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## **Timber Communities Australia submission to PAHSMA Draft Statutory Management Plan**

In providing the following comments to the above mentioned draft statutory management plan, I seek to first acknowledge the work of the PAHSMA in balancing the need to both conserve and promote the unreplaceable cultural heritage values contained within the Port Arthur historic site. It is held in the highest regard by members of Timber Communities Australia.

For present timber families, Port Arthur holds very special cultural importance as a place that witnessed the early commencement of “organised” timber production for commercial return. As terribly harsh as life was for those early convict “loggers”, they played a key role in giving birth to an industry that is vitally important to the present day Tasmanian economy. Much of the present day understanding of the special characteristics of the different eucalypt species originated from Port Arthur.

It is of enormous value to TCA members that this cultural heritage of timber getting and milling is recognized by the Authority as a vital part of the overall Port Arthur story, this heritage is promoted via the Authority’s excellent physical and interoperation displays. TCA is also fully supportive of the ongoing research by the Authority to further this understanding.

This timber getting heritage is continuing as an important part of present day land use in and around the forests that form the back drop to the Port Arthur historic site, much of these present day forests are a result of the efforts of those early convict “loggers”. The present landscape that is the back drop to the historic site is in its self an ever evolving cultural landscape as it was from the time the first tree was felled by the convict “loggers”.

This understanding of an evolving landscape by the Authority was evident with its commitment to co-establish with the Tasmanian Heritage Council in 2004, the round table process. This led to the win- win management agreement between one of our Port Arthur based family members (Roger and Marion Larner) and the Authority regarding proposed timber harvesting on their private land situated in the foothills of Mt Arthur. This process involved all parties identifying and recognising the needs of each party then working to achieve an agreed outcome that maintained these shared values. These values were:- achieving minimal visual impact upon significant “view sheds” of the Historic Site, the Larner’s gaining a fair commercial return from their land,

and equally important, maintaining the past timber getting heritage sites contained within the property. These heritage sites identified that this land had previously, at a much earlier time, provided a commercial return for timber getting, only then it was by “convict loggers”

The success of this round table process is an excellent example of achieving mutually agreed outcomes, and its success should not be overlooked or dismissed. Yet it is some what disappointing that upon reading elements of section 5.7 *External Area Management* it appears that the aforementioned process has been overlooked or was not know by the author of this draft plan.

This disappointment is compounded by what appears to be now a change in approach by the draft management plan seeking to create and impose restrictive prescriptions for neighbouring land, (land the Authority is not legally responsible for). Which raises a very fundamental point; in that TCA considers that the Authority should not restrict private land owner rights without providing adequate compensation. It is also noted that the draft management plan makes inferences to achieving these restrictive prescriptions via third parties.

In 2004 the Productivity Commission considered private land owner rights and made recommendations accepted by Government. In its report “*Impacts of Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations*” a Productivity Commission Inquiry Report (No. 29, 8 April 2004) the Commission made the following recommendation:

“Recommendation 10.9

*Over and above agreed landholder responsibilities, additional conservation apparently demanded by society (for example, to achieve biodiversity, threatened species and greenhouse objectives), should be purchased from landholders where intervention is deemed cost-effective.”*

It its response the Australian Government accepted the recommendation and stated:

*“It is the Australian Government’s position that, prior to the removal of landholders’ rights, State and Territory governments must consult fully with landholders and any other interested parties and meet any legal requirements for direct compensation to property rights holders. This is a precondition before the Australian Government will consider adjustment assistance.”*

In summary, regarding subsection 5.7.2, as it stands in this draft stage it is some what threatening to neighbouring private landowners (It is TCA’s view that this should not be and most certainly does not have to be the case.) It appears as if the Authority is seeking to impose its will upon its neighbouring private land owners with little regard for the aspirations of those land owners. The second paragraph of 5.7.2.refers in a negative way to present private logging practices, yet no reference to the 2004 round table success as the way forward regarding issues raised in this section. Also there is no mention

that logging (timber getting) is a fundamental element of Port Arthur's heritage.

The Policies and Management Actions as listed in this section appear to be very much at odds with the aforementioned 2004 round table process. Not wanting to labor the point, but the Authority is not the only land owner at Port Arthur with goals, yet with the present wording of 5.7.2 there appears to be no recognition of neighbouring land owner rights or aspirations, which does nothing for enhancing or promoting neighbour good will for the sharing of community goals.

TCA does not deny in any way that external area management is a very important matter for the Authority, but we hold the view that its goals can be achieved via a strategy of inclusive involvement and consultation. Such an approach will create good will and alleviate suspicion in relation to the draft statutory management plan's intention to neighbouring land.

Therefore TCA requests that section 5.7.2 be redrafted to reflect a more inclusive partnership approach to meet the Authority's interest in External Area Management. To this end TCA is prepared to assist with this if required.

Barry Chipman  
Tasmanian State Manager

***To View the PAHSMA Draft Management Plan please go to:***

[http://www.portarthur.org.au/pashow.php?ACTION=Public&menu\\_code=200.500](http://www.portarthur.org.au/pashow.php?ACTION=Public&menu_code=200.500)