3 million hectares of non-forest. The areas that were protected as a result of the Regional Forest Agreement - 51,431 hectares of new national parks and 6,828 hectares of new State Reserves - represented a fraction of that estimated to be required by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust. Greg Middleton, who was a scientific officer with the Parks Service, explained that while the Regional Forest Agreement resulted in better knowledge of vegetation types and their distribution, the process inevitably involved some differences of opinion over the interpretation of data. Some forest areas were included in the new reserves that resulted from the Agreement but much of the loggable forest that the conservation movement believed qualified for protection under the Regional Forest Agreement was not. Though Greens held the balance of power with a Liberal minority government at that time they were not successful in achieving a better outcome for the environment movement. Bob Brown explained;

… any move towards protecting forests under the RFA were constantly criticised by Labor as going too far. It was pressure from the Labor opposition in Tasmania, the TTLTC and the timber industry which prevented the Liberals from having room to move to protect forests. As bad as the RFA was when it was announced, Paul Lennon, then
opposition deputy leader, said it had gone too far and protected too much that the Labor Party would not have protected, the Savage River rainforest in the Tarkine wilderness, for example.51

Savage River was the largest of the new national parks declared as a result of the Regional Forest Agreement. Listed on the Register of the National Estate but largely unprotected, the Tarkine includes ocean beaches, waterfalls, wild rivers and mountain ranges including the Norfolk Range. It also contains the largest continuous area of temperate rainforest in Australia - 200,000 hectares of myrtle, celery top pine, sassafras, leatherwood and blackwood. The Regional Forest Agreement, which was signed in 1997, reserved almost 18,000 hectares of north-west Tasmania’s Tarkine wilderness, though conservationists were disappointed in the profile of the new national park which they argued was small and comprised ‘mainly button grass on Baretop ridge’ and little forest.52

The idea of a Norfolk Range National Park, including some of the area later known as the Tarkine, had been initiated by the Circular Head Council and the Burnie Field Naturalists in the mid-1960s. The groups approached Peter Sims who, as President of the North-West Walking Club, prepared a proposal which was presented to the Scenery Preservation Board.53 The Norfolk Range National Park had, Sims said, been near the point of gazettal when it was caught in a change of government in 1972 and vetoed by the new Premier and Minister for Mines, Eric Reece. The area was subsequently designated the ‘Arthur-Pieman Protected Area’ though, Sims argued, this status gave little protection from shooting, fishing, shack-building, off-road vehicle driving or cattle grazing. In 1997 one third of the Tarkine was re-classified to ‘Conservation Area’ which provided park rangers with regulations they were able to enforce in order to better protect the area’s natural values.54 In the early 1990s the Tasmanian Conservation Trust undertook a comprehensive study of the area made possible by an Australian Heritage Commission National Estate Grant of approximately $75,000. That study confirmed and documented that the area met World Heritage criteria—and reinforced the Wilderness Society’s proposal for an extension of the western part of the World Heritage Area to include the Tarkine.55

Much of the Tarkine forest had been allocated to the woodchip company North Broken Hill. In his introduction to the Wilderness Society’s publication *The Tarkine*
(1995), Bob Brown wrote that, in order that the timber could be accessed by the logging industry, the State government absolved itself from its own environmental planning laws to allow roadwork to proceed before the environmental study, which was closed to public input or scrutiny, was finished.56 Meanwhile the Federal government which had acknowledged that the Tarkine possibly held World Heritage values refused, in breach of the World Heritage Convention and international law, to advance its nomination to the World Heritage Bureau.57 After years of campaigning for a national park that would protect the area’s natural values, environmentalists criticised the Regional Forest Agreement because it resulted in the proclamation of a relatively small and treeless part of the Tarkine as national park while it left most of the area’s forests available for logging.

The second largest national park that emerged from the Regional Forest Agreement was the 8,312 hectare Tasman National Park. Local conservationists and national park activists of the Tasman Peninsula had, from the 1980s, called for existing Peninsula reserves to be combined and some coastal areas added to form a single national park.58 Prior to the declaration of the Tasman National Park most of the Tasman Peninsula’s eastern and southern coastline was managed as a series of State Reserves and a Forestry Reserve. In 1995 the State’s Public Land Use Commissioner recommended to the government that the reserves be combined into one national park under the control of the Parks Service.59 Local conservationist Peter Storey said that should have been an easy political decision for the government, given that the areas were already reserved from logging and had little potential for mining, except that Forestry Tasmania (the Forestry Commission) opposed the recommendation because it did not want to lose control of a public relations asset in the Abel Tasman Forest Reserve.60 Storey argued that the advantages of managing the area as a single national park included better protection of wildlife and increased potential to develop the reserve as a tourist destination. Encouraging walkers to the Peninsula could, Storey argued, take pressure off the wetter and more fragile World Heritage Area walking tracks and lead visitors to spend longer on the Peninsula than a single day spent at Port Arthur, with resulting economic and employment benefits for local communities.61
Local conservation groups, under the umbrella of the Peninsula Environmental Network, continued to push for the national park. They networked to increase local support, lobbied parliamentarians and promoted walking tracks and other eco-tourism opportunities. Storey noted that the Liberal Minister for the Environment, Peter Hodgeman, was receptive to the idea but waited too long for an opportune time to make the announcement for it to be made under the Liberal government.62

The Labor Minister, David Llewellyn, granted the Peninsula Environment Network an inter-departmental committee to examine the proposal. Storey said that the majority of committee members, representing walking clubs, tourism, national parks, forestry, horse riders and four-wheel drivers (who were virtually excluded from the proposed reserve because of the terrain) supported the proposal, with the exception of the forestry representatives and the Chairman who, like Llewellyn, was a member of the pro-timber industry Forest Protect Society. Park supporters being in the majority, that committee urged the government to proceed with the park and the proposal was eventually tied to the Regional Forest Agreement.63 Through that process came a commitment that the Abel Tasman Forest Reserve, Crescent Bay State Reserve and the Cape Raoul Reserve would be dedicated the Tasman National Park by the end of 1998. No additional land was added to the park proposal but it did result in the transfer of land under Forestry Tasmania management to Parks Service management.64 Park activists then endeavoured to convince politicians that the 1,000 hectare Cape Surville Forest Reserve should be added to the proposed park and succeeded in persuading the Labor Party to include the area in its environmental policy, a fortnight before the State election of 1998. The Tasman National Park, comprising 9,705 hectares, was subsequently proclaimed in May 1999.65

Environmentalists were critical in their judgments of the Regional Forest Agreement despite the new areas of national park that resulted from it. Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, of the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania, argued that the Agreement fell short of what it could have been. The process, he argued, had the potential to solve the forest conflict by putting more land in reserves but instead the State and Federal governments compromised in places they should not have.66 Geoff Law, a Wilderness Society campaigner, described the limited reserves and abolition of the woodchip limit that resulted from
the Regional Forest Agreement as a ‘disaster for the forests’ and Andrew Rickets, of the Reedy Marsh Forest Conservation Group, wrote;

The Regional Forest Agreement outcome was such a farce. The process was corrupt; the overall result was already decided. They just produced a metre of reports to justify the unjustifiable and the social and economic assessments are just a pack of lies.

Environmentalists might have appeared unreasonable in criticising the process and outcome of the Regional Forest Agreement but the movement believed the interests of forest protection were too compromised. While the forest area protected within national parks and formal reserves did increase as a result of the Regional Forest Agreement the increase was not as great as might have been expected of a scientific, objective process. Available data on forest distribution and reservation illustrated that formal reservation of some forest and vegetation types remained under-represented by the Agreement’s own criteria. With the exception of some vegetation types endemic to areas of the State where most land is in private ownership, notably the Midlands, this outcome would have been determined by political, not scientific considerations. Once again in the history of the politics of Tasmania’s national parks, where the interests of the State’s timber industry and national parks’ conservation role conflicted, national parks’ interests were compromised more than a purely scientific process might have determined.

**Protection of forest within national parks remains contentious**

After two major reviews of forest protection within Tasmania’s national parks and World Heritage Area - the Helsham Inquiry and the Regional Forest Agreement process - both of which resulted in new forest reserves, environmentalists argued that the forest area protected within the State’s national parks remained inadequate. The forest areas added to national parks had not, they believed, made sufficient adjustment for the low level of protection afforded to forests, particularly old-growth forests, before the reviews. Prior to the Helsham Inquiry the Australian Heritage Commission argued that just 1.2% of old-growth forest was protected within national parks because successive governments had wanted most of the resource available for harvest. The Heritage Commission explained,

Establishing National parks covering a range of forest types has proved very difficult in the face of competing land use needs from agriculture and forestry. Such developments usually destroy or severely compromise national estate values of mature and old growth
forests and have contributed to the crisis situation of a scarcity of forests available for conservation.70

David Mercer and Jim Peterson of the Department of Geography at Monash University also argued, in 1986, that the proportion of forest in national parks was small.

Despite the apparently good record of land reservation in Tasmania, at present only 4% of the state’s forests are in reserves. At one time some 5 million hectares in Tasmania were forested but 37% of this area has now been extensively modified by man. The Tasmanian reserve system is far from complete and is strongly biased towards protection of the alpine western mountain regions and buttongrass moorlands. These have slightly acid, leached or skeletal soils or thin peat horizons over a quartzite substrate and are virtually useless for agriculture and forestry. Apparently the potential for mineral extraction is also low in such areas. This pattern of reserves vindicates the ‘residual’ explanation … for Tasmanian national parks. That is, areas are reserved only if they are seen to have no commercial value.71

After the Regional Forest Agreement was ratified timber industry supporters claimed the matter of forest reservation was settled.72 The State government argued that the Regional Forest Agreement resulted in better protection of biodiversity, old-growth forests, wilderness and endangered species and that it had enhanced the reserve system.73 Through the creation of two new national parks - the Tasman and Savage River National Parks - and extensions to five other national parks including Freycinet, Mt William, Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair, Franklin - Gordon Wild Rivers and South-West National Park, the national park estate had been extended by over 50,000 hectares. In addition, the government argued, the Regional Forest Agreement resulted in over 6,000 hectares of new State Reserves, approximately 25,000 hectares of new Conservation Areas, 30,000 hectares of new Regional Reserves, 183,000 hectares of new Forest Reserves and, in response to the need to protect forest communities that do not occur on public reserved land, a voluntary program to protect forest on private land.74

Environmentalists, however, argued that the ‘new’ national parks included land previously reserved under other reserve categories, that what forest was ‘protected’ was largely in small reserves too small to be ecologically sustainable and that, in total, just 30,000 hectares of previously unprotected forest was reserved through the Regional Forest Agreement.75 According to Alistair Graham, a Tasmanian Conservation Trust researcher, after the national parks extensions achieved by the
Labor-Green Accord and the Regional Forest Agreement, protection of some forest types preferred by the timber industry remained vastly inadequate. Graham argued that, in 1996, just 6.3% of the extent of Swamp Gum (*E. regnans*) that existed at the end of the eighteenth century, and 7.4% of that of Stringy Bark (*E. obliqua*), was reserved, amounts that fell well below Regional Forestry Agreement targets, and that just 13% of the extent of *E. regnans* and 14% of *E. obliqua* at the end of the eighteenth century remained. Another commercial forest type, Mountain gum (*E. delegentensis*), which often grows on relatively inaccessible sites, had fared better, with 32% of its early nineteenth century extent remaining, 18% within reserves.76

Although Tasmania’s national park and reserve system was extensive by the turn of the century, its comprehensiveness in terms of conserving the State’s biodiversity varied. By 2005 Tasmania had 589 formal reserves covering approximately 2,606,260 hectares, or 38%, of the State’s land area, and approximately 83,000 hectares, or 3.5% of the marine environment. But, despite the size of the reserve system and environmentalists’ efforts to achieve a representative system, habitat types were unevenly represented and many species and plant communities were not represented in reserves. While button grass moorland and alpine vegetation communities were well reserved, native woodlands and grasslands were not - only about 1% of white gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) grassy woodland, for example, was contained within reserves - and neither were wetlands, estuarine and marine habitats. Of 50 native forest communities identified and mapped for the regional Forest Agreement, 34 met the benchmark of having at least 15% of their pre-1750 extent protected in reserves, while ten had less than 7.5% protected.77 The distribution of reserves is also concentrated in a few bioregions. While 83% of the West bioregion has been reserved, 56% of the Central Highlands and 44% of the Southern Ranges, six of the State’s nine terrestrial bioregions have less than 20% of their area in reserves. In the case of the Northern Midlands, for example, 97.4% was outside any type of reserve.78 By the turn of the century, when the availability of unalienated Crown land was limited, there was limited potential to remedy inadequacies in Tasmania’s terrestrial reserve system by utilizing public land. The pattern of land use and reserve distribution reflected a number of factors including a preference for reserves in ruggedly beautiful, remote and economically marginal areas, early claims made by European settlers for land suitable for agriculture and grazing, and claims
made by the State’s logging industry for land containing commercial stands of forest timber.

What conservationists argued to be a low level of forest protection was due largely to forests’ initial exclusion from national parks and reserves, and partly to their vulnerability to being removed from the reserve system through national park revocations. Pressure from commercial logging interests led to four major revocations from the Hartz Mountains, in 1943, 1952, 1958 and 1979, resulting in a total of 4,052 hectares being withdrawn from the park. Much of this area comprised tall forest with trees over 40 meters in height dominated by *Eucalyptus obliqua* and *Eucalyptus regnans*, and the 1,489 hectares of land that was excised from Mt Field in 1950 comprised similar forest. 79

Why has forest reservation fared so poorly within the national parks system of a once extensively forested State? In defence of their position, pro-logging politicians cite the need to provide Tasmanians with employment as the reason why forest should not be ‘locked up’ in reserves. Conservationists refuted industry claims of forest reserves leading to job losses arguing, for example, that, in the ten years 1990-2000, while outputs increased and woodchip export levels rose to 5 million tons per annum there was a 40% loss of jobs. 80 While employment in the logging sector might have fallen, however, pro-development interests within the State have welcomed the financial investment that big timber companies represent, and taken pride in the rise of company profits. 81

Despite the Commonwealth government’s intention that the Regional Forest Agreement should resolve boundary issues between forest reservation and logging, the extent to which it failed to do so in the Tasmanian case resulted in old-growth logging becoming a major issue in the 2004 Federal election. Tasmanian environmentalists continued to argue that protection of forests within national parks was inadequate and their case was supported by scientists who argued that the Regional Forests Agreement resulted in a political rather than scientific outcome. In the lead-up to the election 100 scientists put their names to newspaper advertisements calling for Commonwealth government intervention to improve Tasmania’s forest reserve system, writing that:
The Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) is widely perceived in the scientific community to have failed to deliver the intended protection for environmental, wilderness and heritage values that state and federal governments committed to when they signed the National Forest Policy in 1992.

The scientific processes in the Tasmanian RFA were overwhelmed by political compromises. Established criteria for forest conservation were not fully applied. There are large areas of high conservation value forest that would have been reserved if the RFA criteria for forest conservation had been fully applied.82

Speculation about the major parties’ policies on Tasmania’s forests continued until the week prior to the election when Mark Latham, leader of the federal Labor Party, unveiled Labor’s policy. Latham said that, if elected, the Commonwealth would appoint a panel to consider protecting up to 240,000 hectares of forest areas nominated by the Wilderness Society. The areas to be examined included:

- The Tarkine Wilderness and adjacent forests
- Great Western Tiers
- Eastern Tiers including Wielangta
- Tasman Peninsula and Bruny Island
- North East Highlands including Blue Tier and Mt Arthur
- Ben Lomond extensions
- Eastern Boundary Extensions to the World Heritage Area including the Picton, Huon and Weld River valleys, Mt. Field, Beech Creek and Counsel River
- Styx and Upper Florentine River valleys
- Reedy Marsh and Dazzler Range
- Leven Canyon and Black Bluff 83

Two days after Latham revealed his position the Liberals’ leader John Howard announced his. Howard committed the Liberal-National Party Coalition to add more than 170,000 hectares of old-growth forest to the reserve system,

- Protected areas to include 76,000ha of rainforest in the Tarkine, Huon and Weld valleys and North-East Tasmania.
- Protect 18,700ha of old-growth in the Styx and the Florentine valleys along the eastern boundary of the World Heritage Area.
- Protect an extra 29,600ha of old-growth forest on the Eastern Tiers, Tasman Peninsula, Central Highlands and North-East Highlands (including Blue and Great Western Tiers).84

Both parties’ policies incorporated funding for industry development and, among other commitments, Labor promised to end clearing of native vegetation while the Coalition promised to continue its support for the Tasmanian government’s plans for a new pulp mill.85 While the environment movement supported Labor’s policy, the timber industry preferred the Coalition’s. After the election, elements of the Labor Party were critical of the Party’s ‘green’ forest policy’s contribution to its election loss, particularly the loss of marginal Tasmanian electorates Bass and Braddon.
However, the significance of the Tasmanian forests issue in deciding in the overall election outcome remained debatable.

Having won the 2004 Federal election the Coalition government reached an agreement with the Tasmanian Labor government to submit proposals to State parliament for the addition of 58,031 hectares to Tasmania’s reserve system. The proposals included the addition of 10,866 hectares to new reserves under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* which had superseded, in part, the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1971* and 47,165 hectares under the *Forestry Act 1920*. Little over a fifth of the new reserve areas were destined for the Parks Services’ jurisdiction - most of the new reserve areas were allocated to the jurisdiction of Forestry Tasmania - and all the areas were to be available for mineral exploration and mining under the *Mineral Resources Development Act 1995*.86

The areas proposed for reservation included parts of the Tarkine and the Styx for which the conservation movement, notably the Wilderness Society, had raised a national profile. The Wilderness Society launched a campaign for 15,000 hectare ‘Valley of the Giants’ national park for the Styx Valley, which harbors the tallest measured trees in the Southern Hemisphere, in 2001.87 While the environment movement welcomed the reserve proposals, especially those in the Tarkine and the Styx, it lamented that other areas identified as having forest of high conservation value in the North East Highlands, Blue Tier and Western Tiers would remain open to logging, and that their non-protected status would mean conflicts over old-growth logging in Tasmania would continue.88

**Conclusion**

Over two decades of campaigning for more forest, particularly old-growth forest, to be protected within national parks and reserves the environment movement achieved significant gains. The result was less than environmentalists had aimed for, and less than they believed was adequate given the relatively small amount of forest protected within national parks and formal reserves at the start of their forests campaign in 1985. The environmental campaign faced a powerful political opponent in the logging industry and its parliamentary support base. Consequently, the political support provided to environmentalists’ forest campaigns by the Tasmanian Greens
holding the balance of power in State parliament and, to a lesser extent, the Hawke Labor government, made an important contribution to the environment movement’s hard-won gains of forest protected within national parks.
Endnotes: Chapter 9

5. ibid.
13. ibid.
14. ibid.
15. ibid.
24. ibid., p.231.
25. ibid., pp.228-233.
28. ibid, p.107.
34. ibid.
40. ibid.
44. DPIWE Archives: Draft Cabinet Minute attached to National Parks and Wildlife Service Minute to Minister, 22 February 1995.


50 Interview with G. Middleton, 3 February 2004.


54 ibid., p.18.

55 ibid.


57 ibid.


59 ibid.

60 ibid.

61 ibid.


63 ibid.

64 ibid.

65 ibid.


68 A. Ricketts, in H. Gee, *For the Forests*, 322-323


70 ibid.


74 ibid.


78 ibid.


Chapter 10

Tasmania’s National Parks at the Turn of the Century: Environmental, Political and Social Challenges

By the last decade of the twentieth century there was little scope for expansion of the Tasmanian national park estate because just a small amount of Crown land remained unalienated. State government conservation policy focused on preserving biodiversity, not wilderness, and strategies for extending conservation of biodiversity shifted from public to private land. Also, because of the relative inadequacy of off-shore conservation, marine reserves became a major recipient of government and non-government efforts to improve the adequacy of the State’s reserve system. Since most members of the public were not as involved with marine sites as they were with terrestrial sites this aspect of reserve expansion was spared the level of political conflict associated with public concern over Lake Pedder, the Franklin River or old-growth forests. With the exception of forest campaigns, extension of the State’s reserve system was driven largely by government agencies with less input from public interest groups than in earlier periods of national park and reserve expansion.

Elements of the State’s national parks movement - environmental organisations, Green parliamentarians and national park user groups - continued to promote their interests in relation to national parks through political advocacy though, unlike earlier periods of national parks’ history, their advocacy related mostly to matters of national park and reserve policy. By the beginning of the twenty-first century the focus of public debate about national parks had shifted from national park expansion to matters of public access and the development of high-cost tourism facilities within national parks.

Different, and conflicting, views about the premise and role of national parks gathered momentum partly as a result of increased support by governments, conservation professionals and some public interest groups for the concept of bioregionalism, which challenged wilderness preservation as a dominant rationale for reserve selection and management. In addition, some national park stake-holders believed they were disenfranchised, their interests unjustifiably dismissed and their
activities, including hunting, horse-riding and four-wheel driving unfairly prohibited by environmentally focused national park management policies. Simon Cubit explained that the perceived strength of political sponsorship of ecocentrism - a philosophy that argued for removal of the human element from wilderness areas - by the Parks Service and Green parliamentarians, prompted disenfranchised stakeholders to create the Tasmanian Traditional and Recreational land Users Federation, in early 1990. Developmental interests continued their resistance to protectionist national parks policies and, from the late 1970s, their arguments blended with those promoting bioregionalism and access to national parks and protected areas based on the principle of sustainability rather than protectionism, in the context of a backlash that incorporated but extended beyond developmental interests.

The term ‘bioregionalism’ relates to the shift that David Hales observed in the dominant perspective on national parks reflected at the 1972 and 1982 world National Park Conferences - from the ‘traditional’ concern of preserving natural landscapes within national parks to a concern about land management which extended beyond park boundaries. The concept arose partly in response to concern over reserves displacing indigenous people from their livelihoods and traditions. It argues that national parks will not survive in a hostile environment and that, consequently, park policy must acknowledge peoples’ prior relationships with reserved land. In order that interests other than strict environmental protection can be accommodated, bioregionalism argues that, within park boundaries, there should be flexible transition from a protective core to intensive uses within parks. Given that some species and habitats are poorly represented within formal reserves and unalienated Crown lands, bioregionalism also argues that conservation measures need to extend outside park boundaries.

Arguments that national park policy must acknowledge peoples’ prior relationships with land arose initially in response to indigenous peoples’ dispossession and cultural disruption. Governments and park management agencies in Australia and some other countries responded to indigenous peoples’ concerns by making varying levels of provision for the continuation of their cultural practices. Tasmania’s National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970, for example, was amended in the 1990s to provide that,
Nothing in this Act precludes an Aboriginal cultural activity by an Aboriginal person on Aboriginal land, within the meaning of the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1995*, so long as that activity is, in the opinion of the Minister, not likely to have a detrimental effect on fauna and flora and is consistent with this Act.5

Though European Tasmanians’ links with reserved lands lacked the longevity of Indigenous peoples’ links, traditions that included hiking, hunting, hut-building, fishing and working cattle with horses and dogs had a history of several generations spanning over 150 years involving lands - notably in Tasmania’s Central Highlands - that had become incorporated within national parks and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Simon Cubit has explained the negative reaction of people who felt disenfranchised by what he described as the Parks Service’s ‘ecocentric’ approach to national parks policy. According to Cubit, ecocentrism emerged as a reaction against the model of science and society that regarded nature simply as a commodity - a model that dominated Tasmanian politics until the rise of the environment movement in the 1960s. Ecocentrism, Cubit explained, values wilderness for its own sake rather than its value for people and regards humans as intruders in natural systems on the basis of an interpretation of information derived from biological science.6 Cubit argued that the influence of ecocentrism within the Parks Service was strengthened by incorporation of environmental activists in the agency’s staff - a practice that was particularly notable following the Franklin River campaign - which blended the roles of ‘ecocentric’ activist and land-use planner.7 The Parks Service’s adherence to ecocentrism, with what Cubit describes as its anti-human and anti-historical vision of protected areas, notably the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, became problematic for the State government when interest groups that objected to policies such as the removal of huts and banning of recreational practices such as hunting, horse-riding, four-wheel driving and the use of companion dogs8, joined forces in the Tasmanian Traditional and Recreational Land Users Federation, and lobbied the State government for change.

Bioregionalism has also challenged the supremacy of the wilderness model of reserve-based nature conservation in Tasmania on grounds that biodiversity cannot be conserved just within public reserves. Some types of environments have entered private ownership to the extent that conservation measures must extend to private
land to ensure their survival. Also, because land management practices outside reserves affect the integrity of neighboring reserves lands, conservation measures must extend beyond reserve boundaries.

Penny Figgis explained that, while the environment movement recognizes that traditional protected areas will not achieve biodiversity alone, the movement is concerned about contemporary directions in national park policy and management that relate to bioregionalism. While proponents might argue that the multiple use approach which bioregionalism argues should replace strict protection in some reserved areas is based on the principle of sustainability, there are actually no clear boundaries between the sustainable and unsustainable. The multiple use paradigm opens the way for Tasmanian governments to pursue their traditional preference for giving developmental interests priority and environmentalists are concerned, Figgis explained, not only about the environmental impact of particular developments in national parks but the ‘thin edge of the wedge’ problem about which she cited Geoff Mosley saying:

Another lesson that park history has taught me is that one development leads to another and usually to one with higher impact. Put in a track and sooner or later someone will want to build huts then chalets then hotels and perhaps roads and airstrips.

Figgis argued that, under the multiple use paradigm espoused by bioregionalism, an amalgam of four-wheel drive enthusiasts, horse riders, hunters and rural interests, united by an anthropocentric philosophy emphasizing the right of humans to enjoy natural areas in their preferred style and peoples’ democratic rights to access public lands by road and track, had emerged as a powerful force opposed to strict protection within national parks by the end of the twentieth century. Common fronts between access groups and extractive industries were emerging, Figgis wrote, along with a trend in national park policy to consider all human demands worthy of consideration. The inadequacy of parks alone in achieving biodiversity is, Figgis said, accepted, the question that remains is whether there is any argument to abandon strictly protected sanctuaries as the core lands around which to build new initiatives.
Divergence of national park philosophy represented by the wilderness and bioregional viewpoints led to divisions within Tasmania’s national parks movement and the launching, in September 2001, of a new national park advocacy group. The Tasmanian National Parks Association advocated specific additions to the reserve system to fill ‘gaps’ in its representativeness, a return to an independent Parks Service and a halt to exclusive, invasive private developments within national parks. The Director of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, which had its origins in the politicisation of national park activists during the controversy over the Florentine forests, held the view that expanding the State’s national parks system was not a conservation priority, however. Michael Lynch argued that the Parks Service was already challenged in managing the national parks under its control and believed that increasing the size of the reserve system would exacerbate existing resource and management problems. On the basis that natural values do not respect park boundaries, that national parks are not the only way of conserving natural values and that natural values outside park boundaries could be as important as those within them, Lynch believed that conservation measures needed to be more flexible and robust than relying on the national parks system.

As well, bushwalking clubs, which had played a central role in the national parks movement from the 1930s to the 1960s, were alienated from the environmental arm of the state’s national parks movement because many of their members opposed walker fees and permit systems that environmental organisations supported.

The Greens were the only political party to consistently give nature conservation priority in cases of conflicting interests between development and conservation within national parks and, from the late 1990s, their power to advocate on behalf of national parks’ conservation role was limited. After two periods of national park expansion made possible by the Tasmanian Greens holding the balance of power within State parliament during the late 1980s and early 1990s the two major parties acted to lessen independents’ and minor parties’ election chances. Prior to the 1998 State election the leader of the Labor Opposition Jim Bacon joined Liberal Premier Tony Rundle to pass legislation raising the vote required to win a seat in the House of Assembly from 12.5% to 16.7%, a few percentage points higher than the Green candidates had been achieving. Consequently, only one Green, Pegg Putt, sat in the Tasmanian parliament following the 1998 election. Nevertheless by the 2004
election support for the Greens had reached 18% State-wide, resulting in the election of four Green Members of the House of Assembly. Having survived an attempt by the major parties to quiet their voice in parliament the Green Party continued to advocate for national parks’ nature conservation role within parliament although, when not holding a balance of power, their influence was limited.

Successive State governments continued a series of changes to the Parks Service’s structure and positioning within the bureaucracy that lessened the agency’s independence and forced changes to the way in which it interpreted its conservation role. By placing the Parks Service’s functions with other government agencies successive State governments shifted the Parks Service from being a reserve-oriented research, advocacy and management agency with a wilderness philosophy to being two separate divisions situated within two separate agencies - a park management division within the State’s tourism agency and a scientific research division within the government’s land management agency.

The restructuring process began when the Gray Liberal government amalgamated the National Parks and Wildlife Service with the Department of Lands in May 1987 to create the Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife. Following the re-structure, the Parks Service relocated from its premises at Magnet Court in Sandy Bay to the Lands Building in Macquarie Street, Hobart, and historic sites were removed from the Parks Services’ jurisdiction. The government leased some sites, including the old Criminal Courts in Hobart, the Carrington Mill at Oatlands and Entally House, Hadspen, to the Tasmanian Branch of the National Trust, at nominal rent16 and the Richmond Goal Historic Site was leased to a former park ranger. The government established a new authority, the Port Arthur Management Authority, under separate legislation, to manage the Port Arthur Historic Site which, along with the Garden Point Caravan Park, was also removed from the Parks Service’s responsibilities.17

Two years after the amalgamation of 1987 the Field Labor government restructured the Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife to create two new departments, the Department of Environment and Planning and the Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage. The latter department incorporated The Royal Tasmanian Botanical
Gardens and the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority in addition to the Parks and Wildlife Service, and was responsible for managing land reserved under both the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1971* and the *Crown Lands Act* of 1976. In 1993 the Groom Liberal government united these two departments within another new structure, the Department of Environment and Land Management (DELM), of which the Parks Service became a division.

Following its election victory in February 1996 the Rundle Liberal government initiated changes that resulted in the two Parks and Wildlife divisions - Resources, Wildlife and Heritage, and Land Management - with the addition of part of Crown Land Services and Property Tasmania - being grouped as the Conservation and Land Management Division of the Department of Environment and Land Management. Subsequently, under the Bacon Labor Government which assumed power in September 1998, the Department of Environment and Land Management (of which the Parks and Wildlife Service was a division) amalgamated with the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, and the Government Analytical and Forensic Laboratories to become the Department of Primary industries, Water and Environment (DPIWE).  

Also the establishment, under the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995, of the Tasmanian Heritage Council in February 1997 affected the role and position of the Parks Service’s Cultural Heritage Branch. The Heritage Council’s role, as defined by its governing legislation, was to focus on the identification and conservation management of the State’s historic buildings and sites. Given that the Parks Service also had responsibilities for cultural heritage management, the Heritage Council’s establishment involved changes to the Parks Service’s role and responsibilities.

The series of departmental restructures meant constant change in the work environment which was unsettling for the Parks Service and its employees. The departmental amalgamation also resulted in a changed requirement for the head of the Parks Service. A strong background in national park management was no longer necessary; instead leaders had varied bureaucratic backgrounds in resource management. After Peter Murrell retired in 1990 Max Laughlin, a long-standing officer of the Lands Department, assumed the role of Director of the Parks Service.
Max Kitchell, who had previously worked in the area of natural resource management with the Victorian Government, was appointed to the position of Director in 1996, and he led the Parks Service during the remaining years of the 1990s.

The late 1980s and 1990s were unsettled years in the Parks Service not only because its structure constantly changed but because its policies and practices were scrutinized and criticised by governments and various public interest groups. The Parks Service’s Minister, Peter Hodgeman, expressed frustration with the Service’s emphasis on Hobart-based scientific research and attacked what he described as a ‘navel-gazing, report-writing focus’, arguing that too much money was spent producing a ‘ridiculous’ number of reports while the ‘environmental black spot’ remained the same. Hodgeman argued that the Parks Service should put more staff and volunteers in the parks, rather than in its bureaucracy. On the basis of an internal report on the Parks Service by Professor Bruce Davis, Hodgeman also called for the abolition of most of the Service’s thirty advisory committees, leaving just four - the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, Wildlife Advisory Committee, Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Consultative Committee and the Macquarie Island Advisory Committee. In order that park management was more closely integrated with local areas and interests, Hodgeman supported a change to district-based advisory committees.

The shift to district-based management - eight districts led by a senior ranger and guided by an advisory committee - was intended to better integrate town and country, with organization being led from the centre but managed by the bush. It was met with mixed responses, however. Some stakeholders argued that the regional basis of decision-making resulted in inconsistencies of policy, practice and outcomes between regions. The Tasmanian Traditional and Recreational Land Users’ Federation, which had interests and demands that could potentially be accommodated by a district-based advisory committee structure, was, however, angry that guidelines for the district committees restricted membership in favor of environmentalists.
During the 1990s the Parks Service increased its level of volunteer involvement through volunteer labour and private reserve schemes. Community Partnerships such as Adopt-a-Track and Community Huts provided opportunities for individuals and groups to participate in reserve management and to maintain prior involvements with reserved lands. Schemes such as these, and others including WILDCare, were intended to improve communication between stakeholders, managers and policy makers, fostering community involvement in the work of the Parks Service and, thereby, developing a new constituency of national park and Parks Service supporters and volunteer workers. From some perspectives Community Partnerships were successful. Between December 1987 and June 1998, for example, WILDCARE volunteers contributed close to 3,000 hours on tasks that included the removal of gorse from Schouten Island, planting eucalypts on Bruny Island and assisting with whale rescues. In the 2001-2002 financial year, 3,000 WILDCARE members contributed over 50,000 hours of voluntary assistance equating to $750,000 in value, Tamar Island volunteers provided the equivalent of $87,500 and about $45,000 of volunteer time was contributed to track maintenance through the Adopt-a-Track program. The Community Partnerships program was not applauded by all national park stakeholders, however. It was criticised in the Tasmanian Conservation Trust’s newsletter for poor volunteer facilitation and acknowledgement of effort. And a contributor to the newsletter of the Tasmanian Traditional and Recreational Land Users’ Federation argued that the program focused on the ‘feel good’ constituency while ignoring stakeholders such as farmers, neighbors, and traditional and recreational land user groups. While data illustrated that the schemes generated volunteer labor, their success in achieving public relations and political goals including a shift towards meaningful local area participation was less clear.

The Parks Service also sought volunteer involvement in extending the State’s nature conservation reserves. By the turn of the century reserve expansion was taking place on private more than on public land. The Regional Forest Agreement established a Private Forests Reserve Program and, by mid 2002, over 142,000 hectares of private land had been assessed for Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) values. Of this, 11,271 hectares of forest was made subject to perpetual conservation covenants and fourteen properties, with a total area of 3,260 hectares, had been
purchased. The Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment estimated the cost of securing forest by covenants to be $219 per hectare, compared to $1,894 per hectare through purchase, though an evaluation of the effectiveness of covenanting forests on private land compared to protecting them in public reserves remains premature.

Another area of reserve expansion during the 1990s involved marine reserves. In 1991 the Field Labor government declared four marine nature reserves - Marine Protected Areas - ranging in size from one to seven kilometres long, along the State’s south-east and east coasts at Maria Island, Tinderbox, Nine Pin Point and Governor Island and, in 2000, the Bacon Labor government declared a ‘no take’ Marine Protected Area around Macquarie Island. In the following year the Bacon government declared the Kent Group National Park, a 2,295 hectare reserve incorporating six islands in Bass Strait - a terrestrial park situated in the midst of a marine reserve proposal - though it did not announce a decision on the fate of the islands’ surrounding waters.

A study of the effect of Maria Island’s Marine Reserve, carried out six years after its declaration, indicated the reserves were an effective conservation strategy. The Maria Island study showed the number of fish species to have increased by 5% in contrast to a fall of 23% in nearby unprotected areas. The diversity of mobile invertebrates and algae had increased by 25% and 11% respectively, in contrast to a fall of 7% and 5% in adjacent non-protected waters.

While national park management dealt with the challenges of new types of reserves, volunteer input and internal restructuring during the 1990s, the State’s national parks system faced greater challenges from developments outside the Parks Service. The most conspicuous of these issues involved park funding, escalating visitation, the role of tourism and pressure to allow private development within national parks.

**Tensions mount over National park usage and funding**

The rise of ‘user pays’ economic policies, combined with increasing usage of and, therefore, maintenance costs for national parks, created new tensions over national park funding from the late 1980s. Pressure on the Tasmanian government to meet
the cost of maintaining the State’s growing national park estate was eased during the 1980s and early 1990s by contributions from the Federal Government following the initial listing of the World Heritage Area in 1982, the Franklin Dam decision in 1983 and expansion of the World Heritage Area in 1989. Initially, the Commonwealth Government contributed $3.7 million per annum, plus $1.8 million capital works funding while the State Government contributed $1.5 million per annum and, to deal with issues of joint funding and overlapping jurisdictions, the two governments established joint management arrangements. However, this arrangement ceased in 1994 when the Commonwealth government pressed for Tasmania to match dollar for dollar funding and the State Government refused on the basis of financial incapacity. In the Tasmanian government’s view, a disproportionate share of Australia’s World Heritage Area is protected in Tasmania for the benefit of all Australians, and the Commonwealth should meet its financial obligations accordingly. The two governments made two four-year agreements that covered the periods 1994-1998 and 1998-2002, during which the Commonwealth contributed $5-$5.3 million while the State provided $3-$3.5 million annually. Though Tasmania did subsequently receive once-off World Heritage Area funding from the partial sale of Telstra, the reduction in recurrent World Heritage Area funding meant that the Parks Service’s expenditure on new infrastructure, notably hardened tracks, and maintenance work slowed.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century the State government had clearly linked the Parks Service’s role to implementing aspects of the State Tourism Strategy. Visitor surveys showed that just a small minority ventured for an overnight walk and that the greatest demand for visitor facilities was in the vicinity of park entrances. Consequently, government spending on infrastructure was concentrated near park entrances while the increasing number of visitors represented by the small minority who undertook overnight walks, combined with local walkers who used back-country tracks and campsites, made managing bushwalker impact and funding back-country track management more problematic than it had been when numbers of walkers were fewer.

National park legislation in Tasmania, like that elsewhere in Australia and in the USA, identified parks’ dual purpose to be that of conserving natural scenery and
wildlife while providing for the enjoyment of those natural assets ‘in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations’.

The inherent contradiction in this mandate became increasingly obvious after the Second World War when populations, people’s leisure times, material standards of living, mobility and desire to recreate by escaping from the cities where they lived, all increased rapidly. As a speaker at the first world Conference on National Parks said, in 1962,

> The question is whether and to what extent it will be possible to preserve unimpaired any substantial remnant of the original natural continent for the balance of the lives of present generations, not to speak of future generations. These relatively small areas which we call national parks and monuments are fragile and quite finite in size. The crowds which are descending upon them and promise to descend in greater and greater concentrations verge on the infinite.

> Part of the tragedy is that most of the people who come to the parks do so in the hope of escaping the crowds they must live with most of the year in the cities. As they make the long trek across the continent for a brief vacation, they visualize an opportunity to get back to nature as it was before the continent was settled; instead, they find themselves far too often crowded shoulder to shoulder with other escapees from the big cities.

> It seems clear that protective measures of some kind must be taken within the parks, if visitors are to find the natural beauty there which is the very reason for their visit.

A past Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Richard Piesse, wrote in 1969 that ‘all over the world, park administrators and conservationists are asking how far can national parks and reserves have a distinctive recreation function while satisfying other needs, notably those of science, education, and the preservation of species’. Piesse noted that the number of visitors to Tasmania’s national parks had grown - the number of visitors to Mount Field National Park increased from 35,000 in 1959-1960 to 54,500 in 1966-1967, a 56% increase. Growing car ownership and the advent of the roll-on roll-off Bass Strait ferry brought more tourists to Tasmania on driving holidays that frequently included bushwalking excursions. In 1964, 674 people walked the Overland Track between Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair, 263 more than in 1955. By 1969 over 800 walkers traversed the track each year. By the 1980s it was clear that the impact of an increased number of bushwalkers was ‘loving the parks to death’ by degrading the qualities that walkers sought in the areas they chose to visit. In Tasmania’s parks, mud and erosion had become major problems associated with walking tracks. Most of the soils in western Tasmania are water-logged peats which do not hold together well under the impact of heavy foot traffic and, compounding the problem, most of Tasmania’s walking tracks were not
routed for sustainability but happened by default as walkers followed a path of least resistance. Campsites, similarly, suffered increasing levels of degradation, overcrowding and depletion of burnable material as the number of overnight walkers increased.

In order to manage the problems being caused by escalating numbers of walkers the Parks Service was faced with five options: doing nothing; increasing supply; increasing durability; reducing the impact of use, and limiting use. Doing nothing might be an ideal way to manage wilderness, but once human impact affects the natural values of an area it becomes a problematic option. Increasing the supply of walking destinations, particularly ‘hardy’ areas, and focusing publicity on hardy tracks can take pressure off the more heavily used and relatively ‘fragile’ areas. The latter strategy has been pursued by Tasmanian national park managers and advocated by environmental organisations but its success has been restricted by the voluntary basis of guidelines on track destination publicity. Increasing the durability or ‘hardening’ of tracks by laying rocks and constructing board-walks and drains has been the main approach used by Tasmanian park managers to deal with increasing usage. While ‘hardening’ may lessen some walkers’ wilderness experience, the extent of damage caused by walkers in some areas has left no evident option for management other than hardening or imposing a very low limit on walker numbers. To reduce the impact of use the Parks Service has conducted a ‘Minimal Impact Bushwalking’ education campaign which appears to have contributed to a shift in walkers’ behavior towards more sustainable practices. The fifth option, limiting use, proved the most controversial and its implementation was slowed, if not halted, by opposition from Tasmanian bushwalking organisations.

During the 1990s the Parks Service developed a track management strategy for the World Heritage Area. The strategy’s recommendations included a classification scheme and works program, an expanded walker education program and the introduction of a walker permit system, the latter having caused contention when a $5.00 per night charge for using major World Heritage Area walking tracks was previously raised in 1986. Because of opposition to permits from Tasmanian bushwalking organisations, however, the Minister deferred their introduction and set up a Track Assessment Group with representatives of the Parks Service,
bushwalkers, tourism and the World Heritage Area Consultative Committee. This group was given the task of identifying a solution to the environmental impact problem that would be acceptable to walkers, economically feasible and consistent with the World Heritage Area Management Plan. Bushwalkers maintained their opposition to quotas applying throughout the World Heritage Area, though their representatives did express willingness to tackle problems arising from overuse in specific areas and to consider the introduction of a walker pass as a source of direct funding to overnight walking areas in preference to permits and restrictions. These concessions were a compromise. All five bushwalking clubs affiliated with the Federation of Tasmanian Bushwalking Clubs, representing a total of 1,800 members, opposed the proposed permit system. The scheme was seen to potentially restrict Tasmanians’ access to bushwalking in their home State - a 5% per annum growth in tourism might, it was argued, result in Tasmanians having 60% less access within ten years. The Hobart Walking Club was opposed to any cost to users over and above standard park entry fees and, in addition, argued that people who performed voluntary work assisting the parks service should have a 50% discount on all fees. The Vice-President of the Federation of Tasmanian Bushwalking Clubs, Andrew Davey, explained his opposition to permits and associated fees saying that, given that approximately 36% of Tasmanians bushwalk, ‘one wonders why, if Tasmanian walkers comprise such a significant proportion of our tax paying community, we subsidise many a swimming pool, sports/recreation ground/facilities, and even some persons, yet our patch has been so long neglected that we are faced with diminishing access …’.

Most pressure on Tasmania’s popular walking tracks comes from interstate walkers. Two surveys conducted in the mid 1990s, for example, showed that over 65% of people walking the Overland Track were from inter-state, while Tasmanians comprised between 15-16%. Another survey of walkers in the World Heritage Area and Freycinet National Park which was conducted in 1994-1995 showed that 50% of walkers on surveyed tracks were from mainland Australia, while 11% were from overseas and 39% were Tasmanians. Findings such as these have been used to argue for higher visitor and permit fees on the basis that Tasmanian taxpayers should not be burdened with the cost of maintaining walking tracks given the high proportion of non-Tasmanian users, though it might be argued that raising fees to
meet costs incurred largely by non-Tasmanian walkers disadvantages local bushwalkers.

Unlike the bushwalking clubs, environmental organisations supported concepts of permits and additional fees. The Director of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Michael Lynch, argued that in order to properly finance park management, fees were mandatory, especially for high maintenance areas such as the Overland Track. The Tasmanian National Parks Association argued that there is a limit to the number of people national parks can sustain without destruction of the natural values they are meant to protect and that, consequently, a permit system was required;

TNPA recognizes that already some of our national parks are being visited by too many people; their numbers cannot be sustained…

It is for this reason the TNPA insists that limits be placed on the numbers of walkers using some of our parks - not only in our more fragile montane areas … but also …in our more popular walks such as the Overland Track…

The prospect of quotas and a daily fee for walkers of the Overland Track grew more imminent with the release, in 1994, of a paper on the future management of the walking track between Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair. That paper argued that the track had reached its maximum sustainable load of 9,000 walkers per year. It recommended limiting the number of walkers setting out on any one day, introducing a booking system, requiring visitors to walk only in one direction, north to south, and charging an additional fee between November and April when over 90% of the track’s usage occurred. Subsequently, in April 2005, the State government announced a plan to charge a $100 fee to walk the Overland Track from Cradle Mt to Lake St Clair, the Premier Paul Lennon arguing that the fee would raise $800,000 annually. The Tasmanian Tourism Council supported the proposal but Tasmanian bushwalkers continued their opposition to the concept in principle and raised practical problems such as policing use of remote sections of the track.

It appeared that whatever policy was adopted by the Tasmanian government in relation to quotas, permits and associated fees it would not have been fully supported by all members of the State’s national park movement which has, traditionally, incorporated bushwalking clubs as well as the more recently formed environmental organisations. The proposal of a permit scheme applying to particularly heavily used
tracks during the peak tourist season did however, approach a compromise that might raise revenue for park maintenance, protect natural and wilderness values and minimise disadvantage to Tasmanian walkers.

Controversy over national park fees and commercialization was not confined to Tasmania. In 1996 a teacher of park resource management and outdoor recreation policy at Kansas State University, J. Mark Morgan wrote in the American Journal of Environmental Ethics that parks’ revenue potential had become a major driving force in United States’ park policy and he asked whether policy decisions were narrowing national parks’ constituency in order that parks contributed more to revenue raising. Morgan wrote that,

… this way of thinking has led to a predictable pattern of commercialization in some state park systems. … Why did this shift of priorities occur? Scarce federal monies for social programs during the 1980s, followed by a nationwide recession, prompted state governments to carefully review departmental budgets in an effort to cut expenses and look for additional revenue streams …. Rather than being considered a political liability, some state park systems began to focus on “creative” financing solutions, via tourists. … As a result of the budget crisis and long-term indebtedness due to construction, many state park visitors have been inundated with user fees.63

Morgan also wrote about the success of park promotion campaigns run in conjunction with state-wide tourism campaigns which, given the scale of increasing visitor numbers, appeared to achieve their aim. Aside from numerical increases, Morgan wrote, it is quite possible that ‘traditional’ park visitors have been displaced, partly through exclusionary practices such as the development of upscale facilities and increasing user fees, by ‘modern’ park visitors, in a process of invasion and succession. It is possible, he suggested, that through commercialisation and conveying the message that ‘the only good park is one that produces revenue, and the only good park visitor is one that spends money’ politicians have unwittingly narrowed the constituency of parks rather than broadened the base of public support.64 To the extent that park visitor displacement has occurred it has possibly reduced national parks’ contribution to maintaining the health and wellbeing of the broader local population - the public health role that was linked to national parks in their early history.
Available information about Tasmanian national park users indicate that Morgan’s arguments might have relevance to Tasmania. A survey of walkers on the Overland Track conducted in 1994-1995 showed that 74% of those over 20 years of age had a tertiary qualification, a high figure given that the proportion of Tasmanians with tertiary qualifications is close to 8%. Because information on park visitors’ characteristics was not collected during national parks’ early years it is not possible to understand the nature or extent of changes to visitors’ socio-economic profile but this appears to be an area worthy of further data collection and consideration of the data’s implications.

According to a 1994 Tasmanian tourism report Tasmania attracts visitors from three of Australia’s biggest spending and ‘discerning’ market segments – the Visible Achiever, Socially Aware and Traditional Family Life. Almost 60% of visitors from these three segments are over 40 years of age, sophisticated, well-informed high earners who like to live well. Visitor surveys show that, between 1993-1996, of an annual total of 457,700 visitors, over 50% went bushwalking while they were in the State - 31.7% went for walks of less that 2 hours, 16.7% for walks of two hours to a full day, and just 3.2% ventured for an overnight walk. In summary, the number of visitors to Tasmania’s national parks is increasing and a high proportion of these visitors are from interstate, mostly middle to high-income earners who are well positioned to pay park entry fees. In the course of the permit debate of 1986, Max Kitchell, Director of the Parks Service said that ‘overseas visitors are often astonished at free access and sometimes insist on paying anyway’. According to Peter Mooney, Parks Service General Manager at the time of the fees increase in 2004, ‘all our visitors are saying they are prepared to pay more and want to pay more so they can come back and visit the reserve in years to come and it is still in a very pristine state’ Consequently, the park entry fees that were initially introduced in the most popular national parks in 1981 under a Labor Government, were re-structured and extended to more parks in 1994 under a Liberal Government, then raised again under Labor, in 2004.
### National Park Entry Fee Increases: Effective 1 November 2004

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of pass</th>
<th>Current fee</th>
<th>New fee</th>
<th>Renewal and Off-peak</th>
<th>Renewal Concession</th>
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<td>Annual all-parks</td>
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<td>$84</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual one-park</td>
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<td>$30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily vehicle</td>
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<td>Holiday person</td>
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<td>$30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Year</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$86.40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


The fees introduced in 2004 were approximately 100% higher than the previous fee levels. The new annual all-parks pass was around seven times greater than the original fee levied in 1980-1981. The introduction of discounts for renewals, two-year passes, off-peak rates and WILDCARE members, and retention of a concession for low income earners in receipt of a government pension reflected an attempt to maintain affordable access to the State’s national parks for Tasmanians. Available data showed cost to be the main reason for not visiting a World Heritage Area, National or State Park given by 6.7% of Tasmanians compared to a national average of 4.7%, a difference that might be partially explained by Tasmanians’ comparatively low incomes.70

An issues paper on user charges in museums, art galleries and national parks produced by the federal government in 1998 acknowledged that the spiritual dimension of national parks might warrant free entry as it does to churches, and it acknowledged a strong Australian cultural tradition of free access to public lands. It suggests that if fees discourage visitors then free entry should be retained as a real option, and that charges for value-added services not become a proxy for entry fees, though it concluded that the extent to which entry fees discourage national park visitation is uncertain.71 Nevertheless, questions relating to how and why, to whom and with what consequences, entry fees pose a disincentive for Tasmanians to visit national parks appear not to be perceived as a matter of public policy concern warranting investigation.
The 2004 fee increases were welcomed by some interest groups including the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and the Tourism Council of Tasmania though the public’s reaction was mixed. Some people supported the fee increase because of the money fees raise for park maintenance and because of the potential lessening of pressure on taxation revenue that a user-pays system represents. It is possible too, though it is not articulated, that any disincentive effect that fees may have on park usage might contribute to easing over-usage. There was some public opposition to the increase in fees expressed by individuals in Letters to the Editor of the State’s daily newspapers, though this opposition did not present as a public interest lobby group. Critics argued that the higher fees would discourage some Tasmanians from visiting their national parks to the detriment of the health and well-being of the State’s population. And one writer suggested that the government’s priorities needed to be examined when tens of millions of dollars were being spent on upgrading car and horse-racing facilities but user fees were being increased to raise $1.75 million for national parks. Some critics of the fee increase indicated discontent with what might appear to be tourism-driven national park policy by calling for a split pricing structure charging a higher rate for interstate and overseas tourists and a lower rate for Tasmanian residents. Though the Australian Constitution disallows the implementation of fee structures that discriminate between residents of different Australian States, local residents’ attachment to reserved lands was acknowledged by the Port Arthur Management Authority in its provision of free access to municipal ratepayers. Tasmanians’ connection to parks as ‘place’ could possibly be recognised by a variation on the Port Arthur precedent with the necessary political will.

Privatisation and Private Development in National Parks
Given the broader political trend towards privatising public facilities there were, at the turn of the century, pressures towards privatisation within national parks and conservation reserves. During this time the State Labor government initiated the sale of land within national parks that had been sites for lakeside and beachside shacks, and it encouraged entrepreneurs to invest in private developments, mostly high-cost developments, within national parks and reserves. While the government’s privatisation agenda had the support of sections of the business sector, most environmental organisations and some local residents’ groups strongly opposed
proposals for private development and the sale of land within public conservation reserves.

Land proclaimed national park often came with huts and shacks that were not immediately removed. In Tasmania’s central highlands trappers and shepherds built timber huts that were mostly abandoned by the time the land was reserved and they assumed the role of walkers’ huts with little, if any, objection from the people who had previously used them. Along the coast and near fishing lakes, however, the situation was different. At the time that new national parks were proclaimed shacks were actively used and maintained by de-facto shack ‘owners’ who had built or inherited shacks on Crown land. Shack ‘owners’ were generally allowed continued use of their shacks provided that they adhered to rules applying to the reserve status of the shack site. Prior to the 1990s neither the Liberal or Labor Party endorsed the option of selling shack sites in national parks, the Liberal Minister Peter Hodgeman having explicitly stated in the context of these sites that ‘you cannot sell a national park’.74

In 1997, however, the Tasmanian parliament passed legislation with regard to shacks erected on public land, along the coast and adjacent to fishing lakes - many of which were situated within national parks - that allowed for the sale of shack sites. Green parliamentarian Pegg Putt opposed privatisation of the sites, recommending that, as happened elsewhere, shacks exist for the lifetime of their owner and are then removed and the site rehabilitated as public land. The government’s plan proceeded, however, and under the Crown Lands (Shack Sites) Act 1997, the shacks were assessed as a basis for determining their future. In June 2003 a motion was passed before the State Parliament that eight sites in National Park, Conservation Areas, Nature Recreation Areas and State Reserves be removed from the reservations of which they were a part. Both major political parties supported the motion on the basis that they recognised shacks as part of Tasmanian recreational culture. Parliamentarians representing the Tasmanian Greens opposed the plan. They argued that ‘traditional’ shack culture was not about ownership and, given that waterfront shack sites were valued at around $150,000 to $200,000 the sites, if sold, would not remain part of ‘traditional’ shack culture but would become the province of the wealthy. When the motion to remove shack sites from Tasmanian reserves was put to
parliament it received twenty ‘ayes’ and just four ‘noes’ - the four Green Members of the House of Assembly. The way was cleared to privatise prime areas of coastal public reserve.

Privatisation of public land and national parks facilities in coastal areas was a contentious issue in Tasmania at the turn of the century. Contrary to the conclusion of a 1998 federal government report that ‘commercial development inside national parks should be discouraged to prevent the creation of a cycle of dependence’, in 2001 the Tasmanian Government approved a developer’s plans to construct a road into the South-West National Park and build a lodge, tavern, jetty, boathouses, spas and eighty cabins at Cockle Creek. Then, in 2004 the Government indicated an interest in supporting a Sydney based company’s proposal to build 800 waterfront houses and a marina at Ralph’s Bay, a Conservation Area noted for its birdlife. At that time a *Mercury* newspaper reporter suggested that with canal developments having been banned in New South Wales and coastal development regulations tightening across mainland Australia, high-flying property developers were turning their attention to Tasmania. At the time of the Ralphs Bay controversy nearly 3,500 residential properties and 500 holiday units were proposed or recently approved for coastal areas, and a State-wide survey of local councils found significant developments proposed for a national park, Coastal Protection Zones, a Crown Conservation Area and coastline with rural zoning.

Public protest hampered progress on private developments in national parks, including coastal shack sites in national parks and Conservation Areas. But pressure remained on the State government to allow, and on the people of Tasmania to accept, private developments involving high-cost accommodation in Tasmania’s national parks and nature reserves. Little was known about who supported such developments and why, or who opposed them and why, what long-term benefits to which Tasmanians they might bring, and what disadvantages, to whom, they might also offer. Decisions about private developments in national parks and other public lands were poised to be made, however, in the absence of information of that kind.

There was a well established and close relationship between tourism and national parks in Tasmania. Tourism had, from the early days of the State’s national parks
system, been a prime justification for reserving public land for use as national parks and, although negative impacts of tourism on some park values are more evident now than they were in the past, tourism is still regarded as the main economic argument in national parks’ favor. What Michael Byers described in his doctoral thesis as national parks’ ‘paradoxical mandate’- to provide for public recreation and tourism while preserving natural values - was subjected to more intense pressure, however, from increasing visitor and walker numbers. More visitors with more money to spend led to pressures for more elitist forms of tourist facilities in national parks. Ventures involving luxury accommodation and helicopter flights into wilderness areas, for example, became economically feasible, resulting in interest from entrepreneurs wanting to utilise parks for high-cost, profit making ventures. While conservationists have often argued for tourism as a valid purpose for national parks and conservation reserves, controversy arose over the impact, sustainability and social equity implications of proposed tourism developments.

Legislation governing national parks, as well as public expectations, allow for national parks to exist for recreation and enjoyment alongside the protection of nature. It is inevitable that visitation will have some negative impact on the preservation of natural values but the acceptability of varying degrees and types of impacts has been a matter of debate. At the turn of the century the increasing number of tourists visiting Tasmania, their ability and willingness to pay for tourism options, and governments’ focus on making money from national parks’ tourism potential combined to exacerbate conflicts over the impact of tourism on national parks’ nature conservation role.

From the early days of Tasmania’s scenery and cave reserves, parks contributed to the Tasmanian economy through tourists’ spending and locals benefited from opportunities to provide accommodation and transport. Where accommodation was available in reserves it was basic, huts were free or attracted a minimal charge that was levied by the Scenery Board. The standard of facilities was rustic, funding was limited and the market was not lucrative enough to attract significant private investment. This scenario of minimal rustic facilities that were accessible to most, if not all, park visitors, changed noticeably in the 1980s.
Following the conflict over the future of the Franklin River the Tasmanian Government focused its attention on ways, other than a hydro dam, in which the area could ‘earn its keep’. With money provided by the Commonwealth Government as compensation for the High Court decision of July 1983 that stopped the Franklin dam, the Tasmanian government appointed a consultant, Nick Evers - who later became Minister for Tourism - to investigate the tourism potential of western Tasmania, ‘to explore ways of increasing the number of visitors, extending duration of stay and, over time, developing genuine destination tourism in the area’.79 Evers’ report included recommendations that proved significant to the future of the State’s national parks system. He argued in favor of facilitating wilderness access to a market broader than the ‘relatively hardy few’, through ‘well-planned development, chiefly on the fringes’.80 Evers also called for government facilitation of private accommodation developments within national parks, suggesting that, ‘presumably, the principal counter-argument would be the somewhat elusive notion that commercial accommodation is incompatible with national parks’.81 Park rangers, he argued, had neither the time nor the expertise to oversee provision of commercial accommodation and therefore the Parks Services’ role as an accommodation provider should be limited to exceptional circumstances such as remote areas where a demand exists but commercial viability would be doubtful. Another of Evers’ recommendations, advocacy for an inter-related track system permitting a north-south walk from the North-West Coast to Cockle Creek, foreshadowed promotion of the Tasmanian Trail. And his appraisal of the National Parks and Wildlife Service foreshadowed the start of the bureaucratic re-structuring process:

Bureaucratic problems include serious resource deficiencies in the National Parks and Wildlife Service and a lack of cohesion in land management in the area. Moreover, the NPWS planning process might desirably be more tourism-oriented, especially in terms of seeking to cater for new market segments.82

Evers helped to consolidate government thinking about national parks that subsequently gathered momentum. In 1985 the State government invited walking tour operators to submit tenders for an exclusive opportunity to construct and operate huts in the Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair National Park.83 Critics recalled national parks’ democratic origins and argued that the prospect of huts located on public land being locked against other walkers was ‘disgraceful’. Bob Brown, who was then an Independent Member of the House of Assembly, said that the commercial huts...
would mar the overland track’s special appeal because the reserve ‘has always had special charm as a place open equally to every walker’ and that it was ‘wrong to lock away facilities for the benefit of paying hikers only’. The private hut scheme did go ahead. When the public’s views were solicited by the Parks Service five years later 59% of submissions called for the removal of all commercial huts within the World Heritage Area, 19% accepted them as a fact of life (though they disapproved) and 22% supported retaining the existing huts, with some calls for the construction of more.

Political pressure for tourism infrastructure in national parks increased in the 1990s. In the six years between 1986 and 1992 travel expenditure within Tasmania doubled from $347 to $688 million, which drew attention to tourism’s economic potential. In 1999 the peak body representing Tasmania’s larger tourism operators, the Tasmanian Tourism Council, produced a report that ‘slammed’ the national parks service’s ‘obstructive’ bureaucracy which, it argued, made it difficult for tourism operators and entrepreneurs to carry out or expand business in a profitable way. The report, which the Tourism Council’s President Terry Martin said ‘was not intended for public eyes, and only ever meant to be anecdotal and one-sided’, uncovered what it deemed ‘ideological suppression’ in the Parks and Wildlife Service to development in natural areas and ‘deliberate obstruction’ of wilderness flight operators. In the wake of the report’s release, the Premier, Jim Bacon, announced that the Parks Service had been ‘stripped of its exclusive power to process wilderness developments’, that a team of agency heads under the leadership of the Department of State Development would take over the role of facilitator and that the Parks Service’s development approval powers might be formally transferred to other agencies following a review of the Service’s functions.

Shortly after the Tourism Council’s scathing report was released a heated conflict arose over a proposal to allow more helicopter landing sites in the World Heritage Area. Up to three new landing sites, in addition to the two existing sites for small aircraft landings, were allowed for under the Tasmanian World Heritage Management Plan of 1999. In January 2000 the Tasmanian Government received submissions from commercial operators planning to fly visitors into the World Heritage Area and the Environment Minister, David Llewellyn, released a short list
of five potential new sites. Among the proposals put forward in the submissions were exclusive one-day rafting trips on the Franklin River, trout fishing at Lake Furmage, day trips to Port Davey, sea plane trips to Lake Olive and helicopter flights to Prion Beach near Precipitous Bluff. Just a small but wealthy elite, possibly including few Tasmanians, would have accessed these opportunities. The operations, however, would have had significant impacts on Tasmania’s south-west wilderness and detracted from other visitors’ wilderness experiences.

The ‘chopper debate’ that resulted revealed deep divisions within the Tasmanian community about the value and meaning of national parks and wilderness areas. Two large environmental organisations, the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and the Wilderness Society, both opposed the idea of helicopter flights over wilderness areas and two new conservation interest groups formed to fight the plans for more landing sites. One of the new groups called itself Leisure Anglers Keeping Environment Serene (LAKES), and the second, a coalition of tourism operators and users of the South-West National Park, called itself Friends of the Quiet Land.

One edition of the *Sunday Tasmanian* devoted two full pages to ‘Letters to the Editor’ addressing the chopper debate. Most of the letters opposed the concept because of aircrafts’ intrusiveness and their potential to destroy values inherent in wilderness and remote areas. All but twelve of the 651 public submissions received by the government in response to the proposal opposed it. Among the opponents were some small eco-tourism business operators, one of whom argued that her business would be adversely affected if regular flights flew over the areas she took visitors and that she would no longer be able to claim a wilderness experience marked by peace and solitude. Tasmania’s wilderness now represented a ‘positional good’ which, as long as it was not spoiled by demands from the masses for convenient access could be made available to a few at a high price, with benefits accruing to the private sector. The head of the Tasmanian Branch of the Tourism Council of Australia, Michael Roberts, argued that aerial access to Tasmania’s South-West was worth too much to the State’s economy to be ignored. He recommended that Tasmania needed to increase its yield from tourism rather than simply increasing tourist numbers, saying,
Experiences that are exclusive, uncrowded and which provide outstanding quality, indulgence and luxury are in significant demand and, the projections suggest, likely to generate significant increases in visitation and job creation. It is in this context that aerial access to the WHA and other places for experiences such as heli-fishing, heli-rafting or heli-walking provide the foundation for a range of high-quality, high-cost tourism products.95

The National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council rejected the proposal for new landing sites in the belief that any additional helicopter or float-plane operator inside or immediately adjacent to the World Heritage Area would significantly impact on its values. Eight of the Council’s ten members supported that position, with the exception of the Council’s Chair, Bruce Davis, and ecotourism entrepreneur Ken Latona. Latona had submitted a proposal for day flights to Mount Milner with a plan to utilise three landing pads in the World Heritage Area. Despite the extent of public protest and the Advisory Council’s opposition, the government granted Latona approval to proceed with his proposal. Friends of the Quiet Land organised a public meeting in Hobart’s Town Hall that was filled to capacity by over 300 people. Tasmanian historian and author Richard Flanagan addressed the meeting, arguing for the retention of south-west Tasmania’s unspoiled natural character and the interests of wilderness over those of company profits,

This is our land. This land is our quiet land, And it remains in its wonderous state because we loved it, because for decades we fought for it, because we marched for it and we rallied for it and we went to jail for it and at this pass we are not going to let our stewardship falter and hand something so precious, so unique and so beautiful as the World Heritage Area over to an unholy cabinet of small town burghers and Tourism Tasmania toerags.96

What makes me angry is that the feelings of the Tasmanian people on this issue are now very well known and yet this Government is simply and openly ignoring the feelings of Tasmanians over this matter.97

Latona withdrew his interest following public protest but by the time the chopper debate had concluded the State government had finalised plans for a significant re-structure of the Parks Service. The changes, announced in the 2000 State budget, removed the Service from its branch status under the Nature Conservation Division and ‘upgraded’ it to Division status. The move was welcomed by sections of the tourism industry because of its potential to enable ‘better decisions’ on tourist development in Tasmania’s national parks.98 The conservation movement was divided in its response, however. The Tasmanian Conservation Trust supported the move though Green parliamentarian Peg Putt
condemned the change, describing it as a ‘theme park’ approach to park management that diverted funding from nature conservation to visitor services.\textsuperscript{99}

In addition, Putt said, the Parks Service’s new manager, Peter Williams had no expertise in the area of nature conservation and that,

\begin{quote}
Effectively the beauty of our wild natural areas will be mined for tourism rather than managed for long-term ecological sustainability and this will put them at risk. Tourism developers are driving this government’s national parks strategy.\textsuperscript{100}
\end{quote}

Tasmania’s national parks system was, however, central to the strategic direction of the State’s tourism industry. The State government’s targets, defined and documented as ‘Tourism 21’, were to double visitor expenditure by the year 2007, to create a growth of 32% in tourism industry employment (6,000 new jobs) and to position tourism as one of the three major sustainable industries within the State.\textsuperscript{101}

From 2000 the Parks Service undertook a substantial amount of work upgrading visitor services within national parks, leading Peg Putt to argue that the emphasis on visitor facilities in State Budget allocations to national parks was such that the money represented a subsidy to the tourism industry while protection of natural values went begging.\textsuperscript{102} Finance for tourism infrastructure in national parks and the World Heritage Area came from the Commonwealth funded Nature Based Tourism Program, the Regional Forest Agreement and the Natural Heritage Trust, boosted by $1.9 million in-kind support from the State government and administered by the Parks Service. The programme, which aimed to foster partnerships between government agencies, local councils and private enterprise was overseen by a steering committee that included representatives of relevant government departments.\textsuperscript{103} It funded a number of projects including visitor centres at Tamar Island, Mount Field, Hastings Reserve and Freycinet, a ‘Tasmanian Walking Tracks Strategy’, interpretation facilities, road access, car parking facilities and trackwork. These projects were not aimed only at the wealthier end of the tourism market and some provided benefits for parks’ nature conservation role. Environmentalists, however, perceived the government-driven priority placed on tourism infrastructure as a shift away from nature conservation as the Parks Service’s priority.
The Bacon government encouraged high-spending forms of nature based tourism and entered into negotiations with developers proposing luxury accommodation facilities at Freycinet National Park and Pumphouse Point within Lake St Clair National Park. A convention centre, restaurant and accommodation were proposed for Maria Island and the Management Plan for the South-West National Park was altered to allow for luxury accommodation to be built at Cockle Creek. These proposals were fought determinedly by the Tasmanian National Parks Association, a new conservation organisation that had evolved from Friends of the Quiet Land, which was opposed any additional commercial developments within national parks. In taking this stand the group had, as an indication of a mandate from the Tasmanian people, the results of a poll conducted by Launceston’s Examiner newspaper that showed 73% of respondents opposed developments within national parks.104

The Tasmanian Government’s intention to develop national parks’ role in promoting the State’s tourism industry was further facilitated by another departmental restructure that took place in August 2002, immediately after the Bacon Government’s re-election. This restructure removed the Parks and Wildlife Division from the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment and placed it within the Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts. The Nature Conservation Branch remained with the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment. New legislation that formally separated the functions of national park and reserve management from the nature conservation branch replaced the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1971 in conjunction with this restructure. The new legislative arrangements placed park management under the National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002, and nature conservation functions under the Nature Conservation Act 2002. This move raised fundamental questions about the role of national parks and reserves, since it appeared to remove reserve management from the primacy of nature conservation and create a clearer pathway for the State’s national parks system to concentrate on accommodating visitors. Having been bureaucratically separated from the managers of national parks and conservation reserves, the focus of scientists employed by the State government to research and advise on land, flora and fauna conservation was shifted more towards private land management. This division
clearly raised concerns for national parks’ conservation role but, according to the University of Tasmania’s Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, it actually also threatened parks’ role in providing for people’s recreation and enjoyment. Kirkpatrick argued that,

Given that the funding for nature conservation and built heritage research has been in a state of rapid decline and a tendency towards project management, rather than research activity, within the Tasmanian and Commonwealth bureaucracies, it is hard to see sufficient research being undertaken to adequately manage and present our magnificent national parks and other reserves. Given that the tourism industry depends on such research, it should be concerned for its future.105

Environmentalists’ concerns about marginalisation of national parks’ conservation role through the separation of the Parks and Wildlife Division from the Nature Conservation Branch might have been lessened if effective linkages between the two separated functions were put in place, or planned, but there was no evidence of this.106

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust welcomed the restructure, the fact that the Minister responsible for park management was to be the Premier and the separation of reserve management functions from the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment’s responsibilities for service provision to all land-holders.107 The Tasmanian National Parks Association, however, opposed the move and called for the re-establishment of an independent National Parks and Wildlife Service which, the organisation argued, needed to include both nature conservation and reserve management functions and be directed by someone with a ‘long history of passionate involvement in nature conservation’.108

The principles of national park management and the kind of Parks Service that the Tasmanian National Parks Association argued for, resembled Tasmania’s National Parks and Wildlife Service of the 1970s and early 1980s. Prior to, and after that period, Tasmania’s national park estate and national park administration were more dominated by developmental interests - notably forestry, mining, tourism and the Hydro Electric Commission. During the 1970s, however, Tasmania’s national park estate had a strong advocate in the State’s Parks Service to pursue nature conservation as its primary goal. While the Parks Service was required to accommodate major developmental interests in its plans for reserve expansion, it had
sufficient government support and funding to achieve significant conservation outcomes, insufficient organised opposition to prevent it from doing so, the support of an active environmental movement in pursuit of the same goals and the leadership of someone with a ‘long history of passionate involvement in nature conservation’. From the perspective of most Tasmanian environmentalists, Tasmania’s national parks estate was in more appropriate custodial care during the years of the State’s National Parks and Wildlife Service’s bureaucratic independence - 1971-1987 - than it was before, and has been since, that era. But, as State governments’ actions from the mid 1980s showed, not everybody agreed with that view.

Conservationists’ and environmentalists’ achievements in protecting areas of outstanding natural beauty and other natural values within the Tasmanian national parks and reserve system were widely recognised as being of value. There were however, at the turn of the century, different interpretations of that value within the community and incompatibilities between interpretations caused political controversy over national park policy and management.

A strong environmental lobby with ecological and preservationist aims argued for reserve management led by biological science with a focus on protecting wilderness values and minimising evidence of human activity. A challenge to at least some of the environmental lobby’s philosophies and aims arose in the late 1980s however, from what might be described as an ‘access’ lobby. The access lobby includes groups of Tasmanians - horse-riders, hunters, local farmers, recreational vehicle drivers and anglers - who wish to continue connections with reserved lands in ways that have been prohibited or restricted by environmentally based national park management. This group encompasses aspects of ‘wise use’ conservation philosophy, and its desire to preserve aspects of cultural heritage reflects elements of preservation philosophy. The lobby, represented in Tasmania by the Tasmanian Traditional and Recreational Land Users Federation presents a fundamental challenge to ecology as defined by biological science disciplines as the appropriate basis for national park management. Though elements of the alliance reflect aspects of traditional land use and wise use conservation, the broad scope of the interest groups and activities involved represent a range of disparate environmental, social, psychological, health and safety impacts for national parks and their users that
extend beyond traditional conservation or land use practices. The inclusion of recreational vehicle driving, in particular, raises questions about the extent to which the alliance reflects philosophical coherence consistent with social and environmental meanings of national parks or political expediency more closely linked to a broader backlash against ‘green’ philosophy than to cultural associations traditionally associated with reserved lands.

Bushwalkers were a discrete group with historical links to the environmental lobby and a specific conflict of interest with modern environmentalism. The bushwalking lobby argued for Tasmanians’ freedom to walk in national parks, and, though this conflicted with environmentalists’ arguments for restricting walkers’ access to parks and reserves, the bushwalkers’ position was not presented as opposition to broader environmental philosophy.

Of developmental interests, which the State government has championed from the days of national parks’ early history, tourism was conspicuous. By the twenty-first century, nature-based tourism presented in forms that threatened long-standing values associated with national parks in ways that tourism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not. Promotion of national park destinations and tourism ventures proposed in the twenty-first century threatened national parks’ egalitarian traditions and some, notably helicopter flights, had the potential to intrude, if not destroy, the quality of other park visitors’ experiences.

**Conclusion**

The future of Tasmania’s national parks was unclear at the turn of the century. The high level of electoral support demonstrated by Tasmanians and Australians generally in this period for policies of reduced public spending, ‘user pays’, economic growth and privatisation of public assets created a political environment that, unlike Australia’s political climate of the 1960s and 1970s, resisted rather than assisted Tasmanian environmentalists in achieving their goals for the State’s national parks system. Neither did these political policies support bushwalkers’ goals of maintaining open access for Tasmanians to the State’s national parks.
The separation of national park management from scientific land management research meant that the wilderness national park model and principles of biological science no longer dominated the Parks Service’s mission to the extent it had, particularly during the early 1980s. Environmental principles remained an integral part of national park management; less tangible values than environmental or economic ones were not necessarily acknowledged in national park policy. Less tangible values, that might be broadly termed social values, have not yet been clearly defined though they emerge from peoples’ writing, such as that of the *Mercury* reporter at the time of National Park’s opening:

> Such things as healthy and educative holidays, days among those crowded solitudes that appeal to the finer natures, opportunities for communing with the spirits of the trees and the brooks … will not be without their real value, though it may not be expressible in pounds, shillings and pence.’

More recently, Alan Putney wrote;

> For many people round the world, protected areas are perceived not so much as in situ repositories of genetic wealth but as primal landscapes of the Creation that deeply touch the spiritual, cultural, aesthetic, and relational dimensions of human life.

and that,

> … perhaps one of the most important values of protected areas in the long run will be their potential to reconnect increasingly urbanized societies to nature and to encourage a reencounter with the knowing of oneness.

Putney argues that discourse on national parks and protected areas has neglected intangible values. It is, he wrote, as if science and economics were considered adequate tools for characterising qualities of life’s intricacies, reflecting the Western tendency to define knowledge on scientific, technical and economic criteria while assigning less importance on other ways of knowing through humanistic, cultural and spiritual means.

The nature of social and political conflict over Tasmania’s national parks at the turn of the century reinforced Putney’s conclusion that national parks’ intangible values needed to be addressed in addition to acknowledgement of their environmental importance. In the absence of a mission that embraced national parks’ social as well as environmental values, however, the Parks Service was subject to political pressure to accommodate conflicting demands and commercialisation in an ad-hoc manner that resembled what Penny Figgis described as ‘value-free managerialism’.
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Part 4

Conclusion

Chapter 11

Tasmania’s National Parks: Varying Purposes and Shifting Politics

This thesis argues that Tasmania’s national parks have fulfilled a range of purposes; that the parks system’s dominant purpose has been politically determined and has shifted over time. The Tasmanian government and community based interest groups have defined different purposes of national parks as their most significant, and changes in national parks’ positioning within the State’s political and social fabric reflect shifts in the relative power of interest groups and the particular national park purpose they have promoted.

People who promoted the national park idea for a number of purposes which included fauna and flora preservation, scenery preservation, economic development through tourism, and public access to recreational parklands for purposes of enjoyment, health and peoples’ well-being, gave rise to Tasmania’s national parks movement in the late nineteenth century. These differing purposes were complementary in some respects and contradictory in others but the complementary elements dominated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the foundations of a national parks system were laid in a political environment of consensus. This consensus was possible because of the large areas of unallocated Crown land available for different purposes, the small scale of industries that were dependent on natural resources sometimes found within national parks, and because the majority of people at the time did not perceive conflicts of interest between national parks and Tasmania’s economic development other than tourism.

The social currency of the idea of progress in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to the political consensus that supported the establishment of national parks and other public reserves. By the early twentieth century the most significant aspect of progress associated with parks was their potential to generate
revenue through tourism. Tourism became the major purpose associated with national parks as a consequence of the Tasmanian Tourist Association assuming a leading role in the Tasmanian national parks movement, and the consistency between that organisation’s aims and those pursued by governments of the time.

From the 1920s conflicts of interest between national park expansion and industrial development grew increasingly apparent and park expansion became subservient to the push for industrial development driven by both Labor and Liberal governments. The primacy of industry interests was facilitated by the structure and procedures of the Scenery Preservation Board which administered national parks and scenery reserves. Reserve proposals were presented to the Scenery Preservation Board, the members of which were mostly representatives of government departments and, from the late 1930s, the timber industry and the HEC, and any significant objections meant the proposal was modified or shelved. Scenery preservation became a residual land-use which governments supported in the absence of an alternative that offered a higher financial return, and the politics of parks was based on a system of compromise in which national parks held a relatively weak negotiating position. Though public interest groups protested the destruction of national parks values for industry purposes on some occasions during this period, and the first major political controversy over national park values arose over the Florentine forest, industry interests retained their influence over national parks and reserves because of strong parliamentary and social support for all forms of industrial development.

The environmental movement that emerged in the 1960s as a response to environmental degradation caused by industrialisation established environmental benchmarks for national park management that called for stronger, more scientifically based national park management agencies. Individual environmentalists and public interest groups which represented Tasmania’s national parks movement supported these developments and they advocated for Tasmania to adopt more scientifically based reserve management led by a professional national parks authority with a directive and mandate to protect national parks’ environmental values.
Tasmanian environmentalists succeeded in achieving a National Parks and Wildlife Service with a legislative mandate to prioritise parks’ nature conservation values as a result of the outcome of the State election of 1969. That outcome did not reflect political consensus supporting national parks’ primary purpose being nature conservation however - the Labor Party intended to place national parks under the tourism portfolio had it won the election. Given that the Labor Party won seventeen seats, the Liberal Party also won seventeen seats and an environmental national park agency depended on Kevin Lyons of the Centre Party holding the balance of power aligned to the Liberals, there was an element of political serendipity in the Parks Service’s establishment in 1971 as a bureaucratically independent agency. Nevertheless, with some ministerial support and a committed Director who was skilled in negotiating and in people management, the Parks Service remained independent for over a decade while it successfully developed national parks’ nature conservation role and effected expansion of the national park estate. Like the Scenery Preservation Board that preceded it the Parks Service was required to negotiate new reserve proposals with competing interests, notably the timber and mining industries and the HEC, and to compromise on reserve boundaries to avoid major conflicts of interest. National park politics were still based on compromise during the 1970s but the Parks Service was positioned as a strong advocate in the compromise process.

National parks’ politics of compromise and the Parks Services’ era as an independent government agency ended in the 1980s following political conflict over the HEC’s Franklin Dam proposal. When the HEC in the early 1980s planned to flood the Franklin River, which environmentalists wanted protected within a national park, the Commonwealth government intervened in support of the environmental lobby and successfully over-ruled the Tasmanian government’s political protocols that had ensured national park expansion and management were ultimately subservient to industry demands and government interests.

The Commonwealth government’s action had significant implications for the politics of Tasmania’s national parks. Firstly, it upset Tasmanian political traditions of prioritising the demands of big industries over those of the national parks movement, and of the HEC never having its plans opposed by any government or government
agency. Secondly, the listing of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, backed by Commonwealth government obligations and funding, extended the influence within the Parks Service of a wilderness park management approach and conservation science, both of which were ill-equipped to deal with matters relating to national parks’ social values, in determining the use of a large portion of public land in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian government, which did not concur with the environment movement’s aims for the State’s national park estate, responded to the environment movement’s rise in political power and influence on national park policy by altering its arrangements for national park administration. From 1987 the Parks Service was subjected to a series of government agency re-structures which ended its bureaucratic independence and shifted its emphasis from wilderness and nature conservation to governments’ traditional focus on parks’ contribution to tourism. From the late 1980s members of some public interest groups who resented limitations on access to and allowed activities within national parks also protested environmentalists’ influence on national park management with arguments that contributed to a political backlash against the dominance of environmentalism in national park policy and management.

By the turn of the century the political assault on environmentalism as the dominant value system determining national park policy had successfully dismantled the national park system’s environmental value structure but had not replaced it with a coherent alternative. Consequently, the Parks Service was required to respond to demands from private developers and community interest groups wanting different kinds of access with varying environmental and other consequences for parks and park visitors in the absence of defined values on which to base the broad range of social as well as environmental policies required for national park management in the twenty-first century.

Environmentalists’ commitment to protecting areas of wilderness or outstanding natural and scenic value had, by the turn of the century, made a major contribution to forming Tasmania’s valuable national park estate. In order to maintain the integrity of national park lands, environmental values would have to remain centrally
important in national park management. However, environmentalism alone could not adequately address the range of social issues that confronted national park systems in the twenty-first century. Neither were the philosophy and methods applying to conservation science appropriate for furthering understanding of social issues associated with national parks as a basis for policy development.

By the twenty-first century protection of Tasmania’s national park values required an approach capable of integrating conservation values and environmental protection with an appreciation of other values Tasmanians have attached to national parks through their history. This history has illustrated that these values include respite from the noise and pollution generated by industrial society, public health, opportunities for people to re-connect with nature, and economic benefits of tourism for local communities. In order that decision-making relating to Tasmania’s national parks might be based on policy rather than the political strength of competing interest groups there is a need to identify non-environmental values intrinsic to national parks and integrate these with environmental principles in a framework that ensures protection of parks’ environmental values within the context of fundamental social values.
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Appendix

National Parks and Reserves managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service

The following list of national parks and reserves pertinent to this history is derived from the Collaborative Australian Protected Area Database (2002).

The listing includes protected area management categories defined by the United Nations Environment Programme, a summary of which is outlined below.

**CATEGORY Ia:** Strict Nature Reserve: protected area managed mainly for science

**Definition:** Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.

**CATEGORY Ib:** Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection

**Definition:** Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land, and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.

**CATEGORY II** National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation

**Definition** Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

**CATEGORY III** Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features

**Definition** Area containing one, or more, specific natural or natural/cultural feature which is of outstanding or unique value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.

**CATEGORY IV** Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention

**Definition** Area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species.

**CATEGORY V** Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation

**Definition** Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.
CATEGORY VI  Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems

Definition  Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

Source:
Listing: Department of Environment and Heritage, Collaborative Australian Protected Area Database, 2002.
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| Mt Chappell Island            | Indigenous Protected Area | V    | 325  | 9/30/00    |
| Oyster Cove                   | Indigenous Protected Area | V    | 30   | 6/12/1999  |
| Preminghana                   | Indigenous Protected Area | VI   | 525  | 6/05/1999  |
| Risdon Cove                   | Indigenous Protected Area | V    | 79   | 6/12/1999  |

<p>| Adamsfield                    | Conservation Area     | VI   | 5,400| 6/27/90    |
| Alpha Pinnacle                | Conservation Area     | V    | 267  | 7/24/96    |
| Ansons Bay                    | Conservation Area     | VI   | 40   | 5/27/83    |
| Apsley                        | Conservation Area     | VI   | 459  | 12/27/00   |
| Arthur-pieman                 | Conservation Area     | VI   | 101,775| 8/25/82    |
| Badger Corner                 | Conservation Area     | V    | 531  | 9/02/1948  |
| Badgers Head                  | Conservation Area     | IV   | 1    | 9/14/78    |
| Bay of Fires                   | Conservation Area     | VI   | 3,440| 12/17/82   |</p>
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| Wellington Park             | Other Conservation Area     | II   | 18,000| 11/01/1993  |

<p>| Actaeon Island              | Game Reserve                | VI   | 9    | 10/24/84    |
| Bird Island                 | Game Reserve                | VI   | 65   | 6/24/81     |
| Bruny Island Neck           | Game Reserve                | VI   | 1,450| 6/20/79     |
| Farm Cove                   | Game Reserve                | VI   | 1,720| 6/27/90     |</p>
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119 Scenery Preservation Board, Minutes of Meetings, 15 October 1971.

120 E.R. Guiler, *The Enthusiastic Amateurs*, 1999, p.120.


122 Advocate, 1 September 1966.


1  Interview with G. Middleton, 3 February 2004.


12 The Staff Bulletin, No.8, August 1974.


15 Mercury, 16 September 1971.

16 DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Director NPWS to Minister for Agriculture, 17 August 1972.

17 DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Forestry Commissioner to Director NPWS, 5 July 1973.

18 DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Forestry Commissioner to Director NPWS, 13 December 1973 and 27 February 1974.


21 DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Member for Bass to Minister for Minister for Lands and Works, 8 January 1973.

22 DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, J. Cunningham to Director NPWS, 28 April 1975.


33 Interview with G. Middleton, 3 February 2004.

34 Mercury, 11 June 1975.

35 DPIWE Archives: Correspondence, Minister for National Parks and Wildlife to Minister administering the Hydro-Electric Commission Act, June 1975.


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DPIWE Archives: Draft Cabinet Minute attached to National Parks and Wildlife Service Minute to Minister, 22 February 1995.


