

# TARKINE NATIONAL COALITION INC.

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President Peter Pullinger

## **Submission to The Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee.**

Dear Sir/Madam Chairperson,

I wish to make a submission to your Committee, on behalf of the Tarkine National Coalition, into the inquiry into funding and resources available to meet the objectives of Australia's National Parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas.

### Objectives

There seems to be no clear set of objectives for Australia's National Parks but these may be extrapolated from existing documents such as, The Kakadu National Park Draft Management Plan 2006, IUCN categories applicable to Nature Reserves (Cat 1a) National Parks or State Reserves (Cat II) and Conservation areas (Cat VI).

Other useful guides to conservation principles can be obtained from the Australian Natural Heritage Charter (second edition) and the document "Protecting Natural Heritage Charter" companion document. Also within the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) 1997 the purpose and objectives for each reserve classification are outlined.

Within Tasmania, since the RFA, there have been two types of reserves: 1. Dedicated reserves and 2. Other (such as Conservation area, game reserve and so on). This second category carries with it very limited protection of natural values leaving the area open to cattle grazing, timber getting, mineral exploration and extraction, roading and tourism.

To highlight the lack of adequate funding and resources available to all of Australia's National Parks and Reserves, and to show the lack of adequate protection of areas of high natural and cultural values, I shall outline my concerns as they apply to the Tarkine, an area including Australia's largest temperate rainforest (see attached map).

With the recent "Community Forest Agreement" both the Tasmanian State and the Federal Government did not adequately protect the wilderness and other natural and cultural values of the Tarkine. Both parties not only failed to bring about a reserve land classification that adequately addressed the high wilderness qualities and other natural and cultural values but it failed to allow adequate funding for the continued management of these additional reserves. The degradation of the values of the new reserves and of those pre-existing reserves in the Tarkine continues apace.

An example of this degradation is the recent damage done to priceless Aboriginal petroglyphs in the Arthur Pieman Conservation area. This is not the first time that irreplaceable artefacts, middens and hut depressions have been damaged in an area cited as one of the world's great archaeological sites.

Inadequate funds have been provided to ensure that enough rangers are available to protect these areas from careless 4WD users and vandals. The uncontrolled use of recreational vehicles has become a major problem throughout Tasmania's reserve system as a direct result of inadequate funding for sufficient staffing of Parks' rangers but in the Tarkine region we are seeing the devaluing of priceless heritage on a daily basis due to this lack of funding and manpower.

Many of the reserves are managed by Forestry Tasmania with inadequate consultation with the local community, including environment groups.

As well as a dire lack of funding and manpower to manage such a large and diverse region as the Tarkine the jumble of reserve types formal and informal, conservation zones and National Park status (Savage River National park) creates a lack of cohesion and consistency to be able to adequately protect and promote the region as a whole.

The values of the Tarkine region were documented for the Australian Heritage Commission by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust in 1992 and while the recent Community Forest Agreement has seen an additional 73,512 hectares protected from logging; this same area has no protection from other threats to its natural values such as mining exploration and ore extraction.

Less than 5% of the greater Tarkine has been given full protection as National Park and the Tarkine National Coalition see the cohesion of the multitude of ad hoc reserves and Conservation areas within the

Tarkine region as one well managed National Park with adequate funding and resources as being a duty of the State and Federal Governments.

It should be pointed out that Australia as a signatory to the World Heritage Convention has a duty to investigate the Tarkine for World Heritage status and by not doing so is in contravention of this international treaty.

Not only has there been inadequate funding and resources earmarked for National Parks and reserves but related to the EPBC act 1999 (object A), there has been a reduction in real funding from the Australian Government for support of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area.

The Tarkine National Coalition see the hodge-podge of reserves of varying status, conservation areas and National Park all under different management systems in the Tarkine as both confusing and inefficient. TNC recommend the creation of a greater *'Tarkine National Park'* as appropriate in terms of adequate protection of natural and cultural values of the area and more efficient in terms of resource and manpower management issues.

There is inadequate Aboriginal involvement in the park and reserve system in Tasmania and the Aboriginal community are supportive of a Tarkine National Park co-managed along the same lines as Kakadu.

Recommendations:

1. Increased funding for Tasmania's National Parks and Reserves.
2. Increased numbers of staff and rangers to oversee the Parks and Reserves.
3. The coalescence of the large number of reserves and management areas under one National Park for the Tarkine as the best outcome for the values of the Tarkine and as a way of most efficiently providing cost and manpower and management.
4. Aboriginal co-management of the Tarkine National Park.

Yours sincerely,

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