I write on behalf of the Tasmanian Greens in relation to the above referral under the EPBC Act.

In Submission #3133, the proponent refers to consultation undertaken, and specifically includes the Tasmanian Greens. This is a misrepresentation of the facts.

In my position as Parks spokesperson for the Greens, I instigated a meeting with the proponent to reiterate our long standing opposition to commercial development inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) and our concern with the current EOI process for private development inside protected areas.

The proponent, Mr Hackett and I had a cordial discussion, but ultimately agreed to disagree. Our adviser, **s22**, also attended this meeting and can attest it was not an effort at consultation on the part of the proponent, although he did agree to meet with us. We thought it important that this be clarified.

Yours sincerely,

Cassy O'Connor MP Tasmanian Greens' Leader Member for Denison

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s22 Via email April 10, 2018

Department of Environment and Energy

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### Submission regarding 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I am writing to make a submission opposing the proposed development on Halls Island and associated helipad and track development on the shores of Lake Malbena. I am a Tasmanian resident, a visitor to the area as a bushwalker and fly fisherman.

There are a number of concerns that I believe mean the submission should be opposed.

- 1. The Parks and Wildlife Assessment (RAA), upon which the referral under EPBC heavily relies has been withheld, making it impossible for the public to determine that project will not have a significant impact on matters of environmental significance. The consultation over the referral should be halted, the RAA released and consultation commenced.
- 2. The project will have a significant impact including on:
  - The amenity of other users including fishermen and bushwalkers because of the use of helicopters for construction, servicing and guest transfer. It is a wilderness area – helicopter flights will destroy the very thing that the submission says it wants people to experience.
  - The wilderness values of the area.
- 3. Helicopter access from Launceston and or Hobart is not reported and it is inconceivable that all guests will arrive via Derwent Bridge (2 hr drive from Hobart, longer from Launceston). Given this is aimed at 'the very top end of the market' helicopter access is likely to be significant out of Launceston (proponents home base) and Hobart
- 4. The project breaches the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan because:
  - It is not a standing camp, but a built commercial development comprising 'buildings' and a central "hut', these are prohibited in the zone covering Lake Malbena
  - Tracks and boardwalk are prohibited in the self reliant recreation zone of the TWWHA Management Plan
- 5. The cumulative impacts of the proposal, including Stage 2 tracks to Mt Oana and 'any additional walking routes' should be reported as part of the same referral

Please advise that this has been received.

Many thanks,



| From:    | s22  |
|----------|--|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals   |
| Subject: | Referral: 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island<br>Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas |
| Date:    | Wednesday, 11 April 2018 9:29:14 PM  |

Dear Sir or Madam,

This email provides comment on the following proposed development: Referral number: 2018/8177 Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas The proposed development would directly impact on the EPBC Matter of World Heritage property.

Impacts would include the following:

### • Significant impact on Criteria vii - Values representing superlative natural phenomena, formations or features.

The Western Lakes region of Tasmania is an area of superb natural phenomena with a landscape reflecting past natural phenomena including evidence of past glaciation, evidenced in its geomorphological features, and biogeographical Gondwanan heritage. It received World Heritage Listing for these, and other, reasons.The proposal's infrastructure and operational activities would have visual impacts that would notably alter and diminish the quality of this unusual, extensive, relatively unmodified landscape.

### • Criteria iii - Values bearing unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilisation which has disappeared

The 'relatively unmodified' landscape of the Western Lakes region bears testimony to Aboriginal and European settlement activities The region received World Heritage Listing for these, and other, reasons. The activities of these past inhabitants contributed to the formation of the present landscape, and it bears testament to their cultures, especially their land management practices. It is, therefore, an important human heritage heritage landscape. The proposed activity is at odds with the heritage values of the site. It imposes a modern dimension and modern land use values on the site, which would substantially alter the World Heritage property in a manner which is inconsistent with its heritage values.

### Potential impacts on wilderness character, including remoteness from settlement and apparent naturalness

The proposal's construction and operational activities, especially the operation of helicopters to access the site, would negatively impact on the relatively undisturbed landscape of the site and surroundings. The acoustic impacts, in particular, of helicopter access, would have a significant impact across a large area which would be particularly intrusive because of the low relief of the region surrounding the flight path and land/water surface qualities, which offer little in the way of an acoustic barrier to contain noise impacts. Given the low visitation, seclusion and quiet nature of the site, including areas along the flight trajectory, these impacts would be particularly notable and disruptive. Such impacts would significantly degrade or damage the wilderness value of the site, including flight trajectory, diminishing its cultural value, as a retreat from the modern world, for a significant group of people who value the site for these reasons. The activity would alter the setting of the World Heritage property, in a manner that is inconsistent with the property's values Lake Malbena is within the "self-reliant recreation zone" of the WHA, within which hut development, new tracks and boardwalks are prohibited. The proposed activity is not

consistent with the values of a "self-reliant" wilderness area.

The proposal should not be permitted in its current form, particularly as the proposed helicopter access would significantly diminish the wilderness values of the World Heritage area and it's cultural amenity and heritage values.

Yours sincerely,



From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:Public Comment: Referral Number: 2018/8177Date:Thursday, 12 April 2018 1:19:58 PMAttachments:S22

Hi,

Please find attached my comment on Referral number 2018/8177.

Thank you,



Submission: s22

#### My submission relates to the following EPBC Number

#### Referral Number: 2018/8177

#### Proponent: Wild Drake Pty Ltd

I believe the proposal would have a significant impact on matters protected by the EPBC Act, fails to account for the significance of Halls Island as a refuge and the referral is inadequate. My reasons are provided below;

#### Highly significant and irreplaceable refuge

Halls Island is a highly significant and unique botanical refuge located within a wild and remote part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Halls Island is the location where a majority of the infrastructure is proposed to be sited. The island is of outstanding universal value and significance, primarily due to its remoteness and as a refuge from fire. The surrounding' mainland' has been significant impacted by fire and an increasingly drier and warmer climate. Halls Island is one of the largest islands located within the Central Plateau, Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

In 2016 the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area had a number of very significant fires that according to fire ecologists "laid waste to Tasmania's pristine wilderness areas, many of them slow growing, ancient vegetation communities.<sup>1</sup> Media reports relating to these fires focussed specifically on the loss of ancient alpine vegetation in the Tasmanian Central Plateau. At the time Fire ecologist David Bowman referred to these world heritage areas a "geological refuge that had survived since Australia was part of Gondwana, the supercontinent that included Antarctica and South America and broke up about 180 million years ago".<sup>2</sup>

This information is relevant because Halls Island is of even greater significance because it functions as a refuge within this world heritage area refuge. This is supported by the fact that the island contains many fire intolerant species and communities such as a grove of ancient King Billy Pine and significant areas of the threatened species *Pherosphera hookeriana*. They are only found on this island because it is a refuge from fire. The ancient and fire intolerant King Billy Pine on the island is the only known population within this area, with the nearest recorded population some 30 kilometres away. The botanical composition containing a large number of fire intolerant species is only present on the island because of the absence of fire for centuries and possibly longer.

There can be little doubt that increasing visitation to the island and constructing and maintaining infrastructure in such a sensitive and unique environment poses a significant threat. Regardless of mitigation measures, the proposed activities will increase the likelihood of fire and the introduction of weeds and pathogens. There could be no better refuge from these threats than an island. The risk of irreversibly altering the islands unique, ancient vegetation is reason enough to not allow this development.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-02/tasmanian-bushfires-damage-to-wilderness-world-heritage-area/7134592

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.smh.com.au/environment/like-losing-the-thylacine-fire-burns-tasmanian-wilderness-world-heritage-area-20160131-gmi2re.html

#### Lack of consideration of the uniqueness of the EPBC community

The Flora and Fauna Assessment accompanying the EPBC referral fails to acknowledge the significance of the island as a refuge and a place with a unique botanical composition compared to the surrounding mainland. This is supported by the fact that the island contains many fire intolerant species and communities such as King Billy Pine and *Pherosphera hookeriana*. They are only found on this island because it is a refuge from fire. The ancient and fire intolerant King Billy Pine on the island is the only known population within this area, with the nearest recorded population some 30 kilometres away. Again it is only present on the island because of the absence of fire.

The Flora and Fauna Assessment acknowledges the presence and high quality of the EPBCA listed *Sphagnum peatland* (endangered) on the island. The report discusses the communities' significance in terms of the extent and condition. Section 2.1.1 of the Flora and Fauna habitat Assessment states;

The NCA and meets the definition for the 'alpine sphagnum bog and associated fens' community listed as endangered under the EPBCA. All the bogs on Hall's Island have thus been mapped as MSP because of the percentage cover of Sphagnum species, with most patches having well over the required 30 % cover (up to 80 % ground cover in some cases) and over 50 cm depth of Sphagnum being evident in places (Plate 2). Of note, the patch of MSP adjacent to the rainforest communities contains emergent pencil pines Athrotaxis cupressoides (Plate 3). The description of the TASVEG community for pencil pine woodland (RPW), allows for the presence of Sphagnum at ground level. However, because the percentage cover of Sphagnum in this patch is so high (> 75 %) it best fits the definition of the MSP community with emergent pencil pines (MSP\_AC).

*Fire* and the *construction of structures* are both listed as threatening processes<sup>3</sup> under the EPBC policy statement for this community. Page 16 of the Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens policy statement 3.16 clearly states under threats and impacts;

### "The biggest threats currently facing this community are fire and ongoing effects of climate change."

The flora and Fauna assessment has not provided any assessment to determine whether the EPBC listed 'alpine sphagnum bog and associated fens' community on the island is of outstanding universal value and uniqueness in terms of its condition and composition when compared to the same community on the surrounding mainland. Given the islands unique botanical composition as a result of an absence of fire on the island, this a fundamental omission from the referral.

This, I believe makes the referral deficient and the proposal a significant risk to EPBC listed values.

I have personally visited Halls Island on multiple occasions and I believe that given the presence of so many fire intolerant species, the island has not been subjected to fire for potentially 100 years or more and some of the wetter gullies perhaps 200 years+.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/b08acec6-6a27-4e71-8636-498719b253b4/files/alpine-sphagnum-bogs.pdf

#### No consideration of alternative siting

It will only take one large fire on the island to destroy the incredibly unique botanical composition and highly important EPBC listed sphagnum community. There are many thousands of lakes in Tasmania's Central Plateau that contain alternative sites for developments such as this. They are located outside of the World Heritage Area. This referral and the proposal does not appear to have given any consideration to siting the development elsewhere and outside of the World Heritage Area and in areas that do not contain EPBC listed communities.

This makes the referral and the proposal deficient.

#### Impossible to determine true extent of development

In terms of determining the direct impact of the proposal on the EPBC listed communities on the island, the map (Map 2) within the referral is grossly inadequate in terms of understanding the proximity of the proposed development footprint to these EPBCA listed communities. The map doesn't even contain a scale bar so determining the true footprint and siting of infrastructure is impossible.

Given the sensitivity of the site and the nature of the proposed development, this makes the referral and the proposal deficient.

#### Only possible due to a rezoning of the site

Until recently, the location of the proposed development was zoned as 'wilderness' under the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan. This previous zoning prohibited almost every aspect of what is currently proposed and protected the areas unique natural values from commercial development. The zone appears to have been amended during the finalisation of the Management Plan.

This is another reason that this proposal should be rejected or at least required to be fully assessed under the EPBC Act.

#### Shoreline access impacts

The threatened species *Pherosphera hookeriana* is confined to the shoreline of Halls Island. The proposed commercial operation is for commercial fishing. Fishing by its very nature is going to require access to the lake shore and this will require the clearance of vegetation and possibly the *Pherosphera hookeriana* that occupies much of the shoreline.

Thank you

s22

| From:    | s22                              |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals                   |
| Subject: | Halls Island submission          |
| Date:    | Friday, 13 April 2018 8:16:37 PM |

Hello, I would just like to say that it would be a shame that a lovely area like Halls Island would be used for the purpose of money making. I have visited the island not that long ago and have fond memories of sitting on the rocks outside Reg Halls Hut playing his guitar and having hundreds of carrawongs fly in from all directions and sit in the surrounding trees. It was so peaceful and special, on a glorious sunny day. Something that I think that after several days walking to get there and a swim across to the island was a reward that I earned. I think that the helicopters noise, the larger population of people and infrastructure would ruin the serenity of the area, as I think that was the reason that Reg Hall built his hut there in the first place. I know that you say only 6 people at once and 30 times a year, but we have seen what has happened to Cradle Mountain and the tourism and money grabbing there, how local people have been pushed away from enjoying that area unless you wave the dollars, the crowds and the noise and mess left behind. I would not like to see the area around Halls Island get to that level. Things always start off small.

I would not have a problem with people going to that magical place, but to earn it by walking in and leaving no trace would be a nicer way of preserving Reg Halls memory. Please rethink past the dollar sign and think about our beautiful area. Earn it, by hard work, enjoy it, but leave no trace. Thankyou for the opportunity for me to write my thoughts, cheers<sup>S22</sup>

Dear Sir / Madam,

I wish to provide public comment on the above proposal.

As a Tasmanian resident and fly fisherman I oppose this application. I strongly believe that no permanent structure(s) should be permitted within this area. I also strongly oppose the fly in/out helicopter proposal for noise and amenity reasons.

I believe approval of this application would be severely detrimental to the Wild, untouched, remoteness of the Western Lakes that we all love. I also believe it will set a precedence for future development that may further threaten this fragile environment.

Regards,

s22

Sent from my iPhone

From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:2018/8177 Referral Submission.Date:Saturday, 14 April 2018 9:28:03 PMAttachments:2018 8177 Objection to Wild Drake Pty Ltd.pdf

Please find attached my submission to the referral 2018/8177 proposal within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

Thank You s22 Westbury Tasmania Objection to the following Proposal

#### 2018/8177

# WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

In the following questions the proponent declares the area as a Lot. A search on LISTMap, the Tasmanina government public information cadastral mapping program (www.thelist.tas.gov.au) clearly shows the area of Hall's Island to be under the jurisdiction of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service as public land. I believe the answer provided in 1.7 to be misleading.

1.7 Is the proposed action a street address or lot? Lot
1.7.2 Describe the lot number and title. N/A
1.8 Primary Jurisdiction. Tasmania

In Section 2.1.1 the proponent describes as "*potential*" the **Impacts relating to general values of 'wilderness',** but fails to provide any detail.

The word "Wilderness" in the name of the TWWHA promotes this district as a place of high value in regards to getting away from the modern world. The following extract sums up the value of wilderness to humans, as being signifacantly enhanced when a physical effort is expended in getting to that area. Please disregard references to campfires in this quoted text.

Accessing wilderness areas via helicopter, and staying in permanently established luxury provisioned huts, severely diminishes and degrades the value of the wilderness area. As the proponent has an existing camp on private land outside the boundaries of the National Park and Wilderness area, I see no benefit ot the landscape, only a monetary benefit to the proponent.

The establishment of remote luxury camps in one of the few easily accessible areas of Tasmania's wilderness sets a precedent for more commercial activities to be established. Due to the high dollar cost of of participating in such an experience, it cannot be argued that this operation will increase the number of people who can benefit from a positive interaction with remoteness.

The immediate response to this question is what one typically associates with any vacation. Wilderness adventure is a chance to get away, relax, have fun, appreciate what one has, spend quality time with family or friends, etc. There's truth to that. However, this thought is problematic: by associating wilderness adventure with the same sentiments as going to a beach house for a week we undervalue wilderness travel; it romanticizes the often difficult and frustrating daily experiences that help us to develop a more deliberate approach to how we fit in to the earth and its communities.

I believe that the true value of wilderness travel is in the ways that wilderness adventure differs from a regular vacation and how these differences help to inform us to adopt daily practices to live life more intentionally, respecting both people and the environment around us in an important way.

The fact that wilderness travel is not easy, primarily due to, unlike a beach house, its necessary inaccessibility, is one of the most valuable aspects of wilderness adventure. If it came easily, if we did not have to earn those sunrises and sunsets across an island covered lake in the Boundary Waters, if we did not have to earn the warmth of a campfire in the morning on top of a mountain ridge, the experience would be diminished. Every step of the way, you are earning the experience. Through sacrifice of modern conveniences, challenging yourself to keep portaging despite deep mud or precarious stepping stones, to never stop paddling when doing a big lake crossing with a bitter headwind, and to get to camp at night, exhausted, and make sure to set up the very shelter you will sleep under and tolerate the bugs, cook over an open fire—it is through all of these physical demands that when laying down your head at night you are able to appreciate a simpler way of doing things. Earning your meals and your sleep through hard work. Admiring the good company of those that help you along the way. Relying on the support of your teammates when conditions are tough. These are all aspects of wilderness travel that lead to the development of resilience, fortitude, and gratitude.

Wilderness travel fosters self-reliance, because while in the wilderness you have to figure it out yourself or as an expeditionary team. There are not modern technologies that you can quickly defer to and thus, problem solving skills that have been untouched since building forts as a child suddenly need to be pulled from the highest shelf, dusted off, and utilized. The same goes for working together as a team. It is easy, particularly with cell phones, to become lost in your own little digital world. Communication in modern life seems more frequently over text messages than face to face conversation. Wilderness travel suddenly requires one to persevere not only through your own mental and physical anguish, but to encourage and help others do the same. And when people aren't getting along, wilderness travelers must sit down, figure it out, and move forward—otherwise traveling with adverse conditions will not be efficient or fun.

From www.vobs.org Voyageur Outward Bound School What's Wilderness Adventure Worth?

Please do not allow "beach houses" to become part of our precious and diminishing remote areas.

Thank You

From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:Development referral number 2018/8177 - Submission from Hobart Walking Club re: MalbenaDate:Sunday, 15 April 2018 12:51:29 PMAttachments:HWC submission Malbena 150418.docx

Please find attached a submission from Hobart Walking Club re: Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

Regards,





# HOBART WALKING CLUB Inc.

G. P.O. BOX 753, HOBART, TASMANIA 7001

Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601 **Email**: <u>epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au</u>

15 April 2018

#### HOBART WALKING CLUB SUBMISSION - Development referral number 2018/8177

## WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

The Hobart Walking Club opposes this development for the following reasons:

#### Loss of heritage use of the hut and surrounding area.

The Halls Island hut is part of Tasmania's mountain huts heritage. These huts have long been used by bushwalkers on the usual understanding with the owners of huts that bushwalkers were welcome to use huts provided that they left the hut in the same condition as when they arrived.

The Hobart Walking Club has led a number of walks into the Lake Malbena area and has visited Halls Island and has occasionally camped near the hut on the island. There are few other camping opportunities close to Lake Malbena. With commercial development on the island it is doubtful that the hut or its immediate environs will be available for visitation and/or camping and so this heritage activity in this area will be lost.

Lake Malbena is near the centre of an area that has become a more frequent destination for the Hobart Walking Club as overland track fees and quotas and rising visitor numbers in other popular areas such as the Walls of Jerusalem and Frenchmans Cap have displaced Club walkers from these areas.

#### Threat to the unique island environment.

Halls Island has largely been untouched by the frequent fires that have ravaged the Central Plateau before it gained environmental protection. The island hosts a remnant pine forest/rainforest and peat beds that have been mostly lost or have been significantly damaged elsewhere on the Central Plateau



# HOBART WALKING CLUB Inc. G. P.O. BOX 753, HOBART, TASMANIA 7001

due to fire. A permanent campsite, building works and increased visitation presents risks to this unique and sensitive environment.

#### Loss of wilderness values due to helicopter flights

The establishment of a helipad and frequent helicopter flights ferrying visitors in and out will interfere with the wilderness values of this area. This has long been an inaccessible area except via extended walking and has been a peaceful location.

There are a number of access routes to Lake Malbena used by walkers. These include a walking route from Lake Ina to Lake Malbena heads across country to meet the Nive River near Lake Tidler and follows up the Nive River to Lake Malbena, following a marked route from Olive Lagoon or crossing Chinamans Plains. Helicopters flying overhead across any of these routes would compromise the wilderness experience for traditional bush walkers.

The proposed flight path included in the proposal closely follows the Lake Ina to Lake Malbena walking route.

#### Conclusion

In summary traditional use and enjoyment of the Lake Malbena area by the Hobart Walking Club will be significantly compromised by this development and there is an elevated risk to the Halls island environment and so as a consequence this development is opposed by the Club.

s22

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached and copied below a comment regarding the proposed Halls Island tourism development.

Submission #3133 - Halls Island, Tasmania

Comment written by s22

The proponent (Wild Drake Pty Ltd) seeks to operate a tourism business within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, a world heritage site. The proposal will utilise helicopters to fly tourists into the National Park from Derwent Bridge, potentially undertaking 60 flights (30 trips) a year plus additional trips for supplying and maintenance. This is an unacceptable exploitation of wilderness world heritage values and will cause great disturbance in the area. The Walls of Jerusalem National Park is an area of exceptional natural beauty, helicopters will pollute the airspace, causing a great amount of noise and will disrupt and scare wildlife such as Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles (*Aquila audax fleayi* ) living or feeding in the area.

Unnecessary helicopter use is not compatible with the wilderness values in which Walls of Jerusalem National Park is celebrated for. These include, natural beauty, native flora and fauna, wild unexploited habitats and fragile alpine ecosystems. People from all over Australia and the world visit this area to experience an undisturbed environment. It is not acceptable for a private company to exploit wilderness values for profit at the expense of the environment and the people who visit the area because of it undisturbed nature.

One of the criteria for which sites are selected for world heritage protection is: - to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance. The Walls of Jerusalem National Park is characterised by this criterion. The area is defined by exemplary natural beauty (mountains, forests, lakes and tarns, flora and fauna) which is aesthetically important to the image of a wild, clean green Tasmania. If this proposal goes ahead, some of the what makes the Walls of Jerusalem National Park so spectacular and special will be lost.

The area proposed for tourism should be managed for conservation and not be exploited by business. The greater area is habitat for Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles which are listed as endangered (EPBC Act). A lack of nests recorded on Halls Island or within a 2km radius of proposed development, does not mean that eagle and other bird species will not be disturbed. The greater area including the flight path is undoubtedly used at times by eagles for hunting and scavenging. The presence of helicopter flights could exclude a large area, along and near the flight path, from being potential nest sites and important bird habitat in the future.

The walls of Jerusalem National Park should be managed foremost to protect the wilderness values which make the area world heritage; secondly it should be managed to provide locals and visitors the opportunity to visit a wilderness area free of the presence of development and

helicopters which would detract from the natural beauty and aesthetic uniqueness of the place.



| From:    | s22  |
|----------|--|
| То:      | EPBC Referrals   |
| Subject: | Referral No 2018-8177 Wild Drake Pty Ltd/ Tourism and Recreation/ Halls Island/ Tasmania/ Halls Island<br>Standing Camp, Lake Malbena Tas. |
| Date:    | Sunday, 15 April 2018 7:38:48 PM   |

I strongly object to the use of helicopters in this proposal and any other proposal in the World Heritage Area / Western Lakes Area to transport clients to their destination.

Allowing helicopter access will have a significant impact. One of the great attractions of the WHA/ Western Lakes area is that they can only be accessed by foot.

This is most appealing to people who want to seek out the remoteness and solitude and escape the hustle and bustle of modern day life.

I fear that if this proposal is allowed it will be a stepping stone for future proposals and hence the real wilderness experience could be lost forever.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10



to whom it concerns

Find attached my submission on 2018/8177



Department of Environment and Energy GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia



15 April 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### Submission in regards to 2018/8177 - WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I make this submission to outline my concerns and thereby opposition to the proposed development on Halls Island and associated helipad and track development on the shores of Lake Malbena. I am a resident of Tasmania and till recently a frequent bushwalking visitor to the Walls of Jerusalem National Park area.

My concerns are:

- 1. The detailed description and overall commentary would seem to be lacking to the extent that gaining an understanding of potential impacts of the proposed intensified usage and mitigation measures proposed are not readily apparent. Key to understanding the intensification is the actual area of the existing hut lease area of 40m<sup>2</sup> and current annual usage of the hut. Based on the scale of the existing hut area on submitted Map 2, the proposed standing camp footprint is approximately 150m<sup>2</sup>. However the Draft Site Plan indicates a considerably larger area. This inconsistency and lack of detail do not endure confidence in the proposal's capacity to have negligible impact on the environmental significance of the area. The information available for comment indicates a considerable increase in use of the island area.
- 2. Proposal fails to demonstrate the necessity for the camp area to be located within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. The wilderness values and activity resource sought can be achieved through a site outside the national park.
- 3. The information provided fails to adequately demonstrate the proposed development will not detrimentally impact on the natural and cultural values that have had the area included not only in a national park but also the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area. The EPBC referral seems to rely on a document withheld from public viewing. As such capacity to assess and determine the actual impacts on matters of environmental significance is impossible. Project plans and information while stated to be freely available at www.riverfly.com.au/hallsisland are not actually on the site.
- 4. The proposal does not comply with the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan in respect to:
- 5. There is no indication of how many persons will be on site at any one time. A maximum of s guests is stated. How many guest experts will there be and how many guides/camp assistants?
- 6. The proposal fails to provide adequate management details of the standing camp area particularly the actual area to be disturbed and rehabilitation to be undertaken.
- 7. There is confusion over whether the helipad is to be located on the island in the national park or off the island outside the national park.
- 8. The Flora and Fauna Assessment by NorthBarker was only for the island development and activity site. It does not assess the off island helipad site, landing site or walking track route...
- 9. The Flora and Fauna Assessment by NorthBarker does not include a survey of wedge-tail eagles along the Helicopter flight path. The concern is that plotting of known raptor sites

to the east of the helicopter flight path is because the forestry operations to the east of the Word Heritage Area have had a statutory requirement to record raptor nest sites within 1km of a timber harvest area. With there being no requirement to record sites in the national park or Central Plateau Conservation Area, the LIST indication of recorded raptor nest sites will not include any raptor nest sites within the national park or world heritage area over 1km from a past or current forest harvest area. There is clearly a need for a more detailed survey of raptor nests.

- 10. All the cumulative impacts of the proposed activity should be included in the same referral. Indicated future tracks to Mt Oana and 'any additional walking routes' should be included in the referral
- 11. The proposed development and activity as presented in the referral documents available for comment, fail to demonstrate the values of the world heritage area will not be significantly impacted upon and the wilderness values the proponent seeks to take advantage of seem to be inadequately protected.
- 12. The proposal as presented does not adequately address the information requirements for commercial development in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area as outlined in the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan.

In conclusion, it would seem that there is no need for the proposal to be based on Halls Island. A site outside the Walls of Jerusalem National Park could be found for the accommodation that is isolated, accessible to the fishing lakes and capable of being developed in compliance with the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan so that there is an acceptable impact on the World Heritage Area values.

Hope this assists with your assessment. Please notify me of this submissions receipt and the decision on the proposal under the EPBC assessment.



| From:        | s22   |
|--------------|---|
| To:          | EPBC Referrals  |
| Subject:     | EPBC 2018/8177; WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas |
| Date:        | Monday, 16 April 2018 9:38:20 AM  |
| Attachments: | EPBC.Referral.docx  |

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached comments by the Australian Heritage Council on EPBC 2018/8177. Please contact me if you require any further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely,



### EPBC 2018/8177; WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp,

Lake Malbena, Tas

Comments by the Australian Heritage Council

The buildings, helipad and tracks do not conform to the zoning prescriptions in the TWWHA Management Plan, which were designed to protect world and national heritage values. Permanent buildings with a 40 x 20 m footprint that would be in place for 12 months each year indicates that this is constructed accommodation and NOT a standing camp. The proposal also raises the issue of appropriate activities in a self-reliant recreation zone (hut construction) and wilderness zone (helicopter access). The World Heritage Committee (39 COM 7B.35, 2015) has called for strict criteria for tourism developments, and mentioned wilderness explicitly in this context: *5 c) Establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, including its wilderness character and cultural attributes;* 

The cumulative impact on both world heritage and natural heritage values would be considerable, particularly noting the impact of helicopters on the outstanding natural aesthetic value of the wilderness area in which it is situated.

The only environmental assessment available to the public does not cover the track to the helipad or the helipad.

While monitoring of some impacts is mentioned, there is no clear indication of the objectives/methods/timeframes of the various monitoring projects, the thresholds for limits of acceptable change, nor who will undertake and analyse the monitoring and who will pay for it. If it is intended that the proponent and/or Parks simply visually assess levels of impact(s) at unspecified intervals, then that is not the same as monitoring.

The proponent indicates that various researchers, the indigenous community and interested persons will be encouraged to visit the site. However, the assessment of impacts (both in the intrusion of helicopter access and on ground environmental impacts) does not include these additional people/visits. The amount of trampling per person will be related to the number of passes to/from scenic/interest points, water and access points, in addition to the initial trampling during construction and then on-going maintenance. Experimental trials of walker numbers have been carried out on the Central Plateau and alpine areas in the Western Arthurs. The sustainable carrying capacity is very low - pads were shown to form with as little as 30-100 passes per year.

Constructing a boardwalk through the EPBC listed Sphagnum (MSP) community does not equate to 'avoiding' MSP. The patterned mires are identified as an outstanding value of this area and should be completely avoided - they are very sensitive to trampling. The endemic conifer, *Pherosphaera hookeriana*, is listed as 'vulnerable' under EPBC. There are very few populations of this species and this is a potentially important site, away from the main populations at Mt Field National Park.

#### Dear Sir,

I write to you as instructed, on behalf of the Tasmanian North Western Fisheries Association. The NWFA represents a third of the 28,000 recreational trout anglers of Tasmania. In 1991 when the use of helicopters and float plane landing within the Central Plateau ,Western Lakes was first proposed. The NWFA recorded that they fully opposed the proposal. That still remains the NWFA policy.

The NWFA would only approve the use of helicopters into the area for emergency and research purposes.

We are completely against the Halls Island submission put forward by Mr Daniel Hackett. The NWFA is not against Tourism but in this case we believe there is a hidden ad gender behind the proposal. Anglers do not want the Western Lakes area opened up by helicopters to personal commercial privatisation and strongly believe that to ensure the fishery for future generations to enjoy, it should never be allowed to happen.

Mr Hackett is a well known commercial trout guide owning a fly-fishing shop in Launceston and running a guiding business for many years.

#### ---

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We are amazed that his current proposal before you does not mention any consultation with the Inland Fisheries Service, AAT, or any angling groups within Tasmania.

We are amazed that within the proposal there is no mention of any fishing or trout guiding activities that will be carried out at Lake Melbena or used as a base to enter further into the Western Lakes areas. As we have stated it is the NWFA opinion that this proposal is being used with a hidden ad gender to allow his guides to conduct commercial trout fishing by helicopter access into the western Lakes.

The large majority of trout anglers are a very protective and passionate group and when pushed are very vocal. The majority are against this proposal, and strongly advise that the question of his fishing, guiding intent, and if, why has it not been included within his submission. This question be asked of Mr Hackett before you sign off on his submission.

My Kindest Regards

As instructed.



From:Circularhead walking clubTo:EPBC ReferralsSubject:2018/8177 - WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and RecreationDate:Monday, 16 April 2018 10:03:11 AMAttachments:CHWC submission lake malbena.docx

To whom it may concern,

Attached is Circular head walking Clubs Submission for lake Malbena.





### **Circular Head Walking Club Inc**

PO Box 256. Wynyard 7325 chwcwalkabout@gmail.com

16 April 2018

Department of Environment and Energy GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia

epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### Submission in regards to 2018/8177 - WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

This is a submission by the Circular Head Walking Club to outline the clubs concerns and opposition to the proposed development on Halls Island and associated helipad and track development on the shores of Lake Malbena. As an incorporated walking club of Tasmania that frequently walks in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park area, the club feels it needs to raise the below concerns:

- 1. The detailed description and overall commentary would seem to be lacking to the extent that gaining an understanding of potential impacts of the proposed intensified usage and mitigation measures are not readily apparent. The actual area of the existing hut lease (40m<sup>2</sup>) and current annual usage of the lease area indicates a considerable increase in use is proposed. Based on the scale of the existing hut area on submitted Map 2, the proposed standing camp footprint is approximately 150m<sup>2</sup>. However the Draft Site Plan indicates a considerably larger area. This inconsistency and lack of detail do not endure confidence in the proposal's capacity to have negligible impact on the environmental significance of the area.
- 2. Proposal fails to demonstrate the necessity for the camp area to be located within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. The wilderness values and activity resource sought can be achieved through a site outside the national park.
- 3. The information provided fails to adequately demonstrate the proposed development will not detrimentally impact on the natural and cultural values that have had the area included not only in a national park but also the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area. The EPBC referral seems to rely on a document withheld from public viewing. As such capacity to assess and determine the actual impacts on matters of environmental significance is impossible. Project plans and information while stated to be freely available at <u>www.riverfly.com.au/hallsisland</u> are not actually on the site.
- 4. The proposal does not comply with the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan in respect to:
- 5. There is no indication of how many persons will be on site at any one time. A maximum of s guests is stated. How many guest experts will there be and how many guides/camp assistants?

- 6. The proposal fails to provide adequate management details of the standing camp area particularly the actual area to be disturbed and rehabilitation to be undertaken.
- 7. There is confusion over whether the helipad is to be located on the island in the national park or off the island outside the national park.
- 8. The Flora and Fauna Assessment by North Barker was only for the island development and activity site. It does not assess the off island helipad site, landing site or walking track route...
- 9. The Flora and Fauna Assessment by North Barker does not include a survey of wedge-tail eagles along the Helicopter flight path. The concern is that plotting of known raptor sites to the east of the helicopter flight path is because the forestry operations to the east of the Word Heritage Area have had a statutory requirement to record raptor nest sites within 1km of a timber harvest area. With there being no requirement to record sites in the national park or Central Plateau Conservation Area, the LIST indication of recorded raptor nest sites will not include any raptor nest sites within the national park or world heritage area over 1km from a past or current forest harvest area. There is clearly a need for a more detailed survey of raptor nests.
- 10. All the cumulative impacts of the proposed activity should be included in the same referral. Indicated future tracks to Mt Oana and 'any additional walking routes' should be included in the referral
- 11. The proposed development and activity as presented in the referral documents available for comment, fail to demonstrate the values of the world heritage area will not be significantly impacted upon and the wilderness values the proponent seeks to take advantage of seem to be inadequately protected.
- 12. The proposal as presented does not adequately address the information requirements for commercial development in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area as outlined in the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan.

In conclusion, from the information available it would seem that there is no need for the proposal to be based on Halls Island.

A site outside the Walls of Jerusalem National Park could be found for the accommodation that is isolated, accessible to the fishing lakes and capable of being developed in compliance with the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan so that there is an acceptable impact on the World Heritage Area values.

Hope this assists with your assessment. Please notify the club of this submissions receipt and the outcome of the proposal's EPBC assessment.



Circular Head Walking Club PO Box 256 Wynyard Tasmania, 7325

s22

| From:    | s22  |
|----------|--|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals                                       |
| Subject: | WALLS OF JERUSALEM NATIONAL PARK - HELICOPTER ACCESS |
| Date:    | Friday, 13 April 2018 11:13:57 AM                    |

#### Good morning

Helicopters and wilderness (except for emergencies) are totally incompatible. The proposal by Daniel Hackett will totally destroy the wild character of the Western Lakes Wilderness for the sake of a quick quid for him.

Please note that Anglers Alliance Tasmania are opposed to any helicopter use in the area except for emergencies.

People are attracted to Tasmania by our wilderness areas but the present State Government seems hell bent on destroying the core value of wildness for the sake of commercial gain by a very small number of operators.

Sincerely



| From:    | s22                               |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals                    |
| Subject: | Helicopters in World Heritage     |
| Date:    | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 3:40:10 PM |

#### Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my concern of the recent proposal to allow commercial helicopter trips to operate in the Tasmanian WHA. Firstly I am not a lawyer or expert in politics but just an average Joe who is passionate about the Western Lakes. As a keen angler and bushwalker that uses the area quite frequently I have been worried for some time about this area being affected by this type of activity. The Western Lakes as you may be aware is valued due to it's remoteness despite covering a relatively small area. Currently there is access from most angles and I am a firm believer that there are options for everyone depending on time restrictions and mobility. Why take that reward of solitude away from someone who wants to put in the effort to escape everyday life?? If a commercial operation was to start by flying wealthy customers into the area, they could potentially land in front of some poor soul who has carried a pack for 6 hrs to his destination. I'm sure his experience would be severely affected If this was to take place. I am writing from a fly fisherman's point of view as it is my main reason for visiting this special place but I'm sure many bushwalkers would feel the same. The proposal at Lake Malbena does not affect me "personally" as I havnt been there but my question is where does it all stop?? Surely someone else will want their piece of the pie?? If we allow one operation to get off the ground I believe it will be a slippery slope from there on in. Before we know it there will be no such thing as a remote Western Lakes experience as the whole reason for being there will be diminished. We go here to escape the developed world!! You can walk across it in a day if you like!! I see there is a dollar to be made and I feel this potential for tourism and a quick buck has many forgetting what the place is about. I can guarantee someone who has forked out a few dollars to be carried in will not respect and look after the area like old mate with the backpack. In my opinion we need to rid ourselves of this "everyone gets a prize" approach and leave places like this to the people who want to put in the effort to see these wonderful spots. I would like to think I can walk in with my children in one day and have them experience a place with no phone reception, no helicopters, no boardwalks and no ticket office to get in. I fear the local bushwalkers and fisherman will be screwed over and the preference given to a group of rich nobodys with a fat back pocket. Locations such as these are becoming much harder to find in this day and age but once it's going to be too late.

# s22

From:\$22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:EPBC Number 2018/8177Date:Tuesday, 17 April 2018 11:16:10 PMAttachments:image001.png<br/>image002.png

EPBC No. 2018/8177 Wild Drake Pty. Ltd./Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

Submission by s22

<u>, 17th April 2018</u>

I am an avid fly fisherman and bushwalker I have made many trips into the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. I have been to Lake Malbena and the Chinamans plains area. This is a remote part of Tasmania that has had little human intervention and as such the fauna and flora in this area abounds including the Tasmanian wedge tailed eagle. I wish to put an objection to this development proposal based on the environment impact on the fauna and flora in the area, in particular the threatened Tasmanian wedge tailed eagle due to the helicopter access.

Australia Day Long weekend 2007, s22 and I walked into the Lake Malbena area. s22 and I were standing in the clearing at the position marked out by proponent Daniel Hackett as a possible helipad. This area is open heathland we witnessed an abundance of fauna, their tracks and droppings.

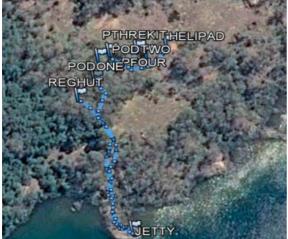
Helipad position from proposal <sup>(1)</sup>.



Whilst in this clearing we spotted a wedge tailed eagle sitting in a tree on the ridge line overlooking this open area between us and Lake Malbena. From its position it would have an ideal vantage point for prey. It took flight and past overhead at close range and proceeded to circle above us for a long period.

The Flora and Fauna Assessment <sup>(2)</sup> dated 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 by

North Barker Ecosystem Services notes that they did not find any wedge tailed eagle nest on the island and that the island would not support a brood or litter. Their assessment was based on the proponent specifying that the proposed helipad was to be on the island itself.



The current proposal  $^{(1)}$  sees the helipad situated in the clearing off the island .

A proper assessment or survey of the area around the helipad and flight path has not been undertaken. North Barker was commissioned by the proponent Daniel Hackett to do the assessment. It however cannot be considered an independent assessment. They openly advertise.

"At North Barker we focus on client success; we achieve this through innovative thinking that reconciles development with regulatory requirements"

Their only off island assessment was:

"No eagle nests are known or likely to occur within 500 m or 1 km line of sight"

Assuming the helicopter flight path is from Derwent Bridge it will pass close to eagle sightings and nests. The map from <u>http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/threatened-tasmanian-</u> <u>eagles-recovery-plan-2006-2010</u> shows a large number of nests in this general area. The Threatened Tasmanian eagle recovery plan 2006-2010 also specifies as its no 1 action.

- Map areas and Search Strategic Areas of Habitat
- Search for Nests Prior to Disturbance on all Land Tenures
- Identify New Threats

The Threatened Tasmanian eagle recovery plan 2006-2010 also states.

The vast majority of known nests occur on State Forest and private property, 47.8% and 42.7%, respectively. This is partly due to the

#### majority of suitable eagle habitat occurring on State Forest and private land but also **due to the majority of nest site searches conducted as a result of forestry activities**.

It is obvious from this statement and maps contained within the Threatened Tasmanian eagle recovery plan 2006-2010 that a comprehensive wedge tailed eagle survey of the Walls of Jerusalem National park has not been undertaken. It is inconceivable that nest sites and actively foraging eagles do not occur inside the park given the large number particularly to the south east that have been found just outside the park boundaries, as a result of search areas in forestry.

Prior to any decision being made on this proposal an independent assessment should be made not only based on Hall's island resident fauna and flora but on the likely impact including off island helipads, walking tracks and flight path.



- 1. EBPC No 2018/8177- Referral-Attach-halls\_island\_maps.
- 2. The Halls Island , Lake Malbena, Walls of Jerusalem Flora and Fauna Assessment date 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 by North Barker Ecosystem Services

Re: EPBC Referral No. 2018/8177

I would like my comments in the attached word document to be considered in the assessment of EPBC No. 2018/8177 Case Title Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

Although I would be happy to be contacted by EPBC, I do not want my contact details to be publicly available, should the actual comments be published in whatever form at some future date.

My contact details are:

s22

I would appreciate confirmation via email that these comments have been received. Please let me know if there are any issues with opening the document.

Regards **s22**  EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177 EPBC Case Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177

I have been following the progress of the proposal by Daniel Hackett of RiverFly 1864 to erect a standing camp on Halls Island, Lake Malbena in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park in Tasmania since it was first proposed following an Expression of Interest invited by the Tasmanian State Government.

http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspX?sys=News%20Article&intID=3521

Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service News article number 3521, published 16 November 2015 reported:

'The Hodgman Liberal Government has announced that four additional projects will proceed to the next stage of the Expression Of Interest process.'

#### One of these projects was:

'A luxury standing camp at Halls Island, Lake Malbena which will facilitate activities including guided kayaking, bushwalking and fly fishing in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park;'

'In order for these projects to proceed they will require minor amendments to the management plans for the relevant national park within which they fall. These amendments will be undertaken in accordance with the statutory process which will include formal public consultation.'

The proposal to erect a standing camp on Halls Island in Lake Malbena, Walls of Jerusalem National Park, was specifically mentioned in the Tasmanian Planning Commission's Review of the 'DRAFT Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 2014': Director's report and representations which was completed in July 2016, Pages 17 and 23 of the review document.

'Many representors considered that it is inappropriate for an EOI process, that is independent of the planning process, but has ventures that fall within the TWWHA, being undertaken whilst the plan is being finalised (e.g. 6981, 7227, Tasmanian Labor Party 7249, 7299, 7302, 7370, Freycinet Experience Pty Ltd 7392). Some representors called for the 'restrictions' regarding commercial development in the current plan to be applied to the final plan (e.g.7272). At least one representor (Pandani Bushwalking Club 7005) specifically opposed the proposal for a standing camp on Halls Island, Lake Malbena).' (page 17 of decision)

'However, the Commission notes that some issues raised such as the overall claim that the TWWHA is unsuitable for tourism and issues relating to the funding, the transparency of concessions and the proposed standing camp at Lake Malbena were not addressed, and therefore finds that the Director inadequately addressed the representations in those cases.' (page 23 of decision)

EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177 EPBC Case Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

A copy of the Tasmanian Planning Commission's decision can be viewed by downloading the pdf file from the link below:

http://iplan.tas.gov.au/Pages/XC.Track.Assessment/SearchAssessment.aspx?id=337

Lake Malbena was reclassified from Wilderness Zone to Self-Reliant Recreation Zone in the 2016 Tasmania Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan.

It is most concerning that the wilderness values of Lake Malbena, which justified its inclusion in the World Heritage Area, have not changed. Rather, it would seem that the interests of a private developer and the current State Government's stated intention of promoting development within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area have been enabled by excising Lake Malbena from the Wilderness Zone.

Halls Island, Lake Malbena is an absolute gem. When I first visited the island in 1995 with my husband and our (then) young family, I was struck by the natural beauty of the island. I recall referring to it as a 'Botanist's delight' in our log book entry.

*The Flora and Fauna Habitat Assessment by North Barker Ecosystems* is professional and comprehensive. I am not qualified to comment on the botanical details and will not compare the listed endangered or at risk fauna described in the report and relate those to EPBC. However, I would urge EPBC to do so.

The significance of the size and depth of the sphagnum peatland, so evident on the island is noted in the report.

A reading of the *Flora and Fauna Habitat Assessment by North Barker Ecosystems* does not however convey the natural and aesthetic values of Halls Island to which the fauna is a rich contributor.

The unique setting of an island on a remote lake, with pencil pines, dwarf pines, celery top pines and King Billy pines, with no evidence of fire damage; large areas of sphagnum peatland, and a rock promontory on a deep channel between the mainland and the southern shore of the island, is striking.

The apparent naturalness and exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance of this island well deserve protection under the EPBC Act.

In my most recent visit to Halls Island in February, 2017, those qualities remained unchanged.

There are currently no man-made structures visible from the shore opposite the island. This would not be the case if there were to be a jetty at the site marked on a map supplied by the proponent to North Barker Ecosystems, in figure 2, page 3 of the *Flora and Fauna Habitat Assessment by North Barker Ecosystems*. Interestingly, there is no mention of a jetty in the actual proposal document, although mention is made of the proponent's intention to use a non-motorised water craft to access the island.

More detail needs to be provided by the proponent regarding the logistics of transferring guests of varying physical abilities and their travel gear from the lake shore to Halls Island, safely. Another consideration is negative impact on the environment on the lake shore adjacent to the crossing point.

Construction of a jetty would most definitely have a negative impact on the natural and wilderness values of the island.

Figure 2, page 3 of the *Flora and Fauna Habitat Assessment by North Barker Ecosystems,* also marks the site of a helipad on the island. No mention of a helipad on the island is made by the proponent in his proposal.

Presently, the only infrastructure on Halls Island is the original hut constructed circa 1955 by Reg Hall. This very small hut was referred to as 'Tardis-like' by a participant in a 3-day field trip organised by the proponent in association with members of the Natural History Department of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) to assess the historical value of the contents of Reg Hall's Hut and his hand-made collapsible kayak.

https://riverfly.com.au/resources/hallsislandmedia/ Audio recording parts 1 & 2 ABC Radio North

I would estimate the total area of this charming hut to be 4 metres by 4 metres in size, making a total area of 16 square metres.

The existing hut is discretely located in picturesque surroundings and is accessed from the southern shore of the island by an approximately 100 metre long, single-person -width foot track.

In point 1.2 of the proponent's referral he describes his proposal to build a small-scale standing camp on Halls Island.

Small-scale relative to what? The proposal to build an extra four huts with associated board walks, stated by the proponent to occupy an 800 square metre site, would dwarf the current 16 square metres occupied by the existing infrastructure.

It is disingenuous of the proponent to state in point 1.3 regarding camp design that the additional huts and board walks, comprising the standing camp, would not be visible when viewed from the existing hut and mainland.

He fails to mention that the standing camp and infrastructure would be visible when viewed from an obvious natural vantage point within 5 metres of the door of the hut. This would degrade the natural wilderness values of the island. I feel qualified to make this comment, having visited the island and camped overnight on each of seven extended

bushwalking/pack rafting trips in the area between 1995 and 2017. Each trip involved walking or paddling in untracked areas.

Construction of the standing camp would negatively impact on the apparent naturalness of the island from this viewpoint.

I also take issue with the term 'standing camp'. The buildings may be removable in time; however they would be of steel and timber construction and would remain in place 12 months of the year, possibly until 2038.

(1.11 estimated start date of proposal May 2018, estimated end date February 2038)

The proponent referred to a camp as 'sleeping under canvas' when espousing the benefits of camping in the wilderness on his RiverFly 1864 website in 2010.

Perhaps that is one reason that this proposal, which was originally made by the proponent in the name of his other business RiverFly 1864, has now been made by him as Director of Wild Drake Pty Ltd, a company which was established in January, 2018.

### The property ID for the Halls Island Hut site is as follows:

| Feature       |          |
|---------------|----------|
| Cadastral ID  | 1495490  |
| Agreement ID  | 110022   |
| Property ID   | 5476091  |
| Computed Area | 39.99 m2 |

This information is publicly available via the LIST (Land Information Systems Tasmania).

On Monday, 9 April 2018, I contacted the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service to enquire about the current lease and was advised to put my questions in writing and forward them to the Property and Projects Officer, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service. As suggested, I sent my questions by email and received the following reply on Wednesday, 11 April.

'I am restricted in the information I am able to release in regards to the terms and conditions of the lease agreement, therefore I ask that the you contact the lessee, Mr Daniel Hackett at <u>info@riverfly.com.au</u> who will be able to answer your queries'.

I did not feel comfortable contacting the lessee, who is the proponent in this case.

Two of the questions in my original query sent to Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service were:

- 1. If it is the case that the current lease covers only the area which includes the existing hut site on Halls Island, or very close to that area, how is it that a lease holder would be able to establish a standing camp on other parts of Halls Island, not covered by the lease?
- 2. Would the proponent need to gain planning approval from local government, Central Highlands Council?

Question no. 2 is answered by point 1.10 of the proponent's referral when he indicates 'yes' the proposed action would be subject to local government planning approval, although I note that he did not provide a contact number for the Central Highlands Council, which I understand would be the local council in this case.

In point 3.10 of his referral, the proponent states:

'Halls Island is leasehold (under lease to the proponent)'

'A privately owned hut (circa 1956) on a separate leasehold is present on Halls Island (owned by the proponent)'

It would be of great concern if a private individual were able to lease Halls Island, which is an area of undisputed natural wilderness value in the World Heritage Area, without public consultation.

Should this proposal proceed and a private standing camp be established on Halls Island, will members of the public who wish to visit the island, possibly camping overnight, be able to do so?

Lake Malbena currently provides a perfect stop-over for those undertaking a multi-day pack rafting experience in the adjacent Wilderness Zoned area, providing suitably experienced, equipped and motivated people to adventure in a challenging, unmodified natural setting in a wilderness environment, which is one of the main aims of the Wilderness Zone of the WHA according to the 2016 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan.

The proponent would have us believe that there is no alternative to helicopter access to Halls Island. However, in the *Flora and Fauna Habitat Assessment by North Barker Ecosystems*, mention is made of a track to the east from Lake Malbena.

This so called track is not at all evident from the western end of Lake Loretta to Lake Malbena. The track is intermittent from Olive Lagoon to the western end of Lake Loretta.

Interestingly, one of the participants in the QVMAG visit accompanying Daniel Hackett, the proponent, to Halls Island, mentioned that *'we lost the track several times, didn't we Daniel'* in an audio recording ABC North provided on Wild Drake Pty Ltd website regarding the Halls Island Proposal.

https://riverfly.com.au/resources/hallsislandmedia/ Audio recording parts 1 & 2 ABC Radio North

From the description in the audio recording, it would seem that the route taken by the group was vehicle access through Gowran Brae before walking westward from Olive Lagoon past Mary Tarn, Lake Loretta to Lake Malbena.

This is significant because Daniel Hackett is an experienced fly fishing guide in the Western Lakes who had been by his own account to Halls Island about seven times within the previous two years, yet he had trouble finding the 'track' several times. This raises doubts about the proponent's implication that there is a 4WD track in this area.

Admittedly, the proponent may not have always accessed Lake Malbena via the above route and may therefore have been unfamiliar with the 'route'. However this raises another important issue, which is the potential to access Lake Malbena on foot rather than by helicopter.

Helicopter access to Lake Malbena involves the building of a helipad and construction of a track to the lake shore in an area where there is currently no track.

Helicopter access to the Walls of Jerusalem National Park for the purpose of transporting recreational visitors would be a 'first'. The proponent seeks to minimise the impact of helicopter use for this purpose by stating that Derwent Bridge is only 11 minutes flight time from Derwent Bridge. However, he also states in point number 4 of part 1.2 of his proposal:

'For perspective, a single Halls Island booking would require a maximum of 24 minutes flight time during the arrival process, and 24 minutes maximum flight time some four days later for departure.'

This equates to two return trips for a single helicopter for each arrival plus two return trips for the helicopter for each departure.

The proponent estimates 'a capacity 30 trip-bookings per year', which could potentially result in a total of 120 trips for client transport alone.

The potential helicopter usage, outlined above, does not include servicing the on-island facilities or the building and construction phase of the proposed development.

In an area which does not currently have helicopter access, the noise impact from overflights, would negatively impact on the naturalness and remoteness, two of the most commonly recognised characteristics of wilderness areas.

It is not only those directly under the flight path who would be affected by noise from helicopters, since, depending on atmospheric conditions, it would be possible for anglers and others within several kilometres of the helicopter to be aware of their presence. This would diminish their experience.

In point 5.2 of his referral, the proponent states that the proposed activities have been assessed in detail (partly) through the comprehensive Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service Reserve Activity Assessment. Since this assessment is confidential and although included in the referral to EPBC, is not publicly available, I am unable to comment on it.

'4.2 For matters protected by the EPBC Act that may be affected by the proposed action, describe the proposed environmental outcomes to be achieved

Outcome 2: Improved conditions and protection for the EPBCA listed sphagnum peatland on Halls Island, through the appropriate installation and use of perforated, raised boardwalk where appropriate.'

Surely the EPBC listed sphagnum peatland on Halls Island would be better protected by removing the necessity to install boardwalk by not building the proposed standing camp on the island.

Halls Island is unique for its remoteness, natural and aesthetic values.

The inference by the proponent that he would be conserving and indeed improving Halls Island by the activities and actions outlined in his proposal, which would include erecting four extra buildings, boardwalks, landing facilities for water craft on the island, a helipad with associated track to the lake shore; when currently the only infrastructure on this delightful island is a very small hut; is outrageous.

#### s22

(Contact details included in accompanying email)

FOI 181005 Document 19

Hi,

Please find attached my comment on referral 2018/8177, Halls Island Standing Camp.

Can you please confirm via email that you have received the attachment?

Please contact me on this email address or on **S22** if you have any questions or need further information.

Regards,

s22

Response to Request for Public Comment on Wild Drake Pty Ltd Proposal to build Hall's Island Standing Camp Reference No. 2018/8177







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### 1. Summary

I am a recreational bushwalker and fisherman with a strong interest in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA), particularly the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. I have been visiting this area most years since 1992, and have travelled by foot and inflatable boat extensively in TWWHA and the specific area described in the proposal.

I first visited Hall's Island in 1995, and have returned many times since, most recently in February 2017. During this time I have gained an extensive personal knowledge of, and deep appreciation for, the specific area described in the proposal and the values that make it so special.

Based on my personal knowledge of Hall's Island and the surrounding area, I strongly object to the proposal described in EPBC Case Title 2018/8177 'Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena'. I believe that the proposal would have a very significant and negative effect on the Matters of Natural Environmental Significance protected under the EPBC Act, most particularly on the almost entirely undisturbed nature of the environment at Halls Island, and the very significant and unique vegetation and other exemplary outstanding universal natural values found there.

My specific concerns in this respect are detailed in Section 2, below.

I further believe that the proposal relies heavily on information which is misleading or incorrect. This is based on my own knowledge of the area, information that is publicly available, statements previously made by the proponent, and contradictory or incomplete information contained in the proposal and appendices. The most significant information in the proposal that is either misleading or incorrect includes the following:

- 1. Claim that the area has '...Obvious long term-disturbance to Apparent Naturalness...'
- Claim that the action will lead to '...improved outcomes...' for a range of matters protected under the EPBC Act
- **3.** Information in the North Baker Flora and Fauna Habitat Assessment which appears to contradict information in the proposal.
- **4.** Claim that there are *'...no alternatives...'* to the proposal.
- 5. Claim that '...Ongoing consultation with interested stakeholders will continue...'
- 6. Claim that the entirety of Halls Island is already under lease to the proponent.
- 7. Relevant information that is missing from the proposal altogether.

I have expanded on Items 1-7 in section 3, below, and Appendix 1.

### 2. Impact of the Proposal on Matters of Natural Environmental Significance protected under the EPBC Act

The site of the proposed activity, Halls Island, is located within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and Walls of Jerusalem National Park. It is also designated as a National Heritage Place. As such, the proposed activity requires assessment under the EPBC Act.

The Outstanding Universal Values Statement on the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, as provided by the Department of the Environment and Energy, includes a number of values that are present specifically and notably on Hall's Island. All of these are protected under the EPBC Act, and threatened to a greater or lesser extent by the proposal.

Hall's Island embodies or contains extensive examples of all of the following values, taken directly from the TWWHA Outstanding Values Statement in Appendix 7:

#### 1. Outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history.

- Relict biota which show links to ancient Gondwanan biota including King Billy Pine,
   dwarf pine, revolute orites, mountain guitarplant, and myrtle beech
- ii. Peatlands, particularly sphagnum peatland with emergent coral fern
- iii. Indigenous families of frogs with Gondwanan origins including Tasmanian Froglet

### 2. Outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment.

- i. Development of peat soils and blanket bogs
- ii. Ecosystems which are relatively free of introduced plant and animal species
- iii. Undisturbed lakes and catchments
- iv. Conifers of extreme longevity, including Pencil Pine and King Billy Pine
- 3. Contains superlative natural phenomena, formations or features, for instance outstanding examples of the most important ecosystems, areas of exceptional natural beauty or exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements.
  - i. Deep glacial lakes
  - ii. The relatively undisturbed nature of the property
  - iii. The scale of the undisturbed landscapes
  - iv. The juxtaposition of different landscapes
  - v. Rare or unusual flora and fauna.

- 4. Contain the most important and significant habitats where threatened species of plants and animals of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation still survive.
  - i. Rainforest communities
  - ii. Alpine communities
  - iii. Habitats which are relatively undisturbed
  - iv. Plant species of conservation significance

I have walked extensively in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area more broadly. One of the most striking features of Halls Island is that all of the above values are present in one 10 hectare area. I know of no other location in Tasmania like this. In particular, I believe that the rainforest, extremely long lived conifers and sphagnum peatland present on Halls Island are some of the finest examples of their type anywhere in Tasmania.

The co-location of rainforest, sphagnum peatland, woodland, King Billy pines, Pencil Pines, and dwarf pines, all on a pristine lake shore environment is the living embodiment of the WHA outstanding universal value of "…rare and unusual flora and… the Juxtaposition of different landscapes…" as per the Outstanding Values Statement on TWWHA. To my knowledge this location has no equal elsewhere in Tasmania.

This observation is supported by the NorthBaker report cited by the proponent, which particularly emphasises the significance and quality of the Sphagnum peatland (MSP) present on Halls Island. In particular, the NorthBaker report describes the sphagnum peatland as having 80% cover, which is remarkable, and being up to 50cm deep. The sphagnum peatland on Hall's Island is also notable for the presence of emergent Pencil Pines. This community covers over 5% of the surface area of Hall's Island according to the NorthBaker Report.

Also of significance are the large conifers and rainforest described in the NorthBaker report, particularly the patch of King Billy pines in the sheltered gully at the south of the island and pictured in plates 5 and 6. According to the map at figure 4, the entire southern shore of the island is actually covered in a fringe of threatened Mount Mawson Pine.

The observations made in the NorthBaker report and summarised above reflect my own observation that the vegetation community on Halls Island is both valuable from a scientific perspective, and an embodiment of the outstanding universal values described in the WHA statement for the area. One of the main reasons Halls Island has such spectacular and valuable vegetation is that it has been protected from fire and extensive human visitation by virtue of being an island located in an already remote spot. The NorthBaker report points out than in many other parts of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, sensitive communities of vegetation such as sphagnum, King Billy Pine and Pencil Pine have already been lost, making the vegetation communities on Halls Island even more valuable.

Due largely to the spectacular and diverse vegetation and the lakeside environment, the location of Halls Island embodies the specific World Heritage Area value of:

"...Containing superlative natural phenomena, formations or features, for instance outstanding examples of the most important ecosystems, areas of exceptional natural beauty or exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements..."

to a greater extent than any other single location in the TWWHA that I have ever visited. In short, the proponent's plan to build a standing camp and network of walking tracks on Halls Island would fundamentally change and greatly damage the naturalness of the area, considering that at present the only signs of human habitation are a  $4 \times 4$  m hut.

Building the new infrastructure described in the proposal would greatly and irrevocably damage the World Heritage values of *2 (iii), Undisturbed Lakes and Catchments,* and *3 (ii) the relatively undisturbed nature of the property.* In addition, all of the values described in 1-4 above would be put at significant risk through greatly increasing the risk of fire due to increased human visitation and the use of helicopters. For these reasons, my view is that the proponent's proposal should either be rejected outright or substantially modified so that any infrastructure is built on the lake shore, not Halls Island itself.

### 3. Information in the proposal that is misleading or incorrect

The proposal relies extensively on information that is misleading, incorrect, or contradictory. The most significant examples are expanded on below. Appendix 1 contains a detailed list of all information in the proposal which, in the author's opinion, is misleading or incorrect.

### 1. Claim that the area has "...Obvious long term-disturbance to Apparent Naturalness..." (pg. 2)

The proponent describes Halls Island and surrounding area as 'rich but modified and/or disturbed, and describes a number of activities undertaken in the area to support his claim.

The implication by the proponent is that the establishment of a helipad, extensive new walking tracks, and a permanent standing camp on Halls Island would not represent a significant increase of existing impacts to Apparent Naturalness. The proponent significantly exaggerates the scale, proximity, and present-day condition of the 'long term-disturbances' he cites in order to support this claim.

The majority of the activities identified by the proponent have had no detectable present day impact on the environment on Hall's Island or immediately around Hall's Island. I would challenge the proponent to produce any evidence remaining today of the following:

- Access by foot from 1940
- Access by seaplane in 1970
- Access by foot from the Traveller Range

I have personally travelled by boat from Lake Malbena on the routes identified and have never observed any sign of human presence or damage. I would describe the area around Lake Malbena, and the routes to the Traveller Range from Lake Malbena via Eagle Lake, Lake Norman and the Ling Roth Lakes as completely unmodified and pristine examples of wilderness.

Even the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan correctly identifies these areas as 'Wilderness Zone'. Only Lake Malbena is excised from this zone, presumably to help facilitate this specific development.

The proponent describes the following activities to further support his claim that the project area is modified and degraded:

- Historical Sheep grazing. The only evidence I have seen of this is a small quantity of rusted fence wire approximately 2km to the east of Lake Malbena, in the Lake Loretta / Mary Tarn area. There is no other remaining trace as far as I can determine, and certainly nothing to support the claim that the area is 'modified/disturbed' to the point that building a luxury camp, helipad and network of new walking tracks would have little additional impact. Refer map at Appendix 6 for details.
- Haflinger 4WD used to access Lake Malbena. The only evidence I have seen of 4WD access to the area is a track that terminates on the ridge to the North-West of Olive Lagoon, approximately 4.6 km from Lake Malbena. I have been walking in that specific area extensively since 1995, and have never seen any evidence that this 4WD track extends any closer to Lake Malbena. Refer map at Appendix 6 for details.

It is ironic that the proponent's proposal, if approved, would represent by far the most extensive modification and disturbance of the wilderness character and values of the Hall's Island area since European Settlement.

### 2. Claim that the action will lead to '...improved outcomes...' for a range of matters (pg. 26)

The proponent claims that building the luxury standing camp on Hall's Island would result in improved outcomes in a number of areas, including protection to the EPBCA 'threatened' sphagnum peatland communities. This claim only makes sense if the alternative of not building the luxury camp at all is ignored.

Simply, the threatened and valuable vegetation on Halls Island and the outstanding natural values found there will be best protected by not building camp there at all, regardless of how sensitively it is sited. One of the identified sphagnum communities which it is proposed to 'protect' with boardwalks presently has no tracks through it at all and no impacts whatsoever. It is incorrect to claim a better protection outcome would be to build a boardwalk through a location that is completely unmodified at present.

Even the NorthBaker Flora and Fauna report that the proponent relies on is equivocal on the subject of 'protecting' the sphagnum vegetation through boardwalks, stating that it "... 'may' be possible to construct board walks within the other communities by using a boardwalk design with minimal footprint and shading...'

In particular, the following outcomes listed by the proponent are disputed:

### i. *"…Outcome 2: Improved conditions and protection for the EPBCA listed sphagnum peatland on Hall's Island…"* (pg. 26)

Given the very low visitation to Hall's Island at present, according to the proponent, it must be considered that the best protection for the sphagnum peatland would be to not develop the site at all and to leave the area in a natural condition.

The proponent's own map shows a boardwalk being conducted through the extensive EPBCA listed sphagnum community to the north of the proposed camp site where no track presently exists.

### ii. *"…Outcome 3: Improved on-island conditions protecting peatlands and waterways through the installation and availability of sewage containment systems…."* (pg. 26)

Again, the proponent has stated that at present there is very low visitation to the Hall's Island area. Given this, it is hard to see how the impact of building a camp and associated infrastructure could be represented as an improvement to peatlands and waterways over the natural state of virtually no human impact.

### iii. *"…Outcome 4: Improved monitoring of the area through the proposed activities…"*

The proponent has not made a case for the benefits of improved monitoring outweighing the very substantial impact of the additional built infrastructure. Likely the primary reason the area is not monitored at the moment is that it is a remote wilderness with very low human visitation and subsequently very low threats to the values found there. If improved monitoring was required, PWS could easily facilitate this through increased field work, without a luxury standing camp being built.

### *iv. "…Outcome 5: Improved knowledge and understanding of the natural values found in the area…"*

The proponent does not make it clear why it is necessary to build a helipad and a luxury standing camp in order to facilitate this fieldwork. The scope of the rest of the proposal is clear that the overwhelming purpose of the activity is commercial, not to further scientific knowledge of the area.

### v. *"...Outcome 6: Improved knowledge of the Aboriginal cultural values of the area..."*

Elsewhere in the proposal, the proponent has stated that so far, the area has been determined as having '...low probability of having Aboriginal heritage present...' (pg. 15, pg. 24).

Given this assessment, it is unclear how the proposal will lead to improved knowledge of Aboriginal cultural values of the area. In any case, the area can already be accessed relatively easily on foot.

### vi. "...Outcome 8: An increased awareness in the community of the value of tourism and conservation partnerships, in promoting and protecting World Heritage Values at the local level..."

The proponent does not elaborate on how building a luxury camp and helipad inside the World Heritage Area actually serves to help protect the area. The Parks and Wildlife Service and ultimately, the Federal Government are charged with protecting the World Heritage Area described in the proposal, which they are already resourced to do.

#### 3. Contradictory information in the NorthBaker Flora and Fauna Habitat Assessment.

The NorthBaker report includes new and additional information that contradicts the information provided by the proponent, including:

- i. Indications that the proposed scale is greater than proponent has indicated in his proposal. The NorthBaker report references the following:
- ii. Huts (pg. 7) rather than the 'standing camp' referred to by the proponent.
- iii. A helicopter landing pad on the island itself, not mentioned by the proponent.
- iv. A network of tracks and boardwalks on the island, more extensive than that described by the proponent, including through the threatened rainforest community (pg. 22).
- v. The possibility of guests hiking to Lake Malbena from the east (Olive Lagoon region), also not mentioned by the proponent, who insists that there are 'no alternatives' to the proposal.
- vi. The NorthBaker map at Figure 2 (pg. 9) includes a reference to a 'jetty' on Halls Island.
   No jetty currently exists there, and the proponent does not mention any such jetty in their proposal.
- vii. The NorthBaker implies that the proponent has considered equipping the huts with fireplaces (pg. 22, 24). The proponent only mentions gas or electric heating in his proposal.

These details are significant as, when taken with other contradictory or misleading information in the proposal, would imply that the proponent has not provided all details necessary to make an assessment of the proposed activity.

#### 4. Claim that there are *'...no alternatives...'* to the proposal. (pg. 32)

This is significant as it suggests that the proponent has not considered numerous obvious alternatives to the proposal which would reduce the impact and risk to the outstanding natural values of the area.

The most obvious alternative to the proposal is to carry it out in a less sensitive area. However, an alternative form of the proposal from the perspective of protecting the EPBC values would be to:

- Locate the camp on the shore of Lake Malbena, rather than on Halls island,
- Utilise tent platforms and tents rather the new buildings,
- Provide access via foot from either proponent's existing tourism operation at Skullbone Plains, located 9.5 km to the south of Lake Malbena, or from the existing historical vehicle track at Olive Lagoon, located 5 km to the west of Lake Malbena.

The NorthBaker report even includes a reference that "...the proposal may also include guests hiking to Lake Malbena... from the East..." (pg. 7) indicating that this alternative was also considered by the proponent, despite his claim in the EPBC referral that there were 'no alternatives' to the proposal.

i. Locating the camp on the shore of Lake Malbena, rather than on Halls Island. Halls Island contains numerous threatened and vulnerable species as documented in the proponent's own flora and fauna assessment. In addition, Halls Island contains exceptional natural beauty and superlative natural phenomena as referenced in the TWWHA Outstanding Universal Values statement.

Locating the camp off the island would greatly increase the protection afforded to these values, while still allowing access to clients.

**ii. Utilising tent platforms rather than a Permanent Standing Camp.** The use of tent platforms and tents, rather than a permanent standing camp, would greatly enhance the values of apparent naturalness and decrease the impact on the values of exceptional natural beauty, particularly when the site was not being utilised.

This is an approach recommended to these developments by the proponent himself in 2010 when he wrote on his website (ref. Appendix 2).:

"...We will not be building a private hut or lodge! One of the great enjoyments of our Western Lakes campouts is indeed the camping...we can see the value and appeal of sleeping under the canvas.

As such, our camp will remain as just that – a tent camp utilizing 2-3 man canvas tents for accommodation. To ensure these values are protected in the Western Lakes, the WHA actually prohibits the building of private huts or lodges in the World Heritage Area...."

ii. Access to the area on foot, rather than by helicopter. The proponent's existing operation at Skullbone Plains is only 9.5 km to the South of Lake Malbena. As such, it would be logical to access Lake Malbena from this existing operation.

Alternatively, the proponent is already proposing in Stage II of the proposal to build a new walking track from Lake Malbena to an 'Aboriginal heritage site'. The only such site in the area is at Mary Tarn. This area is only 2.4 km from the old vehicle track at the Northern end of Olive Lagoon. As such, it would be comparatively straightforward to link the two areas with a new walking track.

Either of the above would avoid the use of helicopters altogether. This would provide the great advantages of reducing the risk of fire caused by aircraft accidents, and reducing the damage to the values of Apparent Naturalness through additional built infrastructure and frequent helicopter landings and take-offs. This would also be consistent with the proponent's own views as expressed in 2010, when he wrote on his website (ref. Appendix 2).

"...We will not be applying to fly customers into the Western Lakes. We believe that one of the greatest parts of the Western Lakes fishery is the remoteness, and the need to use your own energy and initiative to get there.

This remoteness and solitude is further protected by the WHA Management Plan, which actually prohibits the use of helicopters to take anglers in/out of the WHA..."

#### 5. Claim that '...Ongoing consultation with interested stakeholders will continue...'. (pg. 10)

The proponent claims that project plans and information have been freely available from his website since May 2015, but neglects to mention that the plans have changed significantly since then, most notably by only recently replacing access by seaplane to access by helicopter and referencing new walking tracks to be built to Mount Oana to the West and Mary Tarn to the East.

This is highly relevant, as:

- i. In this instance, the use of helicopters requires a significant amount of new infrastructure to be built, including a helipad and approximately 500m of new track, in an area where presently no tracks exist.
- ii. Allowing helicopter tourism inside the Walls Of Jerusalem National Park creates a precedent for further helicopter access proposals throughout the TWWHA, which would greatly degrade the wilderness character of this area.

Notably, the proponent's list of 'interested stakeholders' (pg. 10) does not include the overwhelming majority of people who would be most directly affected by the proposal. These are people who visit Halls Island and the surrounding area, particularly recreational hikers and fishermen.

It is astonishing to me that the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, who to date have conducted only a single field trip facilitated by the proponent, would have a stronger claim to consultation by the proponent than all other recreational users.

I contacted the proponent by email on 7 April 2018 introducing myself as someone who has visited the site many times in the past 23 years, and requested further information – refer appendix 3. I received a response on 7 April stating that the proponent was busy guiding, but as of lodging this submission on 16 April I did not receive any further information from the proponent.

#### 6. Claim that the entirety Halls Island is under lease to the proponent. (pg. 24)

This is significant as it would imply that the proponent would have a greater right and interest to develop the Halls Island site if the entire island was leased to him. Based on all publicly available information and from contacting the Tasmanian Land Titles Office, it would seem that the proponent currently only has a lease over a 39.99 m<sup>2</sup> site out of the entire 10 ha island.

This site lease is intended to represent the original 1955 hut site, but significantly, is actually shown on ListMAPS as being in an area of sphagnum peatland, which is an EPBC Act endangered vegetation species. Refer Appendix 4 for details.

If the proponent does indeed have a lease to the entirety of Hall's Island, this information would not seem to be publicly available, despite enquiries to the Parks and Wildlife service and the proponent himself.

The presence of a lease over the entire island would also raise the question of how the proponent was recently able to obtain such a lease, given that Hall's Island is a WHA listed property inside the Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

#### 7. Relevant information that is missing from the proposal altogether.

The proposal refers extensively to the Parks and Wildlife Service Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) and yet the RAA is confidential and not published. It is difficult to make an informed public comment, or even to know the complete scope of the proposal without access to the RAA.

In addition, the proposal makes no mention at all of any facilities either on the shore of Lake Malbena or Halls Island for the storage, launching, or recovery of water craft. One of the target audiences of the proponent are '...people of varied physical abilities..." (pg. 2). In order to provide safe access to watercraft for such people, it would follow that some kind of jetty or landing would be required at both the lake shore, and on Hall's Island itself.

The proponent's likely intention to build a jetty is further supported by the NorthBaker report which includes a map showing a GPS spot market 'Jetty' on the shore of Halls Island. Refer NorthBaker report, pg. 9, figure 2. Significantly, the proposal makes no mention of this facility or any assessment of the impact to aquatic life, water quality, lake shore erosion, or any other EPBC Act protected values.

Construction of any jetty facilities would also result in further risks to the outstanding values protected by the EPBC Act, namely apparent naturalness and exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

### 4. Conclusion

The site of Hall's Island contains superlative examples of all four of the Universal Outstanding Values that led to the area being declared as part of the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness Area in the first place, as described in Section 1 of this submission. All of these values will either be directly threatened or put at severe risk through the proposed extensive infrastructure to be built on Hall's Island and around Lake Malbena generally, particularly those values relating to the undisturbed or natural character of the location.

Furthermore, the proponent relies extensively on information which is either incorrect or misleading, particularly in terms of:

- i. Claim of existing disturbances to apparent naturalness in the area
- ii. Claim of improved outcomes to matters protected by the EPBC Act
- iii. Claim of no significant impact to matters protected by the EPBC Act

As detailed in Section 2 and Appendix 1 of this submission.

I urge the Minister to consider rejecting the proposed action. At the very least, the proposal should be substantially modified to specify that:

- i. No infrastructure is be built on Hall's Island, including camps, landings, tracks, boardwalks,
- ii. Any standing camp on the shore of Lake Malbena to be comprised of tents and tent platforms, not huts.
- iii. Access to be by foot, ideally from proponent's site at Skullbone Plains, not helicopter.

In the proponent's own words, as written on <u>www.riverfly1864.com.au</u> in 2010:

"...We believe that one of the greatest parts of the Western Lakes fishery is the remoteness, and the need to use your own energy and initiative to get there.

This remoteness and solitude is further protected by the WHA Management Plan, which actually prohibits the use of helicopters to take anglers in/out of the WHA....

...One of the great enjoyments of our Western Lakes campouts is indeed the camping...As such, our camp will remain as just that – a tent camp utilizing 2- 3 man canvas tents for accommodation...

... To ensure these values are protected in the Western Lakes, the WHA actually prohibits the building of private huts or lodges in the World Heritage Area..."

# Appendix 1: Detailed information on misleading or incorrect information

Below is a detailed summary of all information in the proposal which is misleading or incorrect.

#### 1.1 "... Approach routes to island were formed from horse and Haflinger 4WD use..." (pg. 1)

The Haflinger 4WD track referenced in the area does not extend to the West of the Lake Olive/Olive Lagoon area. The last evidence of it I have ever seen is 4.6 km to the East of Lake Malbena (refer map in appendix 5)

#### 1.2 "...Obvious long term-disturbance to Apparent Naturalness..." (pg. 2)

Other than the approx. 4 m x 4 m hut on Hall's Island, built in 1955, the only evidence of long term-disturbance that I have ever identified in the area are the remains of a sheep fence approximately 2km to the East.

### 1.3 "...Haflinger 4Wds, horses and floatplanes have all been used regularly as a means of access during the past sixty years..." (pg. 2)

I have been visiting this area since 1995 most years, and have never seen nor heard of any evidence of horses, floatplanes or 4Wds accessing the area to the West of Olive Lagoon in that 23 year period. Over the 23 year period that I have been visiting Hall's Island, I have personally observed that the original 4WD track to be substantially regenerating through lack of use.

### 1.4 "... All buildings will be of a sympathetic design and scale reflecting key features of the existing Halls Hut... the standing camp would occupy a discrete 800 m<sup>2</sup> site..." (pg. 2)

The existing Halls Island hut is very small, occupying an approximately 16 m2 site. The entire existing lease for the site is only  $39.99 \text{ m}^2$ . It is hard to see how the proposed 800 m2 site, which is twenty times bigger than the present site, 'is of a sympathetic design and scale'.

Past grazing activity in the region generally, while undesirable by present standards, has not decreased the apparent naturalness. Such grazing was very low in frequency and scale, due to the remoteness of the area, the marginal feed and the generally poor weather conditions. As such the area presently appears completely rehabilitated. Visitors to the Central Walls area reported seeing Hereford cattle grazing in Dixon's Kingdom as late as 1970. Today, this area is rightly celebrated for its outstanding natural heritage values.

### 1.5 "...The flight path avoids overflying the TWWHA wilderness zone, or any recognised walking routes, for any extended distances..." (pg. 2)

Derwent Bridge, Lake Malbena and Halls Island are all within the TWWHA, refer map attached. The differentiation between 'self-reliant recreation zone' and 'wilderness zone' has only existed since 2016, and was created specifically by the State Government to facilitate developments inside areas formerly protected as wilderness under all TWWHA Management Plans prior to 2016.

The 2016 TWWHA Management Plan has excised Lake Malbena from the Wilderness Zone. Given that this proposal was publicly released in 2015, it would seem that modifying the Wilderness Zone boundary has been done specifically to facilitate the proposed development. The zoning around Lake Malbena protrudes conspicuously into the 'wilderness zone' where such a development would not be approved. Refer map in appendix 6 for details.

The impact of helicopters extends well beyond the area they are directly overflying. The noise pollution impact of helicopters and subsequent detraction from values of apparent naturalness extend to a corridor around the flight path several kilometres wide.

Recognised routes that will be directly affected include Walls/Lake Malbena/Mt Oana/Ling Roth Lakes/Junction Lake circuit. This route is even mentioned in the proponent's submission as the means by which Reg Hall located the island in the first place ("...Reg first spotted Halls Island during a bushwalk (circa 1950) from the central Walls to Ling Roth Lakes..." pg. 1)

#### 1.6 "...Use of unpowered watercraft..." (pg. 12)

The proponent does not mention any kind of jetty or landing facility on the island or the shore for these. At 180 people per year, a jetty or landing would presumably be required in order to prevent erosion, and to provide safe access and egress to the people of "…varied physical abilities…" that the proposal is to cater for.

The NorthBaker flora and fauna report makes no mention of any assessment of the impact that such a construction would have on aquatic life, water quality, or other any other aspect.

#### 1.7 "...Board walking is to be used on-island where required to minimise impacts..." (pg. 2)

In my view, board walks, as a substantial built element, would increase the impact, especially to 'apparent naturalness', not decrease it. In addition, the majority of the boardwalks are proposed in areas where there are not even any tracks presently, including through the EPBC Act Endangered sphagnum peatland to the north of the standing camp site.

### 1.8 "...Helicopter use... providing access for a broad spectrum of the community including varied physical abilities..." (pg. 2)

This contradicts the proponent's stated marked for the product as "....The very top of the market..." This implies an exclusive group who more commonly use helicopters for access for reasons of speed and expedience, not limited physical abilities.

The wilderness character of the TWWHA is fundamentally incompatible with recreational helicopter use – especially given the impact on users of the TWWHA and Walls of Jerusalem National Park. These users access the area almost exclusively because of the outstanding wilderness values found there.

#### 1.9 "... Describe any public consultation that has been... undertaken..."(pg. 10)

The proponent lists people who have been consulted but does not provide any detail of what their responses were, or even how many responses were generally in favour, or opposed to, the proposal.

I contacted Daniel Hackett via email on 7 April 2018 requesting more information on the proposal. I received an out-of-office reply from the proponent on 7 April, but as of the 16<sup>th</sup> April I have not yet received any further information from the proponent.

The proponent describes that project plans have been freely available since May 2015. However, all previous versions of the project plan described access for clients as being by seaplane. The change to helicopter access has only been made relatively recently. This is highly relevant as:

 In this instance, the use of helicopters requires a significant amount of new infrastructure to be built, including a helipad and approximately 500m of new track, in an area where presently no tracks exist.  Allowing helicopter tourism inside the Walls Of Jerusalem National Park creates a precedent for further helicopter access proposals throughout the TWWHA, which would greatly degrade the wilderness character of this area.

### 1.10 "...Stage 2 Activities... requiring additional State assessment and approval include: Proposed walking routes to Mt Oana... " (pg. 12)

Mt Oana, even according to the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan, is located in the self-described 'wilderness' zone.

According to the Plan, one of the main aims of the 'Wilderness Zone' is to "...retain a challenging unmodified natural setting that suitably experienced, equipped and motivated people can visit for recreation in a remote, wilderness environment..."

Presumably building a network of private tracks as per Stage 2 of the proposal would not be conducive to this aim.

### 1.11 "...1.16 Is the proposed action related to other actions or proposals in the region..." (pg. 13)

The proponent states that the proposed activity is not related to other actions or proposals in the region. However, the proponent also operates a similar activity at Skullbone Plains, which is only 9.5 km south of Halls Island (not 20 km as the proponent incorrectly states on page 29).

This activity is highly relevant as it would be feasible to provide access on foot from the Skullbone Plains site to the proposed site at Lake Malbena, as an alternative to the use of helicopters.

### 1.12 "...2.1.2... Do you consider this impact to be significant..."

The proponent states that he does not consider that building an 800 m<sup>2</sup> luxury standing camp, helipad, 500m of tracks, and extensive boardwalks through EPBC protected sphagnum peatland would significantly impact on the wilderness characteristics of 'remoteness from settlement' and 'apparent naturalness'.

This is to say nothing of any jetties or landing facilities that will presumably need to be built in Lake Malbena itself to provide safe access to and from Halls Island and to protect the lake shore from erosion. It is intriguing, and relevant to the current proposal that when it was suggested in 2010 that RiverFly 1864 ultimately wanted to build private lodges in the TWWHA and fly guests to them via helicopter, Daniel Hackett published the following on his website in the context of defending his proposal for a guided fishing experience in the TWWHA area:

### "....Re-enforcing the World Heritage Area values

As we work towards environmental best practice, there are a few things that we definitely won't be doing:

 We will not be applying to fly customers into the Western Lakes. We believe that one of the greatest parts of the Western Lakes fishery is the remoteness, and the need to use your own energy and initiative to get there.

This remoteness and solitude is further protected by the WHA Management Plan, which actually prohibits the use of helicopters to take anglers in/out of the WHA.

2. We will not be building a private hut or lodge! One of the great enjoyments of our Western Lakes campouts is indeed the camping. In a world full of stuffy-office blocks and hotel rooms filled with recycled air, we can see the value and appeal of sleeping under the canvas.

As such, our camp will remain as just that – a tent camp utilizing 2-3 man canvas tents for accommodation. To ensure these values are protected in the Western Lakes, the WHA actually prohibits the building of private huts or lodges in the World Heritage Area...."3.

### 1.13 "...The footprint of the proposed infrastructure siting contains no outstanding features or values..." (pg. .22).

It is not credible to claim that the project area is restricted to the 800 m<sup>2</sup> standing camp footprint. Even if considering the 10 ha area of Hall's Island as the project area, it is clear that building permanent accommodation modules, tracks, and (not mentioned in the proposal) a boat landing facility, would greatly detract from the naturalness and remoteness of the area.

At present, the only infrastructure on Hall's island is a  $4 \times 4$  m hut built in 1955 predominantly from local materials.

Naturalness and remoteness are two of the most commonly recognised characteristics of wilderness areas, and were two of the main criteria that led to the area being included in the TWWHA in the first place. They are also cited extensively in the TWWHA 2016 Management Plan.

This is to say nothing of the risk to the EPBC protected vegetation communities specifically mentioned as being present at Halls Island in great quantity and quality.

### 1.14 "...3.7 Describe the current condition of the environment relevant to the project area..." (pg.23)

The proponent describes Halls Island and surrounding area as 'rich but modified and/or disturbed, and describes a number of activities undertaken in the area to support his claim.

The majority of the activities have had no detectable impact on the environment around Hall's Island. I would challenge the proponent to produce any evidence remaining today of the following:

- Access by foot from 1940
- Access by seaplane
- Access to the Traveller Range

I have personally travelled by boat from Lake Malbena on the routes identified and have never observed any sign of human presence or damage. I would describe the area around Lake Malbena, and the routes to the Traveller Range from Lake Malbena via Eagle Lake, Lake Norman and the Ling Roth Lakes as completely unmodified and pristine examples of wilderness.

Even the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan correctly identifies these areas as 'Wilderness Zone'.

The proponent describes the following activities to further support his claim that the project area is modified and degraded:

• Historical Sheep grazing. The only evidence I have seen of this is a small quantity of rusted fence wire approximately 2km to the east of Lake Malbena, in the Lake

Loretta / Mary Tarn area. There is no other remaining trace as far as I can determine, and certainly nothing to support the claim that the area is 'modified/disturbed' to the point that building a luxury camp, helipad and network of new walking tracks would have little additional impact.

Haflinger 4WD used to access Lake Malbena. The only evidence I have seen of 4WD access to the area is a track that terminates on the ridge to the North-West of Olive Lagoon, approximately 4.6 km from Lake Malbena. I have been walking in that specific area extensively since 1995, and have never seen any evidence that this 4WD track extends any closer to Lake Malbena.

It is ironic that the proponent's proposal, if approved, would represent by far the most extensive modification and disturbance of the wilderness character and values of the area since European Settlement.

1.15 "...Hall's Island is leasehold (under lease to the proponent), within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. A privately owned hut (circa 1956) on separate leasehold is present on Halls Island (owned by the proponent)..." (pg. 24)

The proponent claims to have leasehold over the entire 10 Ha of Halls Island. Despite extensive enquiries with Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania, the Tasmanian Land Titles Office, and directly asking the proponent, no evidence of such a lease could be found.

According to the List MAP system, the proponent does have a 39.9 m<sup>2</sup> lease over the hut site, although the lease is actually shown as being inside the protected 'MSP' sphagnum peatland community. This is an EPBCA Endangered community according to the NorthBaker report submitted to the proponent.

#### 1.16 "...Section 4 – Measures to avoid or reduce impacts..."

The proponent refers extensively to the Parks and Wildlife Service Reserve Activity Assessment and Nick Mooney raptor assessment, but these documents are both listed as 'commercial in confidence'. A Freedom of Information request has been lodged with PWS to provide information from the RAA. As yet PWS have not provided any information on the RAA. As such it is impossible determine what risks were identified, what the proposed treatments were, and how likely it is that they will be effective.

### 1.17 "...Outcome 2: Improved conditions and protection for the EPBCA listed *sphagnum* peatland on Hall's Island..." (pg. 26)

Given the very low visitation to Hall's Island at present, according to the proponent, it must be considered that the best protection for the sphagnum peatland would be to not develop the site at all and to leave the area in a natural condition.

The proponent's own map shows a boardwalk being conducted through the extensive EPBCA listed sphagnum community to the north of the proposed camp site where no track presently exists.

### 1.18 "...Outcome 3: Improved on-island conditions protecting peatlands and waterways through the installation and availability of sewage containment systems...." (pg. 26)

Again, the proponent has stated that at present there is very low visitation to the Hall's Island area. Given this, it is hard to see how the impact of building a camp and associated infrastructure could be represented as an improvement to peatlands and waterways over the natural state of virtually no human impact.

### 1.19 "...Outcome 4: Improved monitoring of the area through the proposed activities..."

The proponent has not made a case for the benefits of improved monitoring outweighing the very substantial impact of the additional built infrastructure. Likely the reason the area is not monitored at the moment is that it is a remote wilderness with very low human visitation. If improved monitoring was required, PWS could easily facilitate this through field work, without a luxury standing camp being built.

### 1.20 "...Outcome 5: Improved knowledge and understanding of the natural values found in the area..."

The proponent does not make it clear why it is necessary to build a helipad and a luxury standing camp in order to facilitate this fieldwork. The scope of the rest of the proposal is clear that the overwhelming purpose of the activity is commercial, not to further scientific knowledge of the area.

### 1.21 "...Outcome 6: Improved knowledge of the Aboriginal cultural values of the area..."

Elsewhere in the proposal, the proponent has stated that so far, the area has been determined as having '...low probability of having Aboriginal heritage present...' (pg. 15, pg. 24).

Given this assessment, it is unclear how the proposal will lead to improved knowledge of Aboriginal cultural values of the area. In any case, the area can already be accessed relatively easily on foot.

# **1.22** "...Outcome 8: An increased awareness in the community of the value of tourism and conservation partnerships, in promoting and protecting World Heritage Values at the local level..."

The proponent does not elaborate on how building a luxury camp and helipad inside the World Heritage Area actually serves to help protect the area. The Parks and Wildlife Service and ultimately, the Federal Government are charged with protecting the World Heritage Area described in the proposal, which they are already resourced to do.

### 1.23 "...Section 5: Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts..." (pg. 27)

The proponent has identified that the proposal will have no significant impact on a World Heritage Property. It is difficult to make a comprehensive comment on the potential impacts of the proposal, as the proposal draws heavily on the RAA, which is confidential and can't be published.

#### 1.24 "...Section 8: Proposed Alternatives..." (pg. 32)

The proponent states that there were no feasible alternatives to the proposed action. However, there are a number of obvious feasible alternatives, based on the proponent's own previous and current operations and detailed below.

1. Not take the action at all at the proposed location. The most obvious and desirable alternative would be not to develop the Hall's Island site, or any other site within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. This would have the primary advantage of preserving the numerous exemplary environmental, wilderness, naturalness, and aesthetic values of this almost entirely unmodified remote Wilderness area.

The only negative effect of this alternative would be on the proponent's commercial activities.

2. Expansion of the proponent's current operation at Skullbone Plains. The proponent's private hut site at Skullbone Plains is 9.5 km south of Lake Malbena – not 20 km south as stated in the proposal (pg. 29). Like Lake Malbena, it is currently zoned by the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan as 'self-reliant recreation zone'. As such, a route could be constructed from the existing camp at Skullbone Plains to the proposed camp at Lake Malbena.

This alternative would have the advantage of not requiring helicopter access, and so not impacting on the wilderness values of the island.

**3.** Location of the standing camp on the mainland, instead of on Halls Island. The obvious alternative to building a standing camp on Halls Island is to locate the camp on the mainland near the shore of Lake Malbena instead. This alternative would have the primary advantage of protecting the fragile and valuable vegetation on Hall's Island from human impacts, primarily the threat of destruction from fire.

4. Use of tent platforms and tents instead of a 'standing camp'. Instead of building a standing camp, the proponent could build tent platforms and utilise canvas tents. These would have the advantage of reducing the very significant impact that a standing camp would have to WHA values of apparent naturalness and sites of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance. The proponent would recognise this as an alternative because it is the model he himself followed in 2009 when he proposed his Western Lakes Campouts (refer Appendix 2).

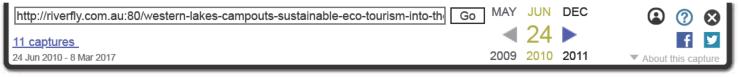
In summary, the most obvious and desirable alternative would be to not take the proposed action in that location. The proponent should identify a new proposal in a different and less sensitive part of the TWWHA. Hypothetically the lowest-impact and least damaging form of the proposal would be to:

- i. Provide access to Lake Malbena on foot, not by helicopter. This would prevent the damage of frequent helicopter usage to the wilderness values of the area, and the impact of building a helipad.
- **ii.** Locate the camp on the shore of Lake Malbena, not on Halls Island. This would protect the fragile and valuable vegetation and general outstanding wilderness and aesthetic values of Hall's Island from the obvious risks of fire and trampling through increased visitation.
- iii. Use tent platforms and tents, instead of permanent accommodation modules. The use of tents and tent platforms would reduce the degradation of the values of apparent naturalness and exceptional natural beauty of the area.

## Appendix 2: Western Lakes Campouts – sustainable eco-tourism into the future

Published on Riverfly.com.au on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2010 by Daniel Hackett

https://web.archive.org/web/20100624045300/http://riverfly.com.au:80/western-lakes-campouts-sustainable-eco-tourism-intothe-future/



### Western Lakes campouts – sustainable eco-tourism

June 21st, 2010 by Daniel



Season 2010/2011 will again see RiverFly Tasmania running our Western Lakes Campouts. In 2009, RiverFly became the first fly fishing business licenced by Parks and Wildlife Tasmania to operate in the Western Lakes. This is something we are very proud of.

This licensing ensures that our guides operate to environmental, operational and safety management plans. Key features of these plans include:

• Minimising environmental impacts.

• Alleviating any conflict with other anglers – part of our Operational Plan was created to ensure that we bypass any waters being fished by other anglers, as a measure of courtesy.

• As a key requirement of our Safety Management Plan, all campouts are run with two guides.

In addition to these rigorous management plans, our formal licencing requires a small payment back to Parks and Wildlife Tasmania for administration and park management costs.

RiverFly Tasmania are proud to be leading the way in sustainable, licenced fly fishing operations in the World Heritage Area / Western Lakes.

#### How are our current camps run?

Our current camps depart from Lake Ada, where we commence on foot to Talinah Lagoon, and onwards into the greater Christys Creek Area. The greater Christys Creek area, along with the Pillans / Julians are the only two areas within the Western Lakes that licenced commercial operators are allowed to camp (as per the World Heritage Area Management Plan).

Our campsite was chosen after weeks of exploration and site assessments in 08/09, followed by on-site consultation with Parks and Wildlife managers. We did not take this process lightly, and it was worth the effort: our site is visually hidden from other anglers, and away from popular waters and foot traffic. This ensures privacy for all anglers in the area.

Our typical camps consist of 3-4 traditional hiking tents, with Trangia and gas burners used for cooking. All of our food is fresh, and carried in for the trip. Of course, all waste is carried back out, along with any other rubbish found during our tips. To date we have also carried out nearly a dozen additional cans and bottles left as litter over the years by other careless users.

As per the regulations of the World Heritage Management Plan, all of our camps are restricted to a maximum of 6 anglers. However, RiverFly goes one step further and restricts its campouts to a maximum of 4 customers.

During season 09-10 we were fortunate to spend more than 35 nights camping-out in the Western Lakes. We only encountered seven other anglers (whom by coincidence were all found fishing the same lake at various times!), two of whom were lost and re-orientated by our guides. In addition, we were able to organise help for one elderly bushwalker who was injured on the track between Christys Lagoon and Lake Antimony, with a storm front approaching.

Environmental Best Practice and managing our Environmental Impact into the future

Whether its commercial or recreational, two of the possible impacts from any camping relates to the trampling of delicate flora around campsites (particularly under tents), and issues relating to the disposal of human and washing-up kitchen waste. These are both areas that RiverFly Tasmania is looking to minimise, and manage to World's Best Practice.

To do its part, RiverFly Tasmania is planning to build four tent-sized platforms, each built to hold a two-man, canvas tent. These platforms will be on-site only for the season, and would mean that our tents don't sit-on or smother any plant life in the area. Such platforms are already used by Parks Tasmania to minimize impacts on the Overland Track and Walls of Jerusalem National Parks, and by private operators in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, South West WHA and Maria Island National Park.

To manage human waste, and any contaminated water from dish-washing, RiverFly is also applying to install a small toilet-pod at the secluded campsite. This would mean that all human waste and contaminated water would be flown-out and disposed of outside of the World Heritage Area, ensuring that we are protecting our delicate water courses into the future. It is planned that the toilet-pod would be emptied each May, after the close of the fishing season. This prevents any possible or perceived conflict between other users of the area and the short (30min) use of the helicopter.

As a final element of our proposal, RiverFly will be limiting the number of fly fishing campouts we run each season. From our plans we will be spending a realistic maximum of 60-70 days per season in the Western Lakes. Considering that literally thousands of nights are currently spent by anglers in the Western Lakes, our real impact on visitation numbers in the area will be tiny. What this minimal-impact camp will provide though is jobs for Tasmanian's, increased awareness of the value of recreational fishing in the Western Lakes, and the opportunity for anglers to learn more about the fishing, flora, fauna and history of the Western Lakes.

#### The camp approval process

Our application is currently with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, and is being assessed through a process called the Reserve Activity Assessment. This assessment ensures that all aspects of the World Heritage Management Plan are met by the proposal. As part of this formal process, public consultation will occur, which will be run in partnership between Parks and Wildlife Tasmania, and RiverFly Tasmania.

Upon a successful final approval, RiverFly will enter into a contract with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. This would see our business pay a commercial lease back to Parks and Wildlife Tasmania (and the Tasmanian people), which will then be used to manage our great National Parks and World Heritage Areas. This is a great example of how our small business can contribute directly back to the management of the Western Lakes for the future.

#### Re-enforcing the World Heritage Area values

As we work towards environmental best practice, there are a few things that we definitely won't be doing:

1. We will not be applying to fly customers into the Western Lakes. We believe that one of the greatest parts of the Western Lakes fishery is the remoteness, and the need to use your own energy and initiative to get there. This remoteness and solitude is further protected by the WHA Management Plan, which actually prohibits the use of helicopters to take anglers in/out of the WHA.

2. We will not be building a private hut or lodge! One of the great enjoyments of our Western Lakes campouts is indeed the camping. In a world full of stuffy-office blocks and hotel rooms filled with recycled air, we can see the value and appeal of sleeping under the canvas. As such, our camp will remain as just that – a tent camp utilizing 2-3 man canvas tents for accommodation. To ensure these values are protected in the Western Lakes, the WHA actually prohibits the building of private huts or lodges in the World Heritage Area.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to <u>contact</u> Daniel Hackett at RiverFly Tasmania. You can read testimonials, including those from campouts customers <u>here</u>

Tags: Western Lakes, Wilderness Campout

Posted in <u>Uncategorized</u>, <u>Western Lakes</u>. Permalink for this post: <u>permalink</u>. | <u> Stumble It</u>

#### 2 Responses to "Western Lakes campouts - sustainable eco-tourism into the future"

<u>Reply</u>

 Daniel says: June 24, 2010 at 9:13 am
 Thanks guys, have a great season in 2010 / 2011!

<u>Reply</u>

Subscribe to the comments for this post with RSS:  $\boxed{N}$  RSS 2.0

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#### Appendix 3: Email sent to Daniel Hackett on 7 April 2018

Sent to info@riverfly.com.au on April 7 2018 at 1:23 PM

Hi Daniel,

I was interested to read on the EPBC website the latest form of your proposal to build a permanent standing camp on Halls Island.

I've been visiting that specific area most years since 1995, so I have a keen interest in developments in the area.

I had a few questions about it -

1) Have you been granted a formal lease over the entire island, or just purchased the hut via a private arrangement with Elizabeth McQuilkin?

2) I noticed your plan is for 30 trips a year. What months are you planning to be operating through?

3) What's your position on people accessing the island and hut, while your guided trips are also in progress - given that the island is located inside the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and WHA?

I gather from your submission that a large part of your motivation is to preserve the Halls Island hut as a culturally significant artefact.

I agree with that position - have you considered an approach like the mountain huts preservation society use?

I note that nearby huts like the ones at Junction Lake and Lake Meston are in excellent condition, and don't require a helipad or guided trips to assist with maintenance.

Thanks for your time -

Regards,

(name supplied)

#### Appendix 4: Map showing current extent of lease on Hall's Island

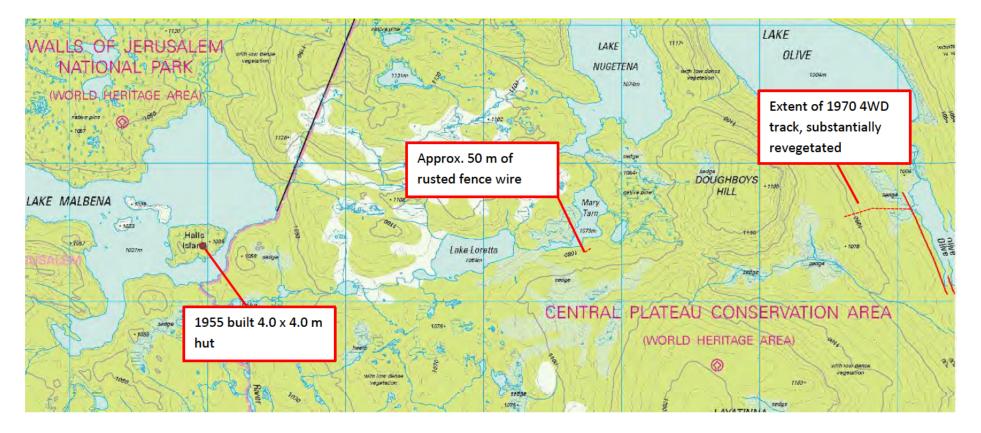
As accessed April 14 2018

#### https://maps.thelist.tas.gov.au/listmap/app/list/map



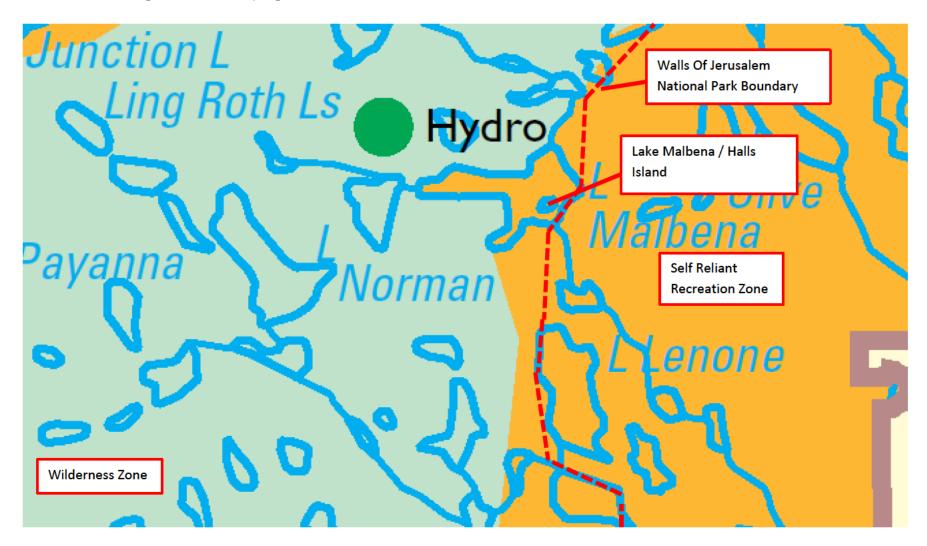
#### Appendix 5: Map showing actual disturbance to Apparent Naturalness as of 2018

#### From Tasmap Lake Olive Map Sheet



#### Appendix 6: Map showing 'Wilderness vs. Self-reliant recreation zone

From TWWHA Management Plan 2016, Page 73



#### **Appendix 7: Outstanding Universal Values Statement, TWWHA**

World Heritage Places - Tasmanian Wilderness - Outstanding Universal Value

http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/tasmanian-wilderness/values

Accessed 15 April 2018



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

# World Heritage Places - Tasmanian Wilderness - Outstanding Universal Value



#### Outstanding Universal Value

World Heritage sites are places that are important to and belong to everyone, regardless of where they are located. They are an irreplaceable legacy that the global community wants to protect for the future.

The common feature of all properties inscribed on the World Heritage List is that they meet the requirement of Outstanding Universal Value. Outstanding Universal Value is defined as cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.

Fact sheet

#### S Understanding World Heritage: what is Outstanding Universal Value?

A Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is the official statement adopted by the World Heritage Committee identifying the criteria under which the property was inscribed, including the assessments of the conditions of integrity or authenticity, and of the protection and management in force. The primary purpose of a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is to be the key reference for the future effective protection and management of the property. When the Tasmanian Wilderness was listed in 1982 a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was not required.

The Australian Government is working with the Tasmanian Government and technical advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee to develop the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

In the meantime examples of World Heritage values that contribute to the property's Outstanding Universal Value are identified under each criterion below. These examples are illustrative of the World Heritage values of the property, and they do not necessarily constitute a comprehensive list of these values. Until the adoption of a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value the list should be used as a guide on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Additional information on the values of the 2013 extension is also available in the following fact sheet.

Fact sheet

S Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area - Frequently asked questions - Adjacent Landholders

#### Criteria

4/15/2018

World Heritage Places - Tasmanian Wilderness - Outstanding Universal Value | Department of the Environment and Energy

The Tasmanian Wilderness is inscribed on the World Heritage List under four natural (<u>vii, viii, ix and x</u>) and three cultural (<u>iii, v, vi</u>) criteria. The criteria for assessing whether cultural and natural heritage values are of Outstanding Universal Value have evolved over time and the criteria against which the property was listed in 1982 and 1989 are not identical with the current criteria. However, the underlying concepts have remained stable.

The values listed below were developed using the 1981 and 1989 nominations for the property. Consideration was also given to assessments and summaries of nominations by the advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee and reports to the World Heritage Expert Panel. The list was reviewed by the Australian chapter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the Australian Committee for International Union for Conservation of Nature and approved by the then Minister for the Environment and Heritage, the Hon Robert Hill in June 2000.

#### Outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history.

The Tasmanian Wilderness is an outstanding example representing major stages of the earth's evolutionary history. The world heritage values include:

- geological, geomorphological and physiographic features, including:
  - rock formations including Precambrian rocks and Cambrian rocks;
  - Late Cambrian to Early Ordovician sequences of the Denison Range;
  - fossiliferous Ordovician limestone;
  - Permian-Triassic sediments and associated Jurassic dolerite intrusions;
  - Darwin Crater and Lake Edgar fault;
  - karst systems including glacio-karstic features;
  - karst geomorphology and karst hydrology;
  - glaciation, including glacial deposits of the Late Cainozoic, Permo-Carboniferous and Precambrian;
  - extraglacial areas (eg solifluction sheets, block streams, rock glaciers, landslip deposits);
  - periglaciation (e.g. Mt Rufus, Frenchman's Cap);
  - soils (e.g. peatlands); and
  - undisturbed river systems which show particular geomorphological processes;
- relict biota which show links to ancient Gondwanan biota including:
- endemic conifers (including the King Billy pine Athrotaxis selaginoides, the Huon pine Lagarostrobos franklinii and the genera Diselma, Microcachrys, Microstrobos);
- plant species in the families Cunoniaceae, Escalloniaceae and Winteraceae;
- the plant genera Bellendena, Agastachys and Cenarrhenes in the Proteaceae;
- other plant genera with Gondwanan links (e.g. Eucryphia, Orites, Lomatia and Nothofagus);
- monotremes (e.g. platypus Ornithorhynchus anatinus, short beaked echidna Tachyglossus aculeatus);
- dasyurid species;
- parrots (e.g. orange-bellied parrot and the ground parrot);
- indigenous families of frogs with Gondwanan origins (e.g. Tasmanian froglet Ranidella tasmaniensis, brown froglet Ranidella signifera, Tasmanian tree frog Litoria burrowsi, brown tree frog Litoria ewingi);
- invertebrate species in the genera Euperipatoides and Ooperipatellus;
- the Tasmanian cave spider (Hickmania troglodytes);
- aquatic insect groups with close affinities to groups found in South America, New Zealand and Southern Africa (e.g. dragonflies, chironomid midges, stoneflies, mayflies and caddisflies);
- crustaceans (e.g. Anaspidacea, Parastacidae, Phreatoicidae);
- primitive taxa showing links to fauna more ancient than Gondwana (e.g. Anaspids, Trogloneta (a mysmenid spider), species of alpine moths in the subfamily Archiearinae, species in the genus Sabatinca of the primitive lepidopteran sub-order Zeugloptera).

### Outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment.

The Tasmanian Wilderness has outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes and ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water and coastal ecosystems and communities, including:

- sites where processes of geomorphological and hydrological evolution are continuing in an uninterrupted natural condition (including karst formation, periglaciation which is continuing on some higher summits (e.g. on the Boomerang, Mount La Perouse, Mount Rufus, Frenchmans Cap), fluvial deposition, evolution of spectacular gorges, marine and aeolian deposition and erosion, and development of peat soils and blanket bogs);
- ecosystems which are relatively free of introduced plant and animal species;
- coastal plant communities free of exotic sand binding grasses which show natural processes of dune formation and erosion;
- undisturbed catchments, lakes and streams;
- alpine ecosystems with high levels of endemism;
- the unusual 'cushion plants' (bolster heaths) of the alpine ecosystems;
- · ecological transitions from moorland to rainforest;
- pristine tall eucalypt forests;
- examples of active speciation in the genus Eucalyptus, including sites of:
  - hybridisation and introgression;
  - clinal variation (e.g. E. subcrenulata);
  - habitat selection (e.g. E. gunnii); and
  - transition zones which include genetic exchanges between Eucalyptus species;
- plant groups in which speciation is active (e.g. Gonocarpus, Ranunculus and Plantago);
- conifers of extreme longevity (including Huon pine, Pencil pine and King Billy pine);
- endemic members of large Australian plant families (e.g. heaths such as Richea pandanifolia, Richea scoparia, Dracophyllum minimum and prionotes cerinthoides);
- endemic members of invertebrate groups;
- invertebrate species in isolated environments, especially mountain peaks, offshore islands and caves with high levels of genetic and phenotypic variation;
- invertebrates of unusually large size (e.g. the giant pandini moth Proditrix sp, several species of Neanuridae, the brightly coloured stonefly - Eusthenia spectabilis);
- invertebrate groups which show extraordinary diversity (e.g. land flatworms, large amphipods, peripatus, stag beetles, stoneflies);
- skinks in the genus Leiolopisma which demonstrate adaptive radiation in alpine heaths and boulder fields on mountain ranges;
- examples of evolution in mainland mammals (e.g. sub-species of Bennett's wallaby Macropus rufogriseus, swamp antechinus - Antechinus minimus, southern brown bandicoot - Isodon obesulus, common wombat - Vombatus ursinus, common ringtail possum - Pseudocheirus peregrinus, common brushtail possum - Trichosurus vulpecula, eastern pygmy possum - Cercartetus nanus, the swamp rat - Rattus lutreolus) in many birds (e.g. the azure kingfisher - Alcedo azurea) and in island faunas;
- animal and bird species whose habitat elsewhere is under threat (e.g. the spotted-tail quoll Dasyurus maculatus, swamp antechinus Antechinus minimus, broad-toothed rat - Mastacomys fuscus and the ground parrot - Pezoporus wallicus); and
- the diversity of plant and animal species.

#### 4/15/2018

Contains superlative natural phenomena, formations or features, for instance outstanding examples of the most important ecosystems, areas of exceptional natural beauty or exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements.

The landscape of the Tasmanian Wilderness has exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance and contains superlative natural phenomena including:

- viewfields and sites of exceptional natural beauty associated with:
  - flowering heaths of the coastline;
  - the south and south-west coasts comprising steep headlands interspersed with sweeping beaches, rocky coves and secluded inlets;
  - eucalypt tall open forests including Eucalyptus regnans, the tallest flowering plant species in the world;
  - rainforests framing undisturbed rivers;
  - buttongrass, heath and moorland extending over vast plains;
  - wind-pruned alpine vegetation;
  - sheer quartzite or dolerite capped mountains (including Cradle Mountain, Frenchmans Cap, Federation Peak and Precipitous Bluff);
  - deep, glacial lakes, tarns, cirques and pools throughout the ranges;
  - the relatively undisturbed nature of the property;
  - the scale of the undisturbed landscapes;
  - the juxtaposition of different landscapes;
  - the presence of unusual natural formations (e.g. particular types of karst features) and superlative examples of glacial landforms and other types of geomorphic features; and
  - rare or unusual flora and fauna.

## Contain the most important and significant habitats where threatened species of plants and animals of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation still survive.

The ecosystems of the Tasmanian Wilderness contain important and significant natural habitats where threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation still survive, including:

- · habitats important for endemic plant and animal taxa and taxa of conservation significance, including:
  - rainforest communities;
  - alpine communities;
  - moorlands (e.g. in the far south-west);
  - riparian and lacustrine communities (including meromictic lakes).
  - habitats which are relatively undisturbed and of sufficient size to enable survival of taxa of conservation significance including endemic taxa;
  - plant species of conservation significance
  - animal species of conservation significance, such as:
  - spotted-tail quoll Dasyurus maculatus;
  - swamp antechinus Antechinus minimus
  - · broad-toothed rat Mastacomys fuscus
  - ground parrot Pezoporus wallicus
  - · orange-bellied parrot Neophema chrysogaster
  - Lake Pedder galaxias Galaxias pedderensis
  - Pedra Branka skink Niveoscincus palfreymani.

World Heritage Places - Tasmanian Wilderness - Outstanding Universal Value | Department of the Environment and Energy

#### Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilisation which has disappeared.

The Tasmanian Wilderness bears a unique and exceptional testimony to an ancient, ice age society, represented by:

• Pleistocene archaeological sites that are unique, of great antiquity and exceptional in nature, demonstrating the sequence of human occupation at high southern latitudes during the last ice age.

## An outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture which has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.

The Tasmanian Wilderness provides outstanding examples of a significant, traditional human settlement that has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible socio-cultural or economic change. The world heritage values include:

archaeological sites which provide important examples of the hunting and gathering way of life, showing how
people practised this way of life over long time periods, during often extreme climatic conditions and in contexts
where it came under the impact of irreversible socio-cultural and economic change.

#### Directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance.

The Tasmanian Wilderness is directly associated with events of outstanding universal significance linked to the adaptation and survival of human societies to glacial climatic cycles. The world heritage values include:

• archaeological sites including Pleistocene sites, which demonstrate the adaptation and survival of human societies to glacial climatic cycles and periods of long isolation from other communities (e.g. the human societies in this region were the most southerly known peoples on earth during the last ice age).

In submission I also refer to the findings of Tasmania's Anglers Alliance...

- Helicopter access would have a significant impact on the wilderness values of remoteness, silence and connectivity to nature that have been traditionally enjoyed in the area by bushwalkers and bushwalking anglers. This impact would extend over and beyond the considerable geographical area of the flight path.
- The outstanding natural values of the wilderness would be significantly impacted by the noise and visual intrusion of a large six seater helicopter.
- The proposal seems to be incomplete with the Parks and Wildlife Service RAA not completed.
- There are no plans for the proposed building structures submitted with the proposal, making it impossible to to gauge their visual impact.

I, s22 , also find these conditions and agree, and deem this proposal both too environmentally and ethically incorre

On Mon, 16 Apr 2018, 6:57 PM **S22** Dear Minister.

wrote:

I speak in objection to reference 2018/8177, Halls Island standing camp proposal, Lake Malbena, Tasmania...

I heavily object to this proposal on many grounds, the first being of environmental concern for the fragile Walls of Jerusalem National park in which this lake is situated, the native Devils, and wedge tailed eagles which may be impacted especially by the proposed helicopter flights and infrastructure...

I also object on the grounds that the Parks environmental impact assessment has been purposely withheld from the public, stated by the proponent, due to "commercial inconfidence" this is unconstitutional and can only be described as secretive and perhaps hiding something that the public should know...

The rezoning of this small area in the national park is also a concern, it seems the state government feels it can undermine the strict World heritage management plans placed in writing to suit this developer, again environmentally dangerous and unconstitutional by WHA management plan...

Lastly is the impact it has on other users of the park, hikers, fly fisherman, who love this area dearly, treasure its remoteness and freedom from commercial interruption, and noisy aircraft, this proposal will ruin this area for all those who currently enjoy it...

Therefore, I strongly object to the proposal and will continue to fight and protest its progression in any legal way possible...

Yours sincerely



Dear Minister..

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Yours sincerely



From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:Re Lake Malbena Proposed developmentDate:Tuesday, 17 April 2018 9:28:32 PM

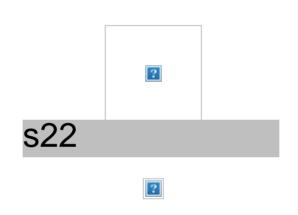
Date: Tue, Apr 17, 2018 at 2:02 PM Subject: EPBC 2018/8177 Wild Drake P/L, Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena Tas To: <u>epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au</u>

I, like many other passionate users of the WHA, strongly support Anglers Alliance position of opposing helicopter use and commercial development of this area.

I have been a member of the Tasmanian Professional Guides Association and have operating a commercial fly fishing guiding business for the past 24 years. My feeling is that if this proposal is not successfully resisted in the strongest manner then it will just be the thin end of the wedge.

I sense that the true value of our WHA will be realised in the distant future when later generations thank us for not allowing developments like the one proposed to go ahead.

Kind regards s22



| From:    | s22                               |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals                    |
| Subject: | Helicopters in Western Lakes      |
| Date:    | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 9:26:21 PM |

To whom it may concern,

As an enthusiastic Tasmanian fly fisherman, I consider the Western Lakes to be the absolute "jewel in the crown" of our trout fishery. While the regions natural beauty and exceptional Trout fishing are known the world over, these virtues do not completely encompass it's allure. The Western Lakes uniqueness also comes from the fact that to fully appreciate the rewards to be had, one must go to considerable effort, both physically and mentally to achieve them. I have fished for Trout in many places around the world and have found this scenario increasingly difficult to find.

#### While the Western Lakes region is quite large if explored on foot,

geographically it is still quite small. With such a broad flat expanse that is frequently all but devoid of sound other than the ever present Currawongs, a Helicopter would be heard many kilometers away. If one tourism operator is permitted to fly aircraft into the area, others in time may logically argue that no single entity should enjoy that monopoly and also be allowed permission. Or perhaps the original operator may over time expand their business with evermore flights and destinations. The "thin edge of the wedge" as they say.

Pioneers such as Reg Hall, Dick Reed and Paddy Hartnett that so passionately loved this area would be all to happy for people to enjoy the Western Lakes just as they have, but it is hard to imagine that they would be happy to see Helicopters flying over head to private lodge accommodation. Tasmania's popularity and romance as a destination is not because every part of it is easily accessible but in spite of it. Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope I have conveyed the love and passion that I and many others feel for this region. Sincerely,



| From:    | s22                              |   |
|----------|----------------------------------|---|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals                   |   |
| Subject: | Malbena/halls island             |   |
| Date:    | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 5:54:32 P | Μ |

I am writing to express my upmost concern for the proposed helicopter access and camp at halls island. I believe that this will irreversibly damage an area of wilderness that should be left untouched and alone from commercial development. Being an avid bushwalker and fly fisherman I believe you are making a huge mistake. I want these areas to remain untouched for future generations to enjoy. Paying huge amounts of money to be flown in is so far from what the experience is all about. We live in a world where people want things at the click of a button without working hard for it. You will be enabling this and ruining the experience for what it should be - bushwalking only, hard work, camping in tents, respecting the environment. Your beliefs that this will improve tourism are false, uneducated, misinformed and poorly researched. You need to understand why people visit these areas and develop tourism based on these ideologies. Not based on easy profit making brainless uneducated ideas.

Feel free to contact me.



| From:        | s22  |
|--------------|--|
| To:          | EPBC Referrals   |
| Subject:     | 2018/8177 - Wild Drake Pty Ltd /Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/ Tasmania/ Halls Island Standing<br>Camp, Lake Malbena Tas |
| Date:        | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 5:50:18 PM  |
| Attachments: | Halls Island Submission.pdf  |

To whom it may concern.

Please find attached a submission from the Pandani Bushwalking Club Inc. in relation to this proposal. The Club would appreciate early advice of the decision about whether these activities will be referred to the Minister for approval.





## COMMENT ON REFERRAL

APRIL 2018

#### Referral Number: 2018/8177

Wild Drake Pty Ltd /Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/ Tasmania/ Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena Tas.

#### SUMMARY:

- The Pandani Bushwalking Club Inc. considers that this proposal would have a significant impact on the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and notes that this is both a World Heritage property and National Heritage place protected by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The impacts are predominantly related to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) criteria iii, vi, vii, viii, ix and x and there are also clearly detrimental impacts in terms of general wilderness values.
- The Club therefore considers that the proposed activities outlined in this referral require the approval of the Minister for the Environment and Energy.
- The island and its surrounding areas will be placed in significant jeopardy if this proposal for a standing camp, boardwalks, kayaking, hill and bushwalking, as well as "citizen-science activities" is implemented using helicopter access.
- While the proposal identifies many of the impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance, the management and mitigation measures do not generally form part of this referral.

• This leaves little confidence in the adequacy of such measures due to the lack of information about the control of the proposed activities through continuous monitoring, assessment and reporting to ensure no significant impacts on an on-going basis.

## CRITERION (III) TO BEAR A UNIQUE OR AT LEAST EXCEPTIONAL TESTIMONY TO A CULTURAL TRADITION OR TO A CIVILIZATION WHICH IS LIVING, OR WHICH HAS DISAPPEARED.

- The referral notes the existence of an "Aboriginal heritage site listed in the RAA". It is understood that petroglyphs can be found nearby at Mary Tarn.
- However, the referral also seems to dismiss any likely presence of Aboriginal heritage in the assessment of relevant impacts. Clearly, Aboriginal people did make seasonal use of the plateau.
- Intense visitation to these heritage sites would have a significant impact due to their sensitivity.
- The existence of other heritage sites has not been assessed and this increases the risk of damage to these un-identified sites.

CRITERION (VI) TO BE DIRECTLY OR TANGIBLY ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS OR LIVING TRADITIONS, WITH IDEAS, OR WITH BELIEFS, WITH ARTISTIC AND LITERARY WORKS OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL SIGNIFICANCE.

- The preservation and maintenance of the settlement that currently represents an association with historical and living traditions is not addressed in this referral. While some of these traditions are mentioned, there is no indication of plans for the management of the remaining tangible structures.
- Clearly, this new proposal will have a significant impact on relationship of the old hut with the surrounding environment. While it currently represents a link with past traditions, that will be diminished with the implementation of the proposal.

## CRITERION (VII) TO CONTAIN SUPERLATIVE NATURAL PHENOMENA OR AREAS OF EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL BEAUTY AND AESTHETIC IMPORTANCE.

- The potential impacts on the relatively undisturbed landscape will be significant.
- The imposition of new infrastructure on the island and its ongoing use will clearly detract from the natural beauty of the area.

CRITERION (VIII) TO BE OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES REPRESENTING MAJOR STAGES OF EARTH'S HISTORY, INCLUDING THE RECORD OF LIFE, SIGNIFICANT ON-GOING GEOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANDFORMS, OR SIGNIFICANT GEOMORPHIC OR PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES.

- Halls Island is a unique island in a remote part of the TWWHA. The landscape on the island at the moment is relatively undisturbed because it is remote, hard to access and seldom visited. Increased visitation of at least 180 visitors concentrated within a limited period of the year represents a significant probable impact on all areas contemplated within this referral. Seasonal and weather factors will be major limiting influences that result in high-intensity visitation being confined to a short period in each year. The relatively large increase in visitation heightens the likelihood of significant impacts.
- Its very uniqueness as a physiographic feature means that it should not be alienated from the Walls of Jerusalem National Park nor leased for private purposes to the exclusion of others.

CRITERION (IX) TO BE OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES REPRESENTING SIGNIFICANT ON-GOING ECOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TERRESTRIAL, FRESH WATER, COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND COMMUNITIES OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS.

- The referral suggests that there are no known nesting sites for any Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles (*Aquila audax fleayi*) "within +2km radius".
- However, the impact of helicopter access to the island will still be significant as the flight line is clearly within the foraging range of these eagles and effects on other birdlife are not factored into the flight path considerations.
- The known nesting sites that are shown in Image 1 of the proposal demonstrate this point.

CRITERION (X) TO CONTAIN THE MOST IMPORTANT AND SIGNIFICANT NATURAL HABITATS FOR IN-SITU CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, INCLUDING THOSE CONTAINING THREATENED SPECIES OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF SCIENCE OR CONSERVATION.

- The island is a unique example of a biological refuge. Huge fires in the 30s and 80s of last century destroyed much of the vegetation of the Central Plateau WHA, including native pines such as *Arthrotaxis selaginoides* and *Arthrotaxis cupressiformis*. The island provides a refuge for the original suite of species, including the endangered Mount Mawson pine.
- While the referral proposes "avoiding woodfires to protect the island flora from the risk of wildfire" there will be a significantly greater risk of fire with multiple potential ignition points from additional infrastructure and increased visitation.

#### SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON GENERAL WILDERNESS VALUES.

- The proposal will have significant impacts on the wilderness character of both the area subject to this proposal and related areas, such as recognised walking routes like the Overland Track.
- The presence of some 180 visitors within a limited period each year will compromise and damage the wilderness values of this environment. There will be a reduction in the remoteness from settlement and a notable loss of apparent naturalness.
- Wilderness qualities are necessarily undermined with the building of huts and helipads they are mutually exclusive.
- Although Halls Island has a small hut on it at present, currently leased by the proponent, this takes up a very small part of its 8.3-hectare extent. The current hut occupies 40 square meters whereas the standing camp with its associated boardwalks is estimated to have a footprint of about 800 square metres and it will consist of more permanent infrastructure.
- There will be significant impacts from intrusive helicopter operations to support the proposed enterprise. These noise impacts may readily reach as far as the Overland Track in the Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair National Park. The noise of helicopter operations destroys the remoteness and its associated silence of the World Heritage Area and over the summer months this will compromise the experience of other users of this area, including recreational fly fishers.
- Is appears likely that there would be a concentration of flights within the summer months rather than being spread over the 270 days of the flyfishing season due to seasonal factors and this will necessarily mean that more users of related areas will have a diminished wilderness experience as the noise will carry for kilometres beyond the flight path.

• The 20-year span proposed for the construction and operation of the standing camp and associated infrastructure will significantly alter, change and damage this area, diminishing both the island's and wider area's wilderness values.

#### MISLEADING OR INCORRECT INFORMATION IN THE REFERRAL

- The referral suggests (3.10) "Halls Island is leasehold (under lease to the proponent), within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park". Inspection of the current leases from the Crown shown in theLIST
   (www.thelist.tas.gov.au) shows that the existing hut site is the only current lease. There is also an incorrect implication that the island is not within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park in the conflicting statement "West of Halls Island is the Walls of Jerusalem National Park ...".
- These plans do not appear to conform with the new 2016 Management plan for the TWWHA. Although this is described as a standing camp, it consists of buildings using timber and steel. Even a self-reliant recreation zone prohibits hut development, new tracks and boardwalks to avoid the impacts that come with them. This development is critically noncompliant.
- The proposal doesn't contain any reference to an assessment of the impacts on the hydrological environment that may result from the construction of jetties. It appears that no study has taken place and it is unknown whether native fish species co-exist with trout.
- The proposal relies heavily on a Reserve Activity Assessment though access has not been provided to the results of this Assessment. While it is stated that a full list of "consultation details is included in the confidential PWS Reserve Activity Assessment submitted to DoE assessors" and that "Further information relating to Reserve Activity Assessment [is] attached separately" this information is not available to those commenting on the referral.

- A major concern is that references to other documentation that is purported to support the referral is not available. This results in significant concerns about any impact assessments or proposals for management of those impacts.
- This means that there are unresolved questions about how these issues would be addressed. For example, how would the implementation of no-entry areas for guests be guaranteed. This is not adequately addressed in the referral.
- The same issues arise following the reference to "the Aboriginal heritage site listed in the RAA" and "subsequent Lease and Licence conditions" as well as "Monitoring of all walking routes to occur via GPS tracking and photo monitoring as per the RAA".
- An authoritative assessment of Aboriginal occupation has not been referenced in the referral. Given that it is known that Aboriginal people made use of the area, it would be essential to complete an archaeological survey of the lake and its surrounding area to identify any as-yet unknown heritage site that could easily be inadvertently damaged.

#### CONTACT DETAILS



PANDANI BUSHWALKING CLUB INC PO BOX 146 NORTH HOBART 7002



From:s22To:EPBC. ReferralsSubject:Re: RE: Comment on Proposal No. 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]Date:Tuesday, 17 April 2018 5:46:16 PMAttachments:Submission against EPBC Act criteria.docx

#### Dear s22

Thanks for acknowledging my submission. It was very hastily written, and I've found time to polish it a little. The result is attached. Could you please substitute this version for the earlier one? Many thanks, s22

On Tuesday, 17 April 2018, 4:53:37 pm AEST, EPBC Referrals <EPBC.Referrals@environment.gov.au> wrote:

#### s22

Thank you for your submission, concerning the proposed Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas (EPBC 2018/8177).

Your submission has been acknowledged and forwarded to the relevant assessment area.

Kind regards

s22

s22

| Referrals Gateway

**Environment Standards Division** 

Department of the Environment and Energy

From: s22 Sent: Tuesday, 17 April 2018 4:24 PM To: EPBC Referrals <EPBC.Referrals@environment.gov.au> Subject: Comment on Proposal No. 2018/8177

To whom it may concern:

Please find attached my submission on proposal no. 2018/8177: Wild Drake Pty. Ltd./Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

Yours sincerely,

s22

#### Comment on Proposal No. 2018/8177

#### Wild Drake Pty. Ltd./Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

Submission from s22

17 April 2018

About s22



The submission that follows is based principally upon views that I have formed as a result of my personal interaction with the Central Highlands of Tasmania.

#### Submission

My objection to the proposal to build a standing camp on Halls Island, Lake Malbena, and the associated helicopter access to the site is based upon my belief that these activities would severely degrade the wilderness values of the area.

In 2015 the World Heritage Committee passed a decision that urged Australia to review the then draft Management Plan, in particular from the point of view of the 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV) of wilderness. It advised the Government to 'ensure that it provides adequate protection for its OUV' including through the '...establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property, which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, *including its wilderness character*... [italics added]'

The Tasmanian Government responded by ignoring this advice and downscaling the Western Lakes area around Lake Malbena from 'wilderness zone' to 'remote recreation zone'. Anyone visiting the area would be hard pressed to find a reason for this. The area is untracked, and apart from a few small remote huts built many years ago has no signs of European habitation.

In fact, despite the semantic difficulties that some people have with the word 'wilderness', when I stand on a remote mountain top in the Central Plateau area (and I have stood on many) and look all around me and see no trace of any artefacts created by humans – no roads, no pylons, no clear-

felled areas, no human modification whatsoever, only a soaring, majestic natural landscape – I find the word 'wilderness' entirely appropriate for what I experience. That is the value that I want to preserve.

Re-zoning the Western Lakes area of the Central Plateau paves the way for degrading its wilderness values. Why? Because under the terms of the *TWWHA Management Plan 2016*, 'standing camps' are permitted in 'remote recreation zones', whereas they are not permitted in 'wilderness zones'. It is tempting to think that the re-zoning of the area was undertaken with the express purpose of paving the way for the building of 'standing camps' such as the one proposed for Halls Island.

I accept that there may be arguments for the erection of temporary structures to accommodate tourism projects in parts of the TWWHA, but the proposed structure on Halls Island cannot be so classed. The structures that Wild Drake Pty Ltd wishes to construct will consist of four huts and toilets built of 'timber and steel', linked by board-walking and serviced by a helipad.<sup>1</sup>

Approval for the construction of this camp was granted by the Tasmanian Government in the absence of any public comment or scrutiny. The Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA), part of the Tasmanian environmental assessment process, has been withheld from public release. In fact, the permanent nature of this proposal should have ensured that it was treated as an RAA Level 4, thereby triggering a formal public consultation process. That it was not treated in this way is bad enough; the covert and clandestine nature of the entire Tasmanian approval process has been far worse. Indeed, it is my belief that federal assessment under the EPBC Act should be re-advertised and started afresh in order to get some transparency into the process.

The proposed huts are one thing, however; the proposed helicopter flights are quite another. According to Wild Drake's submission, there will be 48 hours of helicopter airtime per year associated with getting tourists in and out of the camp. A further 3 hours annually has been estimated for 'maintenance and service'. One would assume these figures to be conservative. But even accepting them and the proponent's estimation of the flight-time per trip of 11 minutes, a small piece of arithmetic shows that 280 flights per year are contemplated.<sup>2</sup> Given that almost all of these would of necessity take place in the warmer six months of the year, it can be predicted that, should the proposal go ahead, there will be over ten helicopter flights per week going to and from Lake St Clair to the helipad beside Lake Malbena, more than one per day!

The most obvious impact that this will have will be upon humans using the area, principally bushwalkers and anglers, who go there to experience remoteness and serenity. A helicopter flying over and landing nearby will absolutely destroy these values, values that the WWHA Management Plan recognises as arising 'principally from the opportunity it provides for people to experience large remote areas that have little or no facilities, management presence or evidence of modern society and are largely free from disturbance and mechanical access'.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the *TWWHA Management Plan 2016* recognises the potential impact of aircraft upon landbased recreational users: 'A key area of management is the impact of aircraft on other users in the TWWHA ... The development of 'Fly Neighbourly Advice' guidelines has been well received by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> EPBC Act submission: Submission #3133 - Halls Island, Tasmania.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In relation to the reliability of Wild Drake's proposal, I may cite three of those with whom it claims to have consulted: the Tasmanian Greens, Land Conservancy Tasmania and the Wilderness Society. I telephoned each of these organisations today. Daniel Hackett and Wild Drake have consulted with none of them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *TWWHA Management Plan 2016* p174.

operators of scenic and charter flights. Voluntary restrictions are the principal means of mitigating the potential impact of over-flights on other users of the TWWHA'.<sup>4</sup>

Given this claim, it is surprising that the Tasmanian Government has accepted proposals from Wild Drake that so flagrantly fly in the face of the 'Fly Neighbourly Advice' guidelines. These guidelines accept the maximum altitude for the WHA as 4,000ft. Moreover, they add, flights 'in and through sensitive areas should be kept to a minimum, and aircraft should be operated in configuration that will minimise noise and visual impact for ground observers'.<sup>5</sup> Eight 'sensitive areas' are identified in the guidelines, of which one is the Traveller Range. This range borders Lake St Clair on the east, with Lake Malbena being some six kilometres further east. It is hard to see how an 11 minute helicopter flight between Lake St Clair and Lake Malbena could manage to avoid over-flying at least some of the Traveller Range. The impact upon recreation users of this utterly obtrusive experience can be imagined!

It is also hard to believe that such an incessant use of helicopters will have no impact upon wildlife. Indeed, a fishing colleague of mine stated at a Tasmanian Fly-Tyers' Club meeting last night (16 April 2018) that he had seen wedge-tail eagles at Lake Malbena; and this despite Nick Mooney's claim in his report commissioned by Wild Drake Pty Ltd that there were 'no nesting sites within a 2km plus radius'.<sup>6</sup> It would seem likely that any habitat in the vicinity, whether used by eagles or any other species of bird or mammal, will soon be vacated should the helicopter fights commence. This aspect of the potential of Wild Drake's proposal should be more thoroughly assessed during the EPBC process.

Three further quick points can be made. First, Wild Drake's proposal is aimed at 'the top end of town', those whose bank accounts allow them to access this remote area with no effort and in the shortest possible time. Others, and we are many, choose to walk in. We do so, not necessarily because we can't afford to travel by helicopter, but because to walk is a much more agreeable and far less invasive way of enjoying this unique environment. If Wild Drake's proposal goes ahead, it will allow a wealthy few (180 rich people per year at full capacity) to spoil and degrade the experience of many hundreds of others who choose to access the area in a far more environmentally friendly way.

Secondly, this and similar proposals completely contradict the very image that Tasmania's wilderness World Heritage Area promotes world-wide, the brand-Tasmania image of a remote, pristine and wild environment.

Finally, and this is my biggest dread, if the Halls Island camp and its associated helicopter access proceeds, it will pave the way for other similar projects in Tasmania's World Heritage Area. Rampant commercialism will destroy the very values upon which it seeks to capitalise. In so doing, it will 'kill the goose that lays the golden egg'. Sadly, the purblind government of Tasmania doesn't realise this – or chooses not to.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> TWWHA Management Plan 2016 p134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/file.aspx?id=6528.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> EPBC Act submission: Submission #3133 - Halls Island, Tasmania.

#### Hello EPBC,

please find attached my comments on Referral 2018/8177: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely, s22

#### Submission by: s22

#### My submission relates to the following EPBC Number

#### Referral Number: 2018/8177

#### Proponent: Wild Drake Pty Ltd

I believe the proposal would have a significant impact on matters protected by the EPBC Act, fails to account for the significance of Halls Island as a refuge and the referral is inadequate. My reasons are provided below.

Halls Island provides a unique WHA refuge from fire, the importance of which is demonstrated by the 2016 fires in the area. An island is as close to perfect as there can be in terms of being a refuge, as demonstrated by the presence of an ancient grove of King Billy pine and large areas of threatened species *Pherosphera hookeriana*. The proposed activities will increase fire risk.

Introduction of pathogens and weeds is another risk. Currently visitors to Halls Island will have walked for some considerable distance then swam or rafted over to get there, with the result that weeds and pathogens will have been diluted or removed during the trip there.

The proponent notes an outcome will be 'Improved on-island conditions protecting peatlands and waterways through the installation and availability of sewage containment systems on-island.' To suggest that the island will be 'improved' by sewerage containment, when there is currently no need for sewerage containment unless the proposal goes ahead, is illogical and thus misleading.

The flora on Halls Island is unique, e.g. 'alpine sphagnum bog and associated fens' community on the island is of outstanding universal value and uniqueness in terms of its condition and composition when compared to the same community on the surrounding mainland.'

There are alternative sites for such a development **outside** the WHA. Having such developments inside the WHA disregards **why** an area is WHA. Splitting the area off in a recent rezoning to disregard WHA listing, one has to ask what the grounds for re-zoning were. It appears the re-zoning had nothing to do with it's worth as WHA and everything to do with plans for commercial development.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.



| From:    | s22  |
|----------|--|
| То:      | EPBC Referrals   |
| Cc:      | s22  |
| Subject: | Subject: EPBC 2018/8177 Wild Drake P/L, Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena Tas |
| Date:    | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 4:34:47 PM  |

The Huon Licensed Anglers Association in southern Tasmania represents around sixty members. We have a club shack in the central highlands and are interested in activities and developments in that area.

We are aware of a proposal to fly parties to Lake Malbena on a regular basis utilising helicopters. We oppose this idea on the basis that the noise and visual intrusion will reduce the wilderness experience anglers and bush walkers presently enjoy in a World Heritage Area.

We are concerned that environmental degradation will follow from the increased human presence in the vicinity of Lake Malbena and surrounds.

We wish to be kept updated on the above proposal with an intention to comment if we see need. Kind Regards



Huon Licensed Anglers Association



| From:    | s22                               |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals                    |
| Subject: | Proposal 2018/8177                |
| Date:    | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 3:42:03 PM |

#### Proposal No. 2018/8177Wild Drake Pty. Ltd./Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

#### Submission by the Tasmanian Fly Tyers Club, 11 April, 2018

The Tasmanian Fly Tyers Club Inc. is a club of more than eighty Tasmanian fly-tying and fresh-water fishing enthusiasts. It was established in 1956, and its members include many prominent anglers familiar with the area of this proposed development.

Unfortunately the only opportunity we have had to discuss this issue was at our monthly general meeting last night (see further comment below), so we are not able to provide a detailed case because of the current pressing deadline. However, there was a very strong general opinion opposing this development, and we would like to be able to make a more detailed case if the opportunity becomes available.

In general terms, our objections are as follows:

- 1. Fundamentally we see this issue as a conflict between relatively narrow-focussed, rather elitist and financiallymotivated commercial interests and the original use of the region as a wilderness area available to the general community.
- The very strong view of our members who enjoy walking into Tasmanian wilderness areas is that the presence of helicopters and obvious commercial activity would significantly reduce the quality of their experience. From an angler's point of view, walking into a supposed wilderness area to fish, only to have clients of a commercial business arriving by helicopter would be very disappointing.
- In our view, the proposal to erect a significant standing camp with supporting infrastructure and serviced by helicopters is completely inconsistent with the original intent of the 1999 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan. To reduce the importance and intent of wilderness opens a much wider community debate which should be conducted well before any individual proposals are considered.
- 2. There is strong concern within our club that approval of this particular proposal will "open the floodgates" to future similar proposals whose approvals will have been facilitated and to which objection will become increasingly futile.
- The eventual result of this trend would be a significant degradation and loss of the concept of wilderness in the Tasmanian context, with consequent serious damage to the Tasmanian brand regarding "clean, green and wild".
- 3. We have some concerns about the findings of the North Barker Ecosystems Services report.
- Anecdotally, one of our members has observed wedge-tailed eagles very close to Lake Malbena, raising questions as to the thoroughness of the North Barker survey.
- Secondly, there is scant mention of the potential introduction of Phytopthora or other soil-borne pathogens, particularly as this has previously been a problem elsewhere in the Tasmanian Central Plateau, and given that clients of the proposed business may well have arrived within a very short time of being almost anywhere else in the world.
- 4. Apart from the above objections, there is a strong feeling that this process has largely progressed, almost to the point of being a fait-accompli, with very limited public airing or opportunity for comment. Despite the fact that many of our members are normally well-versed in issues such as this, it has only been raised as a topic for our attention very recently and we have only had one opportunity (last night's meeting) to discuss it as a club.
- It would not have been difficult to inform our, and other similar organisations of this proposal directly and much earlier. The fact that this was not done casts doubt on whether or not there was ever any genuine desire for timely public involvement in the process.

The Tasmanian Fly Tyers Club would welcome the opportunity to provide further comment if appropriate.

Further contact should be made via our S22

# s22

From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:Comment on Proposal No. 2018/8177Date:Tuesday, 17 April 2018 4:24:16 PMAttachments:Submission against EPBC Act criteria.docx

To whom it may concern:

Please find attached my submission on proposal no. 2018/8177: Wild Drake Pty. Ltd./Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

Yours sincerely,

s22

## Comment on Proposal No. 2018/8177

## Wild Drake Pty. Ltd./Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

Submission from s22

17 April 2018

About s22



The submission that follows is based principally upon views that I have formed as a result of my personal interaction with the Central Highlands of Tasmania.

#### Submission

My objection to the proposal to build a standing camp on Halls Island, Lake Malbena, and the associated helicopter access to the site is based upon my belief that these activities would severely degrade the wilderness values of the area.

In 2015, the World Heritage Committee passed a decision that urged Australia to review the then draft Management Plan, in particular from the point of view of the 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV) of wilderness. It advised the Government to 'ensure that it provides adequate protection for its OUV' including through the '...establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property, which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, *including its wilderness character*... [italics added]'

The Tasmanian Government responded by ignoring this advice and downscaling the Western Lakes area around Lake Malbena from 'wilderness zone' to 'remote recreation zone'. Anyone visiting the area would be hard pressed to find a reason for this. The area is untracked, and apart from a few small remote huts built many years ago has not signs of European habitation.

In fact, despite the semantic the difficulties that some people have with the word 'wilderness', when I stand on a remote mountain top in the Central Plateau area (and I have stood on many) and look all around me and see no trace of any artefacts created by humans – no roads, no pylons, no clear-

felled areas, no human modification whatsoever, only a soaring, majestic natural landscape – I find the word 'wilderness' entirely appropriate to what I experience. That is the value that I want to preserve.

Rezoning the Western Lakes area of the Central Plateau paves the way for degrading its wilderness values. Why? Because under the terms of the *TWWHA Management Plan 2016*, 'standing camps' are permitted in 'remote recreation zones', whereas they are not permitted in 'wilderness zones'. It is tempting to think that the re-zoning of the area was undertaken with the express purpose of paving the way for the building of 'standing camps' such as the one proposed for Halls Island.

I accept that there may be arguments for the erection of temporary structures to accommodate tourism projects in parts of the TWWHA, but the proposed structure on Halls Island cannot be so classed. The structures that Wild Drake Pty Ltd wishes to construct will consist of four huts and toilets built of 'timber and steel', linked by board-walking and serviced by a helipad.<sup>1</sup>

Approval for the construction of this camp was granted by the Tasmanian Government in the absence of any public comment or scrutiny. The Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA), part of the Tasmanian environmental assessment process, has been withheld from public release. In fact, the permanent nature of this proposal should have ensured that it was treated as an RAA Level 4, thereby triggering a formal public consultation process. That it was not treated in this way is bad enough; the covert and clandestine nature of the entire Tasmanian approval process has been far worse. Indeed, it is my belief that federal assessment under the EPBC Act should be re-advertised and started afresh in order to get some transparency into the process.

The proposed huts are one thing, however; the proposed helicopter flights are quite another. According to Wild Drake's submission, there will be 48 hours of helicopter airtime per year associated with getting tourists in and out of the camp. A further 3 hours annually has been estimated for 'maintenance and service'. One would assume these figures to be conservative. But even accepting them and the proponent's estimation of the flight time per trip of 11 minutes, a small piece of arithmetic shows that 280 flights per year are contemplated.<sup>2</sup> Given that almost all of these would of necessity take place in the warmer six months of the year, it can be predicted that, should the proposal go ahead, there will be over ten helicopter flights per week going to and from Lake St Clair to the helipad beside Lake Malbena, more than one per day!

The most obvious impact that this will have will be upon humans using the area, principally bushwalkers and anglers, who go there to experience remoteness and serenity. A helicopter flying over and landing nearby will absolutely destroy these values, values that the WWHA Management Plan recognises as arising 'principally from the opportunity it provides for people to experience large remote areas that have little or no facilities, management presence or evidence of modern society and are largely free from disturbance and mechanical access'.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the *TWWHA Management Plan 2016* recognises the potential impact of aircraft upon landbased recreational users: 'A key area of management is the impact of aircraft on other users in the TWWHA ... The development of 'Fly Neighbourly Advice' guidelines has been well received by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> EPBC Act submission: Submission #3133 - Halls Island, Tasmania.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In relation to the reliability of Wild Drake's proposal, I may cite three of those with whom it claims to have consulted: the Tasmanian Greens, Land Conservancy Tasmania and the Wilderness Society. I telephoned each of these organisations today. Daniel Hackett and Wild Drake have consulted with none of them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *TWWHA Management Plan 2016* p174.

operators of scenic and charter flights. Voluntary restrictions are the principal means of mitigating the potential impact of over-flights on other users of the TWWHA'.<sup>4</sup>

Given this claim, it is surprising that the Tasmanian Government has accepted proposals from Wild Drake that so flagrantly fly in the face of the 'Fly Neighbourly Advice' guidelines. These guidelines accept the maximum altitude for the WHA as 4,000ft. Moreover, they add, flights 'in and through sensitive areas should be kept to a minimum, and aircraft should be operated in configuration that will minimise noise and visual impact for ground observers'.<sup>5</sup> Eight 'sensitive areas' are identified in the guidelines, of which one is the Traveller Range. This range borders Lake St Clair on the east, with Lake Malbena being some six kilometres further east. It is hard to see how an 11 minute helicopter flight between Lake St Clair and Lake Malbena could manage to avoid over-flying at least some of the Traveller Range. The impact upon recreation users of this utterly obtrusive experience can be imagined!

It is also hard to believe that such an incessant use of helicopters will have no impact upon wildlife. Indeed, it should be pointed out that, despite Nick Mooney's claim, a fishing colleague of mine stated at a Tasmanian Fly-Tyers' Club meeting last night (16 April 2018) that he had seen wedge-tail eagles at Lake Malbena. It would seem likely that any habitat in the vicinity, whether used by eagles or any other species of bird or mammal, will soon be vacated. This aspect of the potential of Wild Drake's proposal should be more thoroughly assessed during the EPBC process.

Three further quick points can be made. First, Wild Drake's proposal is aimed at 'the top end of town', those whose bank accounts allow them to access this remote area with no effort and in the shortest possible time. Others, and we are many, choose to walk in. We do so, not necessarily because we can't afford to travel by helicopter, but because to walk is a much more sensible and far less invasive way of enjoying this unique environment. If Wild Drake's proposal goes ahead, it will allow a wealthy few (180 rich people per year at full capacity) to spoil and degrade the experience of many hundreds of others who choose so access the area in a far more environmentally friendly way.

Secondly, this and similar proposals completely contradict the very image that Tasmania's wilderness World Heritage Area promotes world-wide, the brand image of a remote, pristine environment.

Finally, and this is my biggest dread, if the Halls Island camp and its associated helicopter access proceeds, it will pave the way for other similar projects in Tasmania's World Heritage Area. Rampant commercialism will destroy the very values upon which it seeks to capitalise. In so doing, it will 'kill the goose that lays the golden egg'. Sadly, the purblind government of Tasmania doesn't realise this – or chooses not to.

# s22

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *TWWHA Management Plan 2016* p134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/file.aspx?id=6528.

| From:    | s22   |
|----------|---|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals  |
| Cc:      | s22   |
| Subject: | EPBC 2018/8177 Wild Drake P/L, Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena Tas |
| Date:    | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 4:21:32 PM   |

Southern Tasmanian Licensed Anglers Association is an association of clubs that represents licenced freshwater anglers in the southern half of Tasmania.

We have received numerous representations from clubs and individuals objecting to the above proposal.

We submit the following objections -

- Helicopter access would have a significant impact on the wilderness values of remoteness, silence and connectivity to nature that have been traditionally enjoyed in the area by bushwalkers and bushwalking anglers. This impact would extend over and beyond the considerable geographical area of the flight path. The proposal underplays the number of flights by implying 30 flights whereas there will be up to 30 parties flown in each entailing an inward flight for the party, a flight back out after drop-off, a flight in to collect the party, a return flight with the clients, flights in and out for support staff (guides, lecturers, cooks, etc) flights in and out for constructions, equipment and removal of the same and waste.
- The outstanding natural values of the wilderness would be significantly impacted by the noise and visual intrusion of a helicopter, as well as the risk of pollution from fuel, exhausts, etc.
- Safety is an issue as parties may be isolated if the weather, or other demands, preclude flights placing clients and staff at risk.
- Native species, eg Wedge-tail Eagles, may be at risk from injury or worse from contact with helicopter operating near nesting sites.
- The proposal seems to be incomplete with the Parks and Wildlife Service RAA not completed.
- There are no plans for the proposed building structures submitted with the proposal, making it impossible to to gauge their visual impact.

STLAA submits that the proposal is incomplete with insufficient information to enable comment to be properly made or completed.



| From:        | s22                               |   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| To:          | EPBC Referrals                    |   |
| Subject:     | This submission r                 | elates to the following EPBC Number 2018/8177 |
| Date:        | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 4:15:33 PM |   |
| Attachments: | s22                               | 2018 8177 Wild Drake Pty. Ltd.docx            |

To whom it may concern,

please see the attached document in relation to the proposal 2018/8177 by Wild Drake Pty Ltd.

Kind regards,

s22

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s22

Submission: s22

#### This submission relates to the following EPBC Number

#### Referral Number: 2018/8177

#### Proponent: Wild Drake Pty Ltd

We believe that this proposal fails to adequately recognize Halls Island as fire refugia. The vegetation of Halls Island is starkly different from the 'mainland' of the Tasmanian Central Plateau, consisting of a diverse assembly of species including a range of palaeoendemics, forests dominated by alpine yellow gum not found elsewhere on the Tasmanian Central Plateau and an EPBCA listed Sphagnum peatland community. Crucially, Halls Island and several other small adjacent islands are a stronghold of the Vulnerable endemic species *Pherosphaera hookeriana* as listed under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*.

Reasons are provided below:

The re-zoning of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (WHA) is extraordinary and contrary to the requests of the World Heritage Committee. It is unprecedented in Tasmania that a part of the WHA has been re-zoned for a private business to gain a commercial benefit. The proposal aims to construct infrastructure on Halls Island including accommodation, toilets and a network of boardwalks for fishing and sightseeing that will be utilized by 30 groups of up to 6 customers each year. This is a significant increase in visitation. Halls Island is an extremely important fire refugia located in Lake Malbena in a remote part of the WHA. The island is of outstanding universal value and significance, primarily due to its remoteness and as a refuge from fire. Halls Island is one of the largest islands located within the Central Plateau, Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

# EPBC listed Sphagnum bog communities

The Flora and Fauna Assessment acknowledges the presence and high quality of the EPBCA listed *Sphagnum peatland* (endangered) on Halls Island. The report discusses the communities' significance in terms of the extent and condition. Section 2.1.1 of the Flora and Fauna habitat Assessment states:

"...The NCA and meets the definition for the 'alpine sphagnum bog and associated fens' community listed as endangered under the EPBCA. All the bogs on Hall's Island have thus been mapped as MSP because of the percentage cover of Sphagnum species, with most patches having well over the required 30% cover (up to 80% ground cover in some cases) and over 50cm depth of Sphagnum being evident in places (Plate 2)"

*Fire* and the *construction of structures* are both listed as threatening processes<sup>1</sup> under the EPBC policy statement for this community. Page 16 of the Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens policy statement 3.16 clearly states under threats and impacts:

# "The biggest threats currently facing this community are fire and ongoing effects of climate change."

Furthermore;

# The EPBC Act states that a person must not take action if:

- 1. The proposed actions will have a significant impact on the world heritage values of a declared World Heritage property
- 2. A person must not take an action that:

(a) has or will have a significant impact on a listed threatened ecological community included in the endangered category; or

(b) is likely to have a significant impact on a listed threatened ecological community included in the endangered category.

We argue that:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/b08acec6-6a27-4e71-8636-498719b253b4/files/alpine-sphagnum-bogs.pdf

- (a) increased visitation to Halls Island coupled with the construction of infrastructure; has or will have a significant impact on the Sphagnum Peatland communities, a listed threatened ecological community, and
- (b) is likely to have a significant impact on a listed threatened ecological community (Sphagnum peatland) by increasing the risk of catastrophic fire events for example those associated with construction of infrastructure, and increased visitation numbers by for example cooking, smoking or the utilization of the dilapidated open fire that currently exists in the old hut currently on Halls Island.

Therefore, based on the likely impacts in the sphagnum peatland community, the proposal to build infrastructure and increase visitation to Halls Island must be abandoned or reconsidered at alternative sites outside of the WHA.

# The Vulnerable Tasmanian palaeoendemic species Pherosphaera hookeriana

The endemic conifer species *Pherosphaera hookeriana* is listed as Vulnerable under the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (Tasmania) and has a continuous distribution around the southern shore of Halls Island as noted by the North Barker Flora and Fauna Assessment. Regrettably, this survey fails to acknowledge the presence of *Pherosphaera hookeriana* around the lakeside margins of Halls Island albeit at lower numbers. This is particularly evident in the Natural Values Atlas distribution of *P. hookeriana* on Halls Island (Figure 1) demonstrating that the distribution extends around the periphery of the Island. Halls Island and associated smaller Islands is a stronghold for *P. hookeriana* and this presents three major concerns in our opinion:

(1) Increased visitation inexorably increases the risk for catastrophic fire events which will have disastrous consequences for this species. *P. hookeriana* is known to be extremely sensitive to fire with little to no recovery post fire events. The Tasmanian threatened species listing statement above states that fire events may cause "irreversible declines and fragmentation of subpopulations"<sup>2</sup>. Compounding this fact is that little to no recruitment has

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Threatened Species Section (2009) Listing Statement for Pherosphaera hookeriana (drooping pine), Department of Primary Industries & Water, Tasmania.

been ever been observed for this species in the wild, and as such any threat to this species must be avoided.

- (2) Fishing by its very nature requires access to the lakeside margins of Halls Island and there is a very real risk of *P. hookeriana* being trampled and irrevocably damaged by enthusiastic fishers. It is not feasible for all visitors to the island to be monitored at all times to ensure that they keep to constructed boardwalks. There is ample evidence of well trampled paths around many of the nearby lakes that are less difficult to access, although fortunately do not harbor *P. hookeriana* growing on their margins. Thus, we believe that damage by trampling represents a secondary and very tangible risk to the population of *P. hookeriana* on Halls Island.
- (3) It is also worth considering the risk associated with an increase in foot traffic, such as the introduction of pathogens such as *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and the establishment of weeds on Halls Island. The introduction of *Phytophthora* to Halls Island would have an extremely detrimental effect on the flora. It is anticipated that by increasing the number of visitors to Halls Island by perhaps as much as 10-fold represents a significant conservation threat to the vegetation of this unique island and the surrounding WHA.

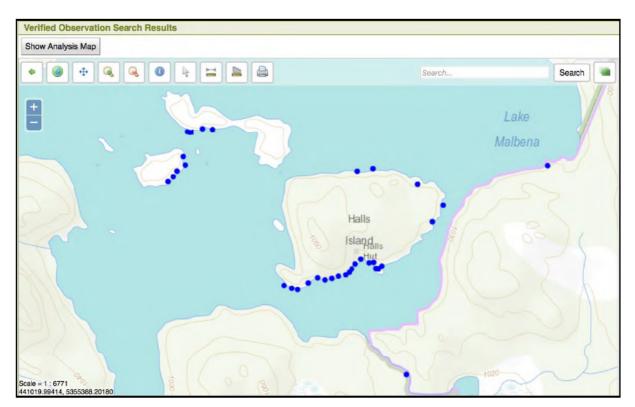


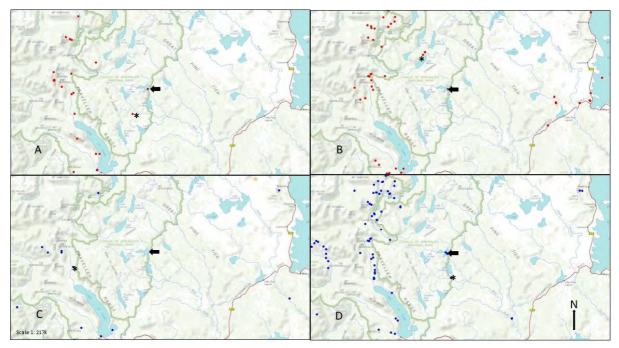
Figure 1. Natural Values Atlas records for the Vulnerable Tasmanian endemic species *Pherosphaera hookeriana* at Lake Malbena and Halls Island. Access date 14/04/2018.

# The unique and disjunct flora of Halls Island.

The vegetation of Halls Island as indicated by the North Barker report pertaining to this proposal, personal observations and also by utilizing all records available on the NVA, clearly indicates that Halls Island is an extremely important fire refugia with an assemblage of species that is quite possibly unique<sup>3</sup> (Gregory J. Jordan Pers. Comm.) and certainly unsurpassed on the Tasmanian Central Plateau. There are, for example, numerous species with disjunct ranges on Halls Island with nearest known populations 10-20 kilometres away. For example, Tasmanian endemics *Athrotaxis selaginoides, Persoonia gunnii, Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* and *Eucalyptus subcrenulata* all have nearest neighbours ranging between 5 and 20kms away (Figure 2). The vegetation of the Halls Island has clearly remained undisturbed for many hundreds of years and possibly much longer while the surrounding vegetation has been subjected to the ravages of fire. In fact, the value of Halls Island as a fire

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Jordan GJ, et al. (2016) "Palaeoendemic plants provide evidence for persistence of open, well-watered vegetation since the Cretaceous". *Global Ecology and Biogeography* **25**, 127–140.

refugia is enhanced by: (1) its relatively large size, being one of the biggest islands in the central plateau and larger than any other known to harbour palaeoendemic rich vegetation; (2) the island has maintained a palaeoendemic rich vegetation that in other parts of the central highlands has been particularly severely impacted by fires<sup>4</sup> leading to the loss of extensive areas of *Athrotaxis cupressoides* rainforests<sup>5</sup>; and (3) its isolation from the 'mainland' which is likely to protect it from fires starting from other parts of the central plateau, a threat that will only increase into the future<sup>6</sup>. The rainforest vegetation Halls Island is already at the margins of rainforest distribution in terms of rainfall (around 1000mm per year according to the North Barker report) and is therefore likely to be subject to years where summer months have less than 50mm of rainfall, which is a strong risk factor for rainforest fires in Tasmania<sup>7</sup>. Any change in management of Halls Island that could increase the risk of fire must be reconsidered.



**Figure 2**. NVA records for four species A. *Athrotaxis selaginoides*, B. *Eucalyptus subcrenulata*, C. *Persoonia gunnii* and D. *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* (Access date 16/04/2018). Halls Island is denoted by the solid black arrow and the nearest known

<sup>5</sup> Holz, Andrés, et al. "Effects of high-severity fire drove the population collapse of the subalpine Tasmanian endemic conifer Athrotaxis cupressoides." *Global change biology* 21.1 (2015): 445-458
 <sup>6</sup> Grose M, Fox-Hughes P, Harris RB, Bindoff N (2014) Changes to the drivers of fireweather with a warming

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Marris, E. (2016) Blazes threaten iconic trees: as Tasmanian climate warms, bushfires are encroaching on forest ecosystems that date back more than 180 million years. *Nature*, **530**, 137–139.

climate – a case study of southeast Tasmania. ClimaticChange, 124, 1–15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Styger, J. K., and Jamie B. Kirkpatrick. "Less than 50 millimetres of rainfall in the previous month predicts fire in Tasmanian rainforest." *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*. Vol. 149. 2015.

record of each species by a bold asterix. The nearest known NVA record for each of these species is approximately: (A) 7kms for *A. selaginoides*-although the nearest significant population is likely to be at Lake Ball approx. 30kms away (B). *E. subcrenulata* approximately 9.3kms away near Lake Charles; (C) *Persoonia gunnii* 16.75kms away, near the Pine Valley- Overland Track junction and (D) *P. aspleniifolius* approx. 5.4kms away, with a record from an Island in Lake Nive, which is also a likely to be an important fire refugia.

## Palaeoendemism on Halls Island

The unique flora of Halls Island is also highlighted by the comparatively large number of palaeoendemic species that can be found growing there. Palaeoendemic species are loosely defined as ancient, with geographically restricted distributions due to considerable historical and contemporary selection pressures<sup>8</sup>. Palaeoendemic species persisting on Halls Island include: Pherosphaera hookeriana, Athrotaxis cupressoides, Athrotaxis selaginoides Diselma archeri, Bellendena montana, Tasmannia lanceolata, Orites sp. and Planocarpa sp. The primary selection pressure driving the extant distribution of these species is a drying climate and increased incidence of fire. The ability of fire to shape the distribution of plant species is well documented. Indeed, many of the palaeoendemic species listed above exhibit poor recovery post fire, and their persistence on Halls Island indicates the importance of this fire refugia. As such, it is highly likely that Halls Island will contain unique genetic diversity that has been extirpated from much of the Tasmanian Central Plateau. This information would offer a snapshot into the vegetation history of the central plateau, and the genetic legacy of the last 500-1000 years is potentially preserved in this fire refuge. Therefore, any development in this area should be avoided as the risks associated with increased visitation and fire are far too great to be ignored.

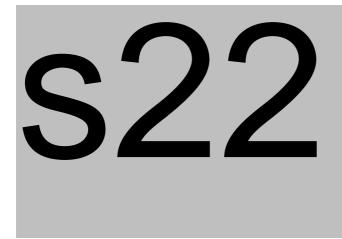
#### Summary

There is no doubt that the unprecedented re-zoning and construction of infrastructure in this infrequently visited and remote part of the Tasmanian WHA will

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Mokany, K., et al (2017) "Past, present and future refugia for Tasmania's palaeoendemic flora". *Journal of Biogeography*, 44, 1537-1546.

have a detrimental effect on the unique flora of Halls Island. Of greatest concern is the impact of fire linked to increased visitation and the construction of infrastructure on Halls Island including a network of boardwalks. Regardless of mitigation strategies proposed, the proposed development will increase the risk of Halls Island experiencing a catastrophic fire event and will also increase the risk of weed species establishing or pathogens such as root rot *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Taken together, these risks are too great to allow the commercial development of Halls Island and alternative sites for this development outside of the WHA should be strongly considered or the proposal abandoned altogether.

## Expertise



Referrals Gateway,

Please find attached TNPA comment on this referral.

If the Reserve Activity Assessment for this proposal is to be released I would appreciate a copy and I expect to be able to provide supplementary comment if relevant.

Nick.





An independent Voice for Tasmania's Parks

17 April 2018

Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601

# EPBC 2018/8177

# Halls Island – Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

The supporting information provided in this referral is inadequate to support the assertion (referral 2.1.2) that the impact of this proposal on world heritage values is not significant, in fact it suggests the contrary.

The referral (final point in 2.1.1) acknowledges 'potential impacts on wilderness character'. No supporting information is provided and it does not reference the (confidential) Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) so it appears that no proper assessment of impacts on wilderness character is contained in the RAA, despite this evaluation being an explicit requirement of the RAA guidelines. The 2016 TWWHA Management Plan also requires consideration of impacts on wilderness values and this is the focus of one of the World Heritage Committee's requests (see below).

# The importance of wilderness

The 1989 nomination of the Tasmanian Wilderness (note the inclusion of 'wilderness' in the name of the property) contains the following statement:

It is this wilderness quality which underpins the success of the area in meeting all four criteria as a natural property and which is the foundation for the maintenance of the integrity of both the natural and cultural values which are displayed.

The statement of Outstanding Universal Value (Dept of E&E website) includes the following:

The landscape of the Tasmanian Wilderness has exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance ... including ... the <u>relatively undisturbed</u> nature of the property.

The World Heritage Committee request of 2015:

- 5. Also urges the State Party to review the proposed new management plan for the property to ensure that it provides adequate protection for its OUV, including:
  - a) Recognition of wilderness character of the property as one of its key values and as being fundamental for its management,
  - b) Recognition of the cultural attributes of OUV, as also fundamental for its management,
  - c) Establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, including its wilderness character and cultural attributes;

It is therefore imperative that consideration of the impact of this proposal on world heritage values includes a detailed consideration of the impacts of both the proposed on-ground infrastructure/operations and the helicopter operations on "wilderness value". This does not appear to have been provided in the RAA so the Australian Government must require quantitative modelling and mapping (as described below) to inform its assessment.

# **Consideration of wilderness-related issues**

It is important to be aware that there is no direct relationship between the Wilderness Zone (delineated in the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan) and the actual location of areas with high Wilderness Value. A simple comparison of the zoning (plan p. 71-73) and Wilderness Value (plan p. 176) maps shows this. The EPBC referral (1.2.3 & 1.2.4) discussion of the helicopter flight path mentions that it avoids the TWWHA Wilderness Zone with the implication that therefore there is no impact on wilderness. This suggests that the Wilderness Zone is being used incorrectly as a surrogate for wilderness or wilderness value.

The only way to assess potential impact of the proposal on "wilderness value" is to undertake quantitative modelling and mapping, and the management plan alludes to this in Section 8.2 (Wilderness Values).

The referral (1.15.1) foreshadows additional walking routes as part of Stage 2 of the proposal (current referral relates only to Stage 1) including routes to Mt Oana which is located in the Wilderness Zone. These need to be included in the wilderness mapping if the full impact of the proposal is to be appreciated.

The TNPA considers this proposal to be unacceptable because its impact on wilderness and, hence, on world heritage values is significant. This should be confirmed by quantitative modelling and mapping of its impact on "wilderness value".

The referral (Appendix A) references the RAA. It is clearly an integral part of the supporting documentation and the TNPA requests its immediate public release.

Yours sincerely.

From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:Comment on proposal 2018/8177 Halls Island Standing CampDate:Tuesday, 17 April 2018 4:05:03 PMAttachments:image001.pngHalls Island submission.pdf

#### Good afternoon

Please find attached submission regarding the proposed development on Halls Island.

We look forward to your response.

Regard

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13 April 2018

Australian Government, Department of the Environment and Energy Public comment Ref. No. 2018/8177 – Application for development of tourism and recreation operation on Halls Island, Lake Malbena, Tasmania by Wild Drake Pty Ltd

To whom it may concern:

We are writing this letter as a public comment to the proposed development on Halls Island by Wild Drake Pty Ltd. This island is an important part of the eco system within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, and as such should be protected from increased visitation that, should this be allowed to incur, will ultimately have a significant on the island environment and its surrounding areas.

We both have visited this island in the capacity of bushwalkers and it is not an easy place to visit. Access is traditionally by foot and often takes visitors a day or more to reach. This in itself protects the island from over visitation.

We have a number of concerns over the proposed development, which are as follows:

- 1. The location of the development is within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. The 'chipping' away with developments like this, will lead to the over exploitation of National Parks and associated World Heritage Areas (WHA) to the extent that natural, cultural and environmental values will be compromised.
- 2. The motive for this development is for profit and for the exclusive use of a limited number of visitors at the 'top end of the market.' The proponents operate a fly fishing guided tour business and the proposal aligns with what they know and not on any philanthropic desire to interpret the nature of the island and surrounding areas.
- 3. The scale of the development is out of context with the size of the island. It is understood that the current lease is 40m2, which is predominantly the site on which the hut built by Reg Hall sits. The size of the proposed development is 800m2. The size of the island is not stated in the proposed development and we would argue that the island is not large in relative terms. With areas not available for buildings, or other built infrastructure due to sensitivities noted in the flora and fauna assessments or are not suitable geo-technically, the scale of the proposed development could be quite intrusive and make a relatively big impact both physically and visually.

Australian Government, Department of the Environment and Energy 13 April 2018 Page 2

- 4. The access to Halls Island will become restrictive. National Parks are for all to access and should not be exploited only for the benefit of wealthy tourists. This development seems to be aimed at the well healed fly fishing community, thinly veiled under the guise of providing an experience for 'kayaking, hill-walking, bushwalking, cultural interpretation, wildlife viewing, and the chance to participate in choreographed 'citizen-science' style field trips with guest experts in the fields of science, art and culture'.
- 5. Although the proponent has provided evidence of consultation, it appears to be limited and it is unknown to what extent those consulted agree or disagree with the proposed development. It is also not known when this consultation took place. It is known that the proponents have changed their vision significantly over the years from a foot access with standing camp platforms experience to a top of the line experience with helicopter access and prefabricated huts. What have the consulted agreed with? The simpler vision or the grander vision which has far greater environmental impacts?

Including consultation with the Launceston Walking Club may also be a bias. There are three large bushwalking clubs within Tasmania and arguably the largest in Hobart could have the greatest number of field trips to Halls Island and the hut built by Reg Hall. There is also a Tasmanian Bushwalking Federation which is the peak body representing the recreational interest of all bushwalking clubs. This office was not consulted in the proposal.

6. The flora and fauna habitats assessment is not in context with the surrounding National Parks or World Heritage Values. It is understood that the surrounding bush area to the fringes of Lake Malbena has been impacted by fire and that the flora on Halls Island is a remnant population that has been untouched by fire and therefore is a significant baseline for the surrounding National Park area. The proposal also includes jetty, but the extent to which this will impact on the marine environment of the lake is unknown. Although it is understood that the lake is occupied by trout, it is possible that with current populations there may be some co-existence with Tasmanian native fish species such as galaxias. Has there been any sensitivity analysis done on this?

The jetty is also based on the southern edge of the island where there are threatened fauna species – refer to Figure 4 of the Flora and Fauna Assessment by North Barker. Any water based activity along this edge will have some impact on the flora species which fringe the southern edge of the island.

7. Access to the island by helicopter is not appropriate for a National Park area. Despite some evidence that the flight path or corridor has no impact on the Wedgetail eagle nest sites, the question remains will the foraging range of the wedgetail and other birdlife be factored into flight path considerations. We have personally witnessed trout being taken by Wedgetail eagles in full flight on other lakes in the Central Plateau area.

The noise of helicopter operations is also excessive to the values of a National Park and World Heritage Area. Traditional access has been by land taking two days via Lake Ina or the Gowan Brae Road. By this necessity, access has been restricted to those who value the natural aspects of the area or to those who seek more remote waters for fishing. Access by this means has had a very low impact on the environment. Helicopters will intrude and significantly cut across this ambience.

The use of helicopters for the works and, it is assumed for the collection of bio-waste, are also not factored into the helicopter traffic over the area.

- 8. The proposal offers no other alternatives to the proposed activity. It is centric on the lease that is held by the proponents. There are plenty of other lakes in the Central Plateau Area which are outside of the WHA and which could offer the same remote and exclusive experience that is proposed.
- 9. The island is noted in the application as a leasehold. It is understood from the Tasmanian Government map of Crown Land leases on the Land Information System Tasmania (LIST) that it is only the immediate surroundings of the hut that is leased and the hut is regards as a private building. If the status of this has changed, it is not known by the public, and it would raise the question as to why such a large area and an island has been leased which is within a National Park and WHA. This may set a dangerous environmental precedent. Would the government allow the lease of other such islands in National Parks such as, Schouten Island or Maria Island in Tasmanian or reserved islands in the Barrier Reef?
- 10. It is noted under section 1.11 of the application that the commencement date is as early as May this year, but the span of the work is over 20 years. If works are staggered over this timeframe, is there a greater likelihood that repeated works will cause further environmental damage. Helicopter traffic, for example, will increase.
- 11. The proponent outlines future activities in developing walking tracks into the area, but has given no indication as to whether they have an in principle agreement over access through privately owned land. The area is landlocked by neighbouring land managers and owners in the Tasmanian Land Conservancy and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre.

We trust that our feedback via the public comment process will be duly considered.

Sincerely,

s22

| From:    | s22                               |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals                    |
| Subject: | Helicopters in World Heritage     |
| Date:    | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 3:40:10 PM |

#### Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my concern of the recent proposal to allow commercial helicopter trips to operate in the Tasmanian WHA. Firstly I am not a lawyer or expert in politics but just an average Joe who is passionate about the Western Lakes. As a keen angler and bushwalker that uses the area quite frequently I have been worried for some time about this area being affected by this type of activity. The Western Lakes as you may be aware is valued due to it's remoteness despite covering a relatively small area. Currently there is access from most angles and I am a firm believer that there are options for everyone depending on time restrictions and mobility. Why take that reward of solitude away from someone who wants to put in the effort to escape everyday life?? If a commercial operation was to start by flying wealthy customers into the area, they could potentially land in front of some poor soul who has carried a pack for 6 hrs to his destination. I'm sure his experience would be severely affected If this was to take place. I am writing from a fly fisherman's point of view as it is my main reason for visiting this special place but I'm sure many bushwalkers would feel the same. The proposal at Lake Malbena does not affect me "personally" as I havnt been there but my question is where does it all stop?? Surely someone else will want their piece of the pie?? If we allow one operation to get off the ground I believe it will be a slippery slope from there on in. Before we know it there will be no such thing as a remote Western Lakes experience as the whole reason for being there will be diminished. We go here to escape the developed world!! You can walk across it in a day if you like!! I see there is a dollar to be made and I feel this potential for tourism and a quick buck has many forgetting what the place is about. I can guarantee someone who has forked out a few dollars to be carried in will not respect and look after the area like old mate with the backpack. In my opinion we need to rid ourselves of this "everyone gets a prize" approach and leave places like this to the people who want to put in the effort to see these wonderful spots. I would like to think I can walk in with my children in one day and have them experience a place with no phone reception, no helicopters, no boardwalks and no ticket office to get in. I fear the local bushwalkers and fisherman will be screwed over and the preference given to a group of rich nobodys with a fat back pocket. Locations such as these are becoming much harder to find in this day and age but once it's going to be too late.



Anglers Alliance Tasmania is the peak body that represents some 27,000 licenced freshwater anglers, and has received numerous representations from clubs and individuals objecting to the above proposal and submits the following objections -

- Helicopter access would have a significant impact on the wilderness values of remoteness, silence and connectivity to nature that have been traditionally enjoyed in the area by bushwalkers and bushwalking anglers. This impact would extend over and beyond the considerable geographical area of the flight path.
- The outstanding natural values of the wilderness would be significantly impacted by the noise and visual intrusion of a large six seater helicopter.
- The proposal seems to be incomplete with the Parks and Wildlife Service RAA not completed.
- There are no plans for the proposed building structures submitted with the proposal, making it impossible to to gauge their visual impact.

Anglers Alliance Tasmania submits that the proposal is incomplete with insufficient information to enable comment to be properly made or completed.

# s22

Anglers Alliance Tasmania

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GPO BOX 963, HOBART TAS 7001 Phone: 0428 84 1166 Email: <u>anglersalliance@gmail.com</u> Web: <u>www.anglersalliance.org.au</u>



ABN 73 327 229 428

From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:EPBC Referral Halls Island 2018/8177Date:Tuesday, 17 April 2018 12:53:51 PMAttachments:NPWAC Hall"s Island.docx

Please find attached a submission on the above referral from the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council Tasmania in response to the above referral.



# NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE ADVISORY COUNCIL (NPWAC) GPO Box 1751, Hobart, Tasmania

Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment

epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au

#### SUBMISSION REGARDING WILD DRAKE PTY LTD 2018/8177 Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

The National Parks and Wildlife Council (NPWAC) has reviewed the Hall's Island proposal out-ofsession and is unable to support this project as it is currently presented for the following reasons:

- The buildings and tracks do not conform to the zoning prescriptions, which were designed to protect world and national heritage values and are likely to have significant potential impacts on WHA values.
- The 2016 TWWHA Management Plan permits huts only in the Visitor Services or Recreation Zones. The proposal to construct "multiple huts" (described as such by the proponent in the EPBC referral) within the Self-Reliant Recreation Zone is not permitted. (NPWAC notes that the existing hut was present on the Island prior to the declaration of the TWWHA).
- The proponent presents these structures as a "standing camp". NPWAC notes that while the definition of a standing camp is yet to be finally resolved, the three accommodation and one communal huts proposed are substantial structures, designed to be erected semi-permanently at best and do not meet the general perception of a "standing camp".
- The cumulative impact of helicopter flights on world heritage values will be considerable, particularly noting the impact of noise on the outstanding natural aesthetic value of the wilderness area in which it is situated. There is also the potential impact of these helicopter flight paths on endangered fauna.

#### Other issues with the proposal are:

- The proponent has submitted a proposal and RAA for Stage 1 of the proposed project but refers to Stage 2 several times, but Stage 2 is not included in the current RAA assessment. It would be a more realistic approach if the complete proposal, noting the staged approach, was submitted for approval, to enable an assessment of the cumulative effects of the project.
- NPWAC are concerned about the cumulative impacts of infrastructure and visitors to this area. Experimental trials of walker numbers have been carried out on the Central Plateau and alpine areas in the Western Arthurs. The sustainable carrying capacity is very low pads were shown to form with as little as 30-100 passes per year. (Constructing a boardwalk through the EPBC listed Sphagnum (MSP) community does not equate to 'avoiding' MSP).
- Monitoring of impacts of the proposed activities is raised several times in the RAA by the proponent. There is no clear indication of the objectives/methods/timeframes of the various monitoring projects, the thresholds for limits of acceptable change, nor who will undertake and analyse the monitoring and who will pay for it.
- The recreational fishers in Tasmania have traditionally been opposed to this type of development and in particular, helicopter access to the wild fishery.
- It is not clear how much consultation has been held with the Aboriginal community over the proposal to visit the Mary Tarn cultural site.
- NPWAC has commented previously, that contentious projects such as this should not be considered until there is an agreed framework to guide assessment. PWS is only in the initial stages of a Tourism Management Plan for the TWWHA that should guide such assessments.

SZ7 NPWAC

17 April 2018

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| From:        | s22  |
|--------------|--|
| To:          | EPBC Referrals                               |
| Subject:     | Comment on EPBC Referral No. 2018/8177       |
| Date:        | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 10:23:28 AM           |
| Attachments: | Comment to EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177.docx |

Re: EPBC Referral No. 2018/8177

I would like my comments in the attached word document to be considered in the assessment of EPBC No. 2018/8177 Case Title Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island

Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

Although I would be happy to be contacted by EPBC, I do not want my contact details to be publicly available, should the actual comments be published in whatever form at some future date.

My contact details are:



I would appreciate confirmation via email that these comments have been received. Please let me know if there are any issues with opening the document.

Regards **s22** 

#### EPBC Reference No. 2018/8177

WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I wish to comment on the proposed establishment of a standing camp and associated infrastructure on Halls Island at Lake Malbena in the Tasmanian World Heritage Area.

The proponent suggests that the area has been significantly impacted by previous human activity and that this impact could be used as justification for further development on the island and in the surrounding area.

The present signs of human activity on Halls Island and surrounding areas consist of the following:

- a small 4 metre x 4 metre, 2-bunk hut discretely positioned on Halls Island
- a single person-width foot track approximately 100 metres long links the hut site to a natural rock promontory on the southern shore of the island
- present access to Lake Malbena consists of approximately 450 metres of remnant, overgrown vehicle track which goes from a point near the north-western end of Olive Lagoon to the top of the ridge, south-east of Doughboys Hill.
- from here, there is an intermittent single person-width foot track extending westward to the western end of Lake Loretta. There is no visible foot tracking beyond this point.

The argument that this present, small level of human activity on Halls Island and surrounding areas could justify the building of what effectively are four permanent additional buildings, board walks, waste water treatment infrastructure, helipad and foot tracks in the area is quite ridiculous.

The proponent suggests approximately 30 trips a year will be made to the island by clients. The helicopter used for transporting these visiting groups would fly back to Derwent Bridge and then return to pick the group up some days later. This means as many as four flights per group. This translates into as many as 120 flights per year just for client transport alone. Helicopters would also be needed for servicing the building complex e.g. replacing gas cylinders, removing waste, and food supply.

Helicopter use in the Western Lakes – Walls of Jerusalem National Park is extremely contentious. The present state government seems to think that a comparison can be made between helicopter usage in this area and that as carried out in much larger remote areas such as New Zealand and Canada.

Bushwalking and angling activities in the Western Lakes and Walls of Jerusalem National Park are concentrated in an area only approximately 20 kilometres by 30 kilometres. The sound impact of helicopters overflying and landing/taking off is very evident from as much as 10 kilometres from where the aircraft is operating. This can have a very negative impact on the perception of solitude and wilderness concepts for ground-based individuals.

s22

#### EPBC Reference No. 2018/8177

WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

Helicopters are currently used in the WHA for rescue, fire fighting, resupply of huts and other necessary transport requirements. The potential use of helicopters in this area for transporting groups involved in recreational activities represents a most concerning precedent, in my opinion, as there is at present no suggestion as to the potential future scale of this activity.

The WHA Management Plan has an appropriately strong emphasis on maintaining and protecting the natural values of the WHA. Halls Island and the surrounding area have undeniably extremely high natural values. For instance, the island supports four different native pine species. This combination cannot be found in the few other small islands located in the Western Lakes. The co-location of a wide variety of vegetation types undamaged by fire, on a 10-hectare island in a wilderness setting, must be unique.

The proponent suggests that tracks could be built to Mount Oana and to a significant Aboriginal Heritage Site. This is presumably a point on the northern shore of Mary Tarn. The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service encourages minimal impact bushwalking techniques in the areas under its management. This applies particularly to areas which are undeveloped and untracked. I don't see how building tracks in the proposed locations, where there are presently no tracks, fits with the minimal impact bushwalking philosophy espoused by the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Previous to the last review of the WHA Management Plan, Halls Island was included in the wilderness zone for the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. Wilderness Zone precludes building standing camps and helicopter access. The current WHA Management Plan has excised Halls Island from the Wilderness Zone to now include it in the Self-Reliant Recreation Zone, which allows standing camp building and helicopter access. This subversion of the management plan can only be seen to have been made to facilitate the establishment of the proposed Halls Island development. This sets an ugly precedent for more 'goal-post changing' alterations to the WHA Management Plan in the future.

Previous planners saw fit to include Halls Island in the Wilderness Zone of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. What has changed?

I cannot see how building the Halls Island development can in any way advance or support the great natural values of the island environment. The only benefit of this development would be financial gain to the proponent and associated service providers. Therefore, I believe that this development cannot be justified, and that it is contrary to the aims of the World Heritage Area concept to protect valuable wilderness areas.

I don't believe that an 'Open for Business' mentality is appropriate for the Tasmanian World Heritage Area.

Finally, I believe that a fully informed, objective decision on the proposed development cannot be made without a site visit.

s22 17 April 2018

| From:    | s22   |
|----------|---|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals                                  |
| Subject: | World Heritage and Western lakes areas Tasmania |
| Date:    | Tuesday, 17 April 2018 7:03:45 AM               |

I am totally against the use of helicopters and commercial huts in the Western lakes by commercial operators.

This area is unique not only in Tasmania but the world.

Being a tour operator I can see the benefits of tourism but this is not the place for these activity's.

You can over develop areas and you will loose a lot of tourists not only to this area but all over Tasmania.

Regards

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|---|---|---|--|--|
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From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:Private Submission, Lake Malbena, TasmaniaDate:Tuesday, 17 April 2018 1:21:47 PMAttachments:Malbena submission.rtf

Please find attached my submission regarding 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

Thank you, **s22** 



April 16, 2018

Departmant of the Environment and Energy via: epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au

#### Submission regarding 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I make this submission to oppose the proposed development.

Does this development proposal satisfy the World Heritage Area Management Plan? If the answer is "No" then the application must be rejected.

Wilderness has high value when it is not readily accessable. This is but another example of "*death by a thousand cuts*".

Any anthroplagenic alteration of Tasmania's high value natural asstes must be judged not by the possible short term financial gain for an individual or company but by the long term effects on the environment and biodiversity. In this case, buildings, tracks, pads and helicopter shuttles will have a high impact on these considerations and the amenity for all other users. Lake Melbena in its current condition is already available to fisherman and bushwalkers in a natural and unspoilt state. Let's keep it that way.

I am a Tasmanian resident and a bushwalker.

Yours sincerly,



From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:Referral 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTDDate:Monday, 16 April 2018 10:58:31 PMAttachments:s22 Comment on EPBC Referral Halls Island.pdf

Please find attached my comments recommending assessment of this proposal under the EPBC Act.





#### Comment on EPBC Referral 2018/8177

WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

The proposal should be assessed under the EPBC Act due to potential impacts on matters of national environmental significance, specifically:

- 1. the EPBC-listed **Alpine** *Sphagnum* **bogs and associated fens** endangered ecological community;
- 2. World Heritage Criteria VIII and X, specifically values related to biological evolution in the form of fire-sensitive paleo-endemic flora, including threatened species (*Pherosphaera hookeriana*);
- 3. Wilderness values of the Tasmanian Wilderness WHA.

#### Alpine Sphagnum bogs and associated fens endangered ecological community

The proponent's assertion that there will be no significant impacts on the EPBC-listed Alpine *Sphagnum* bogs and associated fens endangered ecological community is insufficient in detail of mitigation measures. Alpine *Sphagnum* bogs are highly sensitive to fire, hydrological changes, nutrient input and trampling. The proposed development is in close proximity to and upslope from a fine example of this community. Any spillage of liquids during construction or operation of the development (e.g. contaminants such as fire-suppression chemicals (e.g. fire extinguishers) and accidental greywater discharge) could impact the bog community. Any changes to the local hydrology such as interception of rainfall or diversion of runoff associated with the development might impact the bog community. Adequate greywater treatment without polluting either terrestrial or freshwater ecosystems will be extremely challenging given the small size of Halls Island and the abundance of sensitive vegetation communities.

#### **World Heritage values**

Halls Island supports significant populations of the endemic conifer *Pherosphaera hookeriana,* which is listed as vulnerable under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*, and fire sensitive rainforest, which is rare in this region of the Central Plateau due to a history of fires in the region. *Pherosphaera* and several other species on Halls Island (e.g. *Nothofagus cunninghamii, Bellendena montana, Tasmannia lanceolata, Diselma archeri, Athrotaxis* spp.) are ancient relictual Gondwanan species which, individually and as a vegetation community, represent evolutionary processes of outstanding universal value.

The four species of paleo-endemic conifers are particularly vulnerable to fire. Consequently, the distribution of these species is very restricted in the southern and eastern parts of the Central Plateau, which has been subject to frequent and widespread fires. Halls Island represents a significant refuge for these fire sensitive species in this region. Increased visitation to Halls Island will increase the risk of fire.

#### Wilderness quality

Contrary to the proponent's claim, the construction and presence of private infrastructure and the frequent operation of helicopters will have significant impacts on the remote wilderness values of the TWWHA at Lake Malbena and anywhere within visual or audible range of the flight path.

#### **Alternative locations**

Based on the above matters of national and international significance, the proposed location of this development is not acceptable. Indeed, Halls Island is one of the most environmentally sensitive locations in the southern half of the Central Plateau. There are many remote lakes in the Tasmanian highlands outside of the TWWHA and with far less sensitive ecosystems which could provide this kind of tourism development.

#### **Relevant expertise**



Sincerely,

s22

16/4/2018

| From:    | s22                                    |
|----------|--|
| To:      | EPBC Referrals                         |
| Subject: | EPBC referral 2018/8177 public comment |
| Date:    | Monday, 16 April 2018 10:53:08 PM      |

#### Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I only learned on this proposal today, and I understand the period for public comment ends today.

I believe the specifics of this development, in particular the proposed helicopter flights into Lake Malbena are in conflict with the heritage values of the area. To quote from the proponent's own marketing material of years past, "We believe one of the greatest parts of the Western lakes fishery is the remoteness, and the need to use your own energy and initiative to get there" [Western Lanes campouts - sustainable eco-tourism into the future, June 21st 2010 by Daniel Hackett, RiverFly Tasmania].

In my opinion the following statement in the proponent's referral is deliberately misleading "Haflinger 4wd's, horses and floatplanes have all been used regularly as means of access during the past sixty years." These means of access may have been used in the past (i.e. pre-1984), however to my knowledge these means of access have not been used in recent years (i.e the last 30+ years).

I regularly walk in parts of the TWWHA (Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area), and most recently walked in the western lakes region 7-9 April 2018. I support responsible, low-impact development in and around our national parks. However intrusions by helicopters are already having a detrimental impact on the wilderness values I and many others hold dear. I therefore register my objection to this proposal.

Best Regards,



Dear Sir or Madam

Please find enclosed my submission regarding the proposal to commercialise the Lake Malbena Halls Island area.

Kind regards

s22

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

s22

Via email April 16, 2018

Department of Environment and Energy

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### Submission regarding 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

I am writing to make a submission opposing the proposed development on Halls Island and associated helipad and track development on the shores of Lake Malbena. I spent the first 27 years of my life in Tasmania before moving to Alice Springs. I visit Tasmania at least 4 times per year and have been bushwalking in Tasmania for 45 years.

I have had the pleasure of walking to Lake Malbena via Mt Ida several years ago. It was a beautiful walk surrounded by the brilliant isolation and quiet of the wilderness. To sully such an experience with a loud and ostentatious display of civilisation I believe is not congruent with the Wilderness Heritage values successive Tasmanian Governments have endorsed and emphasised in various Tourism campaigns. To mar this unique ecosystem in a time of worldwide environmental degradation and sabotage would deprive future generations of this experience. It is incumbent upon this privileged generation to ensure this legacy is preserved for all our grandchildren.

For me the loss of access is equivalent to the loss of heritage values. The tight wording of the proposal and application does not suggest that it will be easy for "regular visitors" other than "customers" to actually gain access to these areas. Those with a "special interest in European cultural history of the island" represent an even more discrete and small group of individuals. The result of this stringent application process is that it leaves the Company with unfettered control of access to this area. Such control seems an overreach for a private company to gatekeep this wilderness environment in what appears to be a non-transparent process that lacks any independent oversight or obvious appeal process.

There are several concerns that in my opinion warrant opposition to the proposal:

- 1. The project will have a lasting and significant impact on:
  - The amenity of other users including fishermen and bushwalkers because of the use of helicopters for construction, servicing and guest transfer. It is a wilderness area helicopter flights will destroy the very thing that the submission says it wants people to experience.
  - The wilderness values of the area.
  - Contribute to the acceleration of lost heritage as it negatively impacts on biodiversity
- 2. The Parks and Wildlife Assessment (RAA), upon which the referral under EPBC heavily relies has been withheld, making it impossible for the public to determine whether that project will not indeed have a significant and deleterious effect on the environment. It is wise and prudent to ensure an open process of consultation with all parties including the wider public occurs. Therefore, in my opinion, it is imperative that the consultation over the referral should be halted, the RAA released and consultation commenced.
- 3. Helicopter access from Launceston and or Hobart is not reported, and it is unlikely that all guests will arrive via Derwent Bridge (2 hr drive from Hobart, longer from Launceston). Given this commercial proposal is aimed at 'the very top end of the

market' helicopter access is likely to be quite significant out of Launceston (proponents home base) and Hobart. We have already seen the negative publicity that Cruise ships venturing into Wineglass Bay and helicopter flights over Freycinet have had on the reputation of Tasmania as a Wilderness destination.

- 4. Finally, I believe the project as outlined breaches the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan for two reasons:
  - It is not a standing camp, but a built commercial development comprising 'buildings' and a central "hut', these are prohibited in the zone covering Lake Malbena
  - Tracks and boardwalk are prohibited in the self-reliant recreation zone of the TWWHA Management Plan.

I look forward to your feedback.

Please notify this author of receipt of this submission.

Yours Sincerely

s22

From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:public comment re 2018/8177Date:Monday, 16 April 2018 8:04:56 PMAttachments:EPBC Submission april2018.docx

Please find attached

Regards

s22

Submission In Regard To: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena,

# 2018/8177



Tasmanians should treasure their unique national parks and wilderness world heritage areas. Treasuring our national parks and wilderness world heritage areas requires a strong belief in their intrinsic value and hence our responsibility, as stewards, to ensure they remain valued, protected and respected for future generations. It is with this sense that I write this submission. I do not propose to provide comment in great detail to the proponent's proposal but merely to make to make the following key points:

- This is the first time that helicopters will be permitted to land in Tasmania's remote world heritage area for routine access by tourists. The environmental impact needs to be rigorously assessed, the Tasmanian community consulted and the results made accessible to the Tasmanian public.
- The proponent indicates he has a lease over the entirety of Halls Island in contradiction to the Tasmanian Governments own LIST data which indicates a lease area of approximately 36 m2. The status of the leasehold needs immediate clarification.
- The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Risk Assessment has not been made available to the Tasmanian public. It can only be sought by a Right to Freedom of Information request which currently takes several months to be processed / released reinforcing the community opinion that the current Tasmanian state government does things in secret largely to benefit "mates". (I read with interest the article in in todays The Mercury newspaper (Thurs 12 April) "Shutting the Doors of Freedom" by Associate Professor Rick Snell who writes that in Tasmania 'twenty seven years of high expectations about open government have failed and continue to yield a poor harvest year after year'
- The deadline date should be extended to allow pursual of answers to the above three questions.
- High end accommodation, supporting facilities and tourists on Halls Island must not be allowed as the risk of degradation, intrusion into by people and consequent destruction of the fragile sphagnum moss ecosystem and other threated species is too high.
- The proponent indicates non powered water craft will be used. There is no indication of jetties or landings so how will the risk of erosion or damage to the lake shore be controlled? How will less mobile tourists enter and exit non powered water craft?
- Stage 2 proposes construction of tracks where not even footpads exist today and where aboriginal heritage remains un disturbed.
- The Tasmanian community strongly responded to the proposed amendments to the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan* in 2015 with over 7,000 submissions forwarded; the majority not supportive of the changes. Sadly many of those changes came to fruition in the current Management Plan (2016) which has seen significant watering down of the laws and regulations protecting our world heritage areas. Under the original plan this development **would not** have been allowed. The reclassification of this area from a wilderness zone to a self reliant recreation zone allowing for structures and commercial air craft landings is appalling (I can think of no other word). This renaming to suit Government policy, enable tourism developments and the privatisation of public assets to the highest bidder or a perceived 'mate' etc only serves to further devalue and erode the value of wilderness. Devaluing brings with it the real risk of exploitation and with it the slippery slope of more and more exploitation and commercial developments. In the end Tasmania will destroy the very things that makes our

national parks and world heritage areas special. Protection should be strengthened not weakened. At the very least built tourism infrastructure and developments must remain outside the world heritage boundaries.

- I remain strongly concerned that the expressions of interest process for development in Tasmania's national parks and world heritage areas are being conducted in secret and information deliberately with-held from the public. These proposals, their assessment criteria, their assessment methodology and risk assessments are not being made transparent to Tasmanian's. A responsible, open and accountable government would deem this a democratic essential.
- I am opposed to the proponent's proposal to construct a luxury camp on Halls island in Lake Malbena, with helicopter access, within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. My opposition also extends to the proponent's stage 2. Such developments do not hold with the values of protecting our cherished and unique world heritage areas.

Submitted by:



From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:Submission opposing 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls<br/>Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, TasDate:Monday, 16 April 2018 5:40:59 PMAttachments:100418 Malbena submission bw.docx

Hi

Please confirm receipt of this submission

Regards



Department of Environment and Energy

Dear Sir/Madam,

### Submission regarding 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I am writing to make a submission opposing the proposed development on Halls Island and associated helipad and track development on the shores of Lake Malbena. I am a Tasmanian resident, a visitor to the area as a bushwalker.

There are a number of concerns that I believe mean the submission should be opposed.

- 1. The Parks and Wildlife Assessment (RAA), upon which the referral under EPBC heavily relies has been withheld, making it impossible for the public to determine that project will not have a significant impact on matters of environmental significance. The consultation over the referral should be halted, the RAA released and consultation commenced.
- 2. The project will have a significant impact including on:
  - The amenity of other users including fishermen and bushwalkers because of the use of helicopters for construction, servicing and guest transfer. It is a wilderness area helicopter flights will destroy the very thing that the submission says it wants people to experience.
  - The wilderness values of the area.
- 3. Helicopter access from Launceston and or Hobart is not reported and it is inconceivable that all guests will arrive via Derwent Bridge (2 hr drive from Hobart, longer from Launceston). Given this is aimed at 'the very top end of the market' helicopter access is likely to be significant out of Launceston (proponents home base) and Hobart
- 4. Helicopter access to the area is specifically restricted by the "Fly Neighbourly advice"
  - Reports from the Parks and Wildlife Department specifically restrict air traffic referring to an arrangement with local flight and charter operators to reduce impact the "Fly Neighbourly Advice" Links to information and maps below:
    - i. http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/file.aspx?id=6528
    - ii. http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/file.aspx?id=7090
- 5. The project breaches the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan because:
  - It is not a standing camp, but a built commercial development comprising 'buildings' and a central "hut', these are prohibited in the zone covering Lake Malbena
  - Tracks and boardwalk are prohibited in the self reliant recreation zone of the TWWHA Management Plan
- 6. The cumulative impacts of the proposal, including Stage 2 tracks to Mt Oana and 'any additional walking routes' should be reported as part of the same referral

Please advise that this has been received.

Regards, s47F

| From:        | s22          |                                    |
|--------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| To:          | EPBC Referra | ls                                 |
| Subject:     | EPBC Numbe   | r 2018/8177 Halls, Island Tasmania |
| Date:        | Monday, 16 A | April 2018 2:43:38 PM              |
| Attachments: | PastedGraphi | c-1.png                            |

To whom it may concern,

I have been following the proposal of the Halls Island (EPBC Number 2018/8177 Halls, Island Tasmania) development for some time and would like to voice my concerns.

Initially the project was approved as a "Standing Camp" under the Tasmanian Governments EOI process. It has since developed into a number of permanent structures with boardwalks and a helipad used to shuttle guests and deliver supplies.

A statement from the tourism operators (RiverFly 1864) own website in 2012 outlines clear opposition to heli fishing and the building of private accomodation.

### **Re-enforcing the World Heritage Area values**

As we work towards environmental best practice, there are a few things that we definitely won't be doing:

1. We will not be applying to fly customers into the Western Lakes. We believe that one of the greatest parts of the Western Lakes fishery is the remoteness, and the need to use your own energy and initiative to get there. This remoteness and solitude is further protected by the WHA Management Plan, which actually prohibits the use of helicopters to take anglers in/out of the WHA.

2. We will not be building a private hut or lodge! One of the great enjoyments of our Western Lakes campouts is indeed the camping. In a world full of stuffy-office blocks and hotel rooms filled with recycled air, we can see the value and appeal of sleeping under the canvas. As such, our camp will remain as just that – a tent camp utilizing 2-3 man canvas tents for accommodation. To ensure these values are protected in the Western Lakes, the WHA actually prohibits the building of private huts or lodges in the World Heritage Area.

sourced from:

https://web.archive.org/web/20100624045300/http://riverfly.com.au:80/western-lakescampouts-sustainable-eco-tourism-into-the-future/

The fact that Lake Malbena was excised from the TWWHA, even though it sits right in the middle of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, should not mean that private operators have the green light to develop infrastructure that goes against TWWHA management plans. The island is also home to a number of threatened flora, some endemic to Tasmania , and are directly under threat from the proposed development as seen on the LIST Map layer showing rare/endemeic trees. It is naive to think that any proposed development would not have an impact on an ecosystem, particularly an island that has been largely exempt from bushfire.



We were lucky enough to spend 4 days in this area over Easter and were delighted by the number of wedge tailed eagles and other native animals that were present in the area. We will be returning in late May as part of the Where Where Wedgie Survey, a large scale survey designed to estimate the number of Tasmanian Wedge Tail Eagles left in the wild https://naturetrackers.com.au/about.php

The proposed helicopter path is said to avoid known eagle areas but I would like to see the outcome of the survey in May to be sure that these areas are eagle free.

I am in no way opposed to the use of helicopters to service existing huts, track building and repairs, emergency use or fire management but I am fundamentally opposed to the use helicopters to shuttle patrons to and from areas that are already accessible by foot. I believe approving this development will open the door for other tourism operators to apply for similar projects that go against the TWWHA management plan and are directly against the wilderness image that Tasmania is internationally known for.

Regards,

s22

University of Tasmania Electronic Communications Policy (December, 2014).

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| From:        | s22   |
|--------------|---|
| To:          | EPBC Referrals  |
| Subject:     | Fwd: [Fwd: North West Walking Club"s objection to 2018/8177 Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Halls Island Standing<br>Camp, Lake Malbena] |
| Date:        | Monday, 16 April 2018 1:17:59 PM  |
| Attachments: | 2018-04-16 NWWC objection to 2018 8177 Wild DrakeLake Malbena proposal.pdf  |

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached the North West Walking Club's objection to 2018/8177 Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena

Please email or phone me if you have any queries.

Regards S22



North West Walking Club Inc PO Box 107, Ulverstone 7315 s22

16 April 2018

Department of the Environment and Energy epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

The North West Walking Club objects to and opposes the proposed development on Halls Island Lake Malbena.

The proposed development degrades the heritage values of Halls Island & Lake Malbena.

The buildings and standing camp infrastructure proposed to be built is over an existing open grassy space traditionally used for camping by bushwalkers and fishermen. There are no other suitable camping areas on Halls Island. The clear impact of the proposal is that the traditional users, bushwalkers and fisherman, will be excluded from camping on Halls Island. The traditional bushwalking & fishing camping heritage on Halls Island will be lost.

Yours faithfully a



North West Walking Club

| From:        | s22                                    |
|--------------|--|
| То:          | EPBC Referrals                         |
| Cc:          | s22                                    |
| Subject:     | 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD           |
| Date:        | Monday, 16 April 2018 1:50:50 PM       |
| Attachments: | BWT Submission for Lake Malbena v3.pdf |

Environment Assessment Branch

We have attached our submission for the Lake Malbena - Halls Island Project



Bushwalking Tasmania



bushwalking.tasmania@iinet.net.au

# Bushwalking Tasmania



P.O. BOX 1190 Launceston Tas 7250 or <u>bushwalking.tasmania</u> @iinet.net.au

s22

15<sup>th</sup> April 2018

# SUBMISSION

## 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601 Dear Sir,

Bushwalking Tasmania represents bushwalking in Tasmania. This includes all major walking groups and many individuals. Our interest includes walking in al of Tasmania.

We are seriously concerned about the way this proposal has been made public with almost nil consultation with 'key stakeholders'. We only accidentally came across the issue by word of mouth. We are also concerned about access issues at Lake Malbena, whether for heritage or other reasons. The area has been frequented by members of our various organisations and other walkers for well over a century, and their predecessors. Bushwalking is very much a traditional practice here; ie it is a heritage value in this State.

Allowing only a fortnight to submit is a big ask for consultative bodies, please review this, and make six weeks available in future.

# This project will have a significant impact of environmental and social significance; including no access to appreciate heritage for many.

There are many concerns that we believe makes the project unacceptable including;

- 1. The project breaches the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan because:
  - It is not a standing camp, but a built commercial development comprising 'buildings' and a central "hut', these are prohibited in the zone covering Lake Malbena
  - Tracks and boardwalk are prohibited in the self-reliant recreation zone of the TWWHA Management Plan
  - The TWWHA Management Plan says that: landing sites are to abide by

# Bushwalking Tasmania

the prescriptions for the underlying Zone at each site, i.e. for the self Reliant Recreational Zone no facilities are to be constructed and – no landing sites are to be made available in the wilderness Zone.

We support these prohibitions and prescriptions in this area.

- 2. The project will have a significant impact including on heritage and cultural values:
  - The amenity of other users including bushwalkers and fishermen because of the use of helicopters for construction, servicing and guest transfer. It is a wilderness area – helicopter flights will disrupt the very thing that the submission says it wants people to experience.
  - Those who would normally camp on the island do so very close to the existing hut where the most of the suitable ground exists. The presence and attitude of 'upmarket others' may make customary walkers feel that the 'upmarket others' have an exclusive right to be present. This would be the opposite of the attitude of R Hall, after whom the island is named. Customary use must be protected. (There are few other camping opportunities close to Lake Malbina. With commercial development on the island it is doubtful that the hut or its immediate environs will be available for visitation and / or camping at best a sense of unwanted 'intrusion' is likely.)
  - The island which hosts king billy pine forest/rainforest and peat beds that have been mostly lost or significantly damaged elsewhere on the Central Plateau by fire. A permanent campsite, building works and increased visitation presents risks to this unique and sensitive environment.
- 3. The cumulative impacts of the proposal, including Stage 2 tracks to Mt Oana and 'any additional walking routes' should be reported as part of the same referral.
- 4. The Parks and Wildlife Assessment (RAA), upon which the referral under EPBC heavily relies has been withheld, making it impossible for the public to determine that project will not have a significant impact on matters of environmental significance. The consultation over the referral should be halted, the RAA released and consultation commenced.
- 5. To destroy the wilderness value of this area for the exclusive use by the wealthy is perverse. It is against the public interest and values, particularly the vast majority of the less wealthy.
- 6. Halls hut was built in the 1950's and the area, vessel and hut have been available for public use for some decades. The area was also visited before the hut was built. The Hobart Walking Club gave almost \$100 to Reg Hall's daughter (Elizabeth McQuilkin) to maintain the dinghy for public use in the late 1990's.
- 7. Lake Malbena is very poor fishing.

While trivial access might be permitted "on request", "when appropriate", "for regular past users" (extremely few) and "those with a specific interest in European history" (of which there is none – it is Tasmanian history if referring to the hut), most visitors visit but once or twice to it very worthwhile. The caveats strongly indicate difficulty for "regular visitors" being allowed to visit. To date visitors for specific European history reasons are far fewer

# Bushwalking Tasmania

than for recreational purposes. Essentially as past regular users die out, visitation is compelled to cease except for wealthy clients of the project proponent. This is indeed a perverse restriction of the TWWHA for Tasmanians, and a blatant disregard for bushwalkers who may wish to see the hut, whether for heritage appreciation or an interest in huts.

We are most concerned also that if such a proposal goes ahead it will restrict access to the area that bushwalkers and fishermen have traditionally used. If the project were to proceed (best not), protection of customary walking (heritage), fishing and similar use must be part of the undertaking. We strongly oppose extra rules upon walkers as a result of the project, which has the capacity to attract more persons to the area.

### Conclusion

Traditional use of the Lake Malbena area by Tasmanian bushwalkers will be significantly compromised by this development and so this development is opposed by Bushwalking Tasmania.

Yours sincerely,



From:s22To:EPBC ReferralsSubject:Proposal 2018/8177 Halls Island, TasmaniaDate:Monday, 16 April 2018 11:49:52 AMAttachments:Halls Island submissions22 16April2018.docx

To whom it may concern,

Please find my submission as attached

Regards,

s22

S22

April 16, 2018

Department of Environment and Energy Submission #3133 Halls Island, Tasmania <u>epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au</u>

### Submission Re: Proposal 2018/8177 Halls Island, Tasmania

I am a Tasmanian resident and regularly walk on the Central Plateau area of Tasmania including the areas covered in this proposal.

I oppose the proposed development on Halls Island and associated helipad and track development on the shores of Lake Malbena, to Mt.Oana and the undisclosed location of an aboriginal site.

My concerns include:

- 1. Helicopters
  - Helicopters are **fundamentally inconsistent** with the values of World Heritage and Wilderness experiences and are inconsistent with the objectives of the World Heritage Area Management Plan.
  - Helicopter impact cannot be limited just to the area of the flight path. My experience is that helicopters can be heard over 10's of kilometres across the plateau. Helicopter noise intrudes on and devalues the essence of the experience people seek from going into this area.
  - The proponent suggests a maximum of 48 hours of helicopter time. This appears to be inconsistent with the 30 trips/season x 12mins/one-way trip x 4 one-way trips/customer + 3 hours of maintenance which is 27 hours. If the helicopter is only to be used for 27 hours then that is 135 trips for the season. If the proponent is correct in saying the maximum time of helicopter use is 48 hours, then that would be around 240 trips per season. Whether 135 or 240, neither option can be construed as having an insignificant impact.
- 2. Access to Halls Island
  - I am concerned that this proposal will prevent or limit access to Halls Island. Reg Halls hut is a significant historical site that should be accessible to the public. The fact that it and its contents are still in good condition is testimony to the regard with which it is held. Recently I shared the experience with three teenagers who highly valued and benefitted from the effort of the walk into Lake Malbena and the swim over to the island. These types of activities are important to building self-reliant skills and character and understanding Tasmanian history and natural ecosystems. The island provides a focal point and should be available for future generations.
- 3. Viability
  - I am concerned about the viability of this enterprise and therefore the potential impact maybe to no avail in any case. I would encourage those assessing the proposal to look critically at the business model including the attractiveness of this site to a 'high end' tourist.
- 4. Precedent
  - There have been previous unsuccessful proposals to allow helicopter access for commercial trout guiding on the Central Plateau. If this proposal is approved then it would set a precedent that could encourage other proponents to use helicopters to access the Central Plateau. For example, this proponent (a trout guide) may want to extend activities to nearby lakes. It is

only 8 km by helicopter from Halls Island to Lake Silver and Lake Antimony, trout waters that provide more reliable fishing than Lake Malbena. Although such an extension would appear to be a small increment in terms of distance, it would be a game changer and have a very significant impact on the users, values and reputation of the Central Plateau.

- 5. Tasmania's reputation
  - The State and Federal governments need to be careful about over exploiting Tasmania's (international) reputation for wilderness experience. This project represents a relatively small monetary gain (maybe no gain at all) for a small number of people at the expense of devaluing Tasmania's wilderness reputation.

Yours faithfully,

s22

| From:        | s22   |
|--------------|---|
| To:          | EPBC Referrals  |
| Subject:     | 2018 / 8177 Halls Island, Lake Malbena proposal by Wild Drake |
| Date:        | Monday, 16 April 2018 11:22:07 AM                             |
| Attachments: | Personal Subm Halls Is Apr2018.pdf                            |

Dear Sir / Madam,

Attached is my submission on the Halls Island and surrounding area development proposal; your reference 2018 / 8177.

I oppose the development with good reason.

Please acknowledge receipt of the submission, and into the right hands, thanks,

s22

## SUBMISSION

## 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

Department of Environment and Energy, John Gordon Building King Edward Terrace Parks ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam,



The island is a very special place to me. I have only taken very small caring groups there, often staying a few days. I have very fond memories, in mid to late summer, of swimming in the lake, diving from the only suitable rock platform near the dinghy slip. It is easy to get in and out there, unlike all other spots, and not far from the island track. Elsewhere on the island the small 'untouched' king billy forest is a marvel. There is even a little cairn on the islands high point.

I am seriously concerned about the way this proposal has been made public with almost nil consultation with 'key stakeholders'. I only accidentally came across the issue by word of mouth. In the extremely limited time remaining to submit, I could only pass on the message to a few persons. This limits your getting the concerns of Tasmanians about the proposal, and being able to act appropriately.

I am concerned about access issues at Lake Malbena, for heritage, ambience and other reasons. The area has been frequented by several individuals I know well, plus members of various organisations. These and other walkers have visited for well over a century, as well as some predecessors. <u>Bushwalking and access to such places</u> is very much a <u>traditional practice</u> here; i.e. it <u>is a heritage value</u> in this State.

Allowing only a fortnight to submit is a big ask for individuals and consultative bodies, please review the submission interval, and make six weeks available in future.

# This project will have a significant impact of environmental and social significance; including no access to appreciate our heritage for many Tasmanians.

There are many concerns that I believe make the proposal unacceptable including;

- 1. The project breaches the World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan because:
  - It is not a standing camp, but a built commercial development comprising 'buildings' and a central 'hut', these are prohibited in the zone covering Lake Malbena (I support the prohibition)
  - Tracks and boardwalk are prohibited in the self-reliant recreation zone of the TWWHA Management Plan
  - The TWWHA Management Plan says that: landing sites are to abide by the prescriptions for the underlying Zone at each site, i.e. for the Self-Reliant Recreational Zone no facilities are to be constructed and no landing sites are to be made available in the wilderness Zone. I support these prohibitions and prescriptions in this area.
- 2. The project will have a significant impact including on heritage and cultural values:
  - The amenity of other users, including bushwalkers and fishermen, because of the use of helicopters for construction, servicing and guest transfer. It is a wilderness area helicopter flights will disrupt the very thing that the submission says it wants people to experience. When discussing the project with Halls daughter (who sold the lease to the proponent), she volunteered that she was not happy with helicopters in the area.
  - Those who would normally camp on the island do so very close to the existing hut where the most of the suitable ground exists. The presence and attitude of 'upmarket others' may make customary walkers feel that the 'upmarket others' have an exclusive right to be present. This would be the opposite of the attitude of R Hall, after whom the island is named. Customary use must be protected, not just that of "regular visitors". (There are few other camping opportunities close to Lake Malbena. With commercial development on the island, it is doubtful that the hut or its immediate environs will be available for visitation and / or camping at best, a sense of unwanted 'intrusion' is likely.)
  - The island which hosts king billy pine forest / rainforest and peat beds that have been mostly lost or significantly damaged elsewhere on the Central Plateau by fire. A permanent campsite, building works and increased visitation presents risks to this unique and sensitive environment.
- The cumulative impacts of the proposal, including Stage 2 tracks to Mt Oana and 'any additional walking routes' should be reported as part of the same referral. (Perversely if ordinary Tasmanians wanted tracks in the area, they would not be allowed. There should not be different rules because of money – the TWWHA belongs to us all.)
- 4. The Parks and Wildlife Assessment (RAA), upon which the referral under EPBC heavily relies, has been withheld, making it impossible for the public to determine that project will not have a significant impact on matters of environmental significance. The consultation over the referral should be halted, the RAA released and consultation commenced.
- 5. To destroy the wilderness value of this area for the exclusive use by the wealthy is perverse. It is against the public interest and values, particularly the vast majority of the less wealthy. (The ability of <u>any</u> Tasmanian, who can walk, to visit is itself a heritage value.)
- 6. Halls hut was built in the 1950's and the area, vessel and hut have been available for

public use since. The area was also visited before the hut was built. The Hobart Walking Club gave almost \$100 to Reg Hall's daughter (Elizabeth McQuilkin) to maintain the dinghy for public use in the late 1990's. She accepted public use.

7. Lake Malbena is very poor fishing.

While trivial access might be permitted "on request", "when appropriate" to "regular past users" (extremely few) or "those with a specific interest in the European cultural history of the island" (of which there is probably none – besides, it is <u>Tasmanian</u> cultural history if referring to the hut and island), most people visit but once or twice to find it very worthwhile. The caveats strongly imply difficulty for "regular visitors" being allowed to visit. To date visitors for specific European cultural history reasons are far fewer than for recreational purposes. Essentially as past regular users die out, visitation is compelled to cease except for wealthy clients of the project proponent. Extremely few clients are likely to be Tasmanian. This intention is indeed a perverse restriction to this part of the TWWHA for Tasmanians, and a blatant disregard for bushwalkers who may wish to see the hut, whether for heritage appreciation, an interest in huts or to see what the area would be but for bushfires.

### Conclusion

I am extremely concerned that if such a proposal goes ahead it will restrict access to areas that bushwalkers and fishermen have traditionally used. If the project were to proceed (best not), protection of customary walking (heritage), fishing and similar use must be part of the undertakings for the project. I strongly oppose extra rules upon walkers / Tasmanian visitors as a result of the project, although it may have a capacity to attract some more persons to the area.

As traditional use of the Lake Malbena area by Tasmanian bushwalkers will be significantly compromised by this development, this development is opposed.

Yours Sincerely,











To whom it may concern

I am currently a financial member of the North West Angling Association and fish in the World Heritage area of the highlands of Tasmania.

I wish to voice my concern with the proposed development at Lake Malbena. The proposal will have a negative impact on the World Heritage area. In particular, the use of helicopter transfers in and out of the camp.

I also do not consider that there has been enough consultation with other users of the wilderness area. Of concern, there has been no input from the angling community.

s22

Sent from my iPad

I am writing to oppose the private development by Wild Drake at lake Malbena for the following reasons.

- The proposal is likely to have a significant impact on World Heritage Values —considered 'Matters of National Environmental Significance' under the law. As such the Wild Drake proposal should be rejected outright.
- If the referral is not rejected outright, it should be deemed a 'controlled action' and subject to further assessment.
- The proposal is inconsistent with the Tasmania's Wilderness Word Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan, which allows only standing camps in the self-reliant recreation zone. The referral describes the project as far more than a standing camp, with hut and multiple other buildings proposed to be constructed from timber and steel.
- Additionally, the TWWHA Management Plan states that any "new tracks or reroutes" should only be for "environmental/management purposes only" (p79). The proposal details new tracks that are for tourism/recreation in the self-reliant recreation zone and wilderness zone.
- The proposal would have a negative impact on mapped wilderness values, a World Heritage value and significant component of Outstanding Universal Value, important for the maintenance of the integrity of the TWWHA. Lake Malbena is of high wilderness value and huts and commercial helicopter access degrade wilderness.
- The project's negative impact on wilderness also contradicts the legislated management objective for national parks, as detailed under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act (2002)*, which lists "to preserve the natural, primitive and remote character of wilderness areas" as a management objective.
- The proposal is shrouded in secrecy, with the full, state-based Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) withheld from public release. Until the RAA is fully released, genuine community consultation for this referral is impossible.
- Private, commercial tourism accommodation is not currently an "existing use" of Halls Island and Lake Malbena and it is not, and has never been, the destination of private commercial helicopter flights with the sole purpose of transporting paying customers.

Regards s22

| s22 |  |  |
|-----|--|--|

Hello,

I am writing to express my concern and protest against the private commercial development in Tasmania's <u>Wilderness Word Heritage Area</u>, at lake Malbena by Will Drake.

Tasmanian is one of the few places left that has 'true wilderness' such as this left, being undeveloped.

Allowing helicopter access and development into such a unique and pristine area is wrong.

For Tasmania to remain unique and pristine in a rapidly overdeveloped world is vitally important for our future generations.



| From:    | s22  |
|----------|--|
| Sent:    | Wednesday, 11 July 2018 10:42 AM   |
| То:      | EPBC Referrals   |
| Cc:      | will.hodgman@parliament.tas.gov.au; elise.archer@parliament.tas.gov.au           |
| Subject: | Halls Island, Lake Malbena—Tasmanian Wilderness—submission on referral 2018/8177 |

Lake Malbena in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park is recognised as being of high wilderness character. Wilderness is an important World Heritage value 'which underpins the success in meeting all four criteria for a natural property and is the basis for the maintenance of its integrity'. (TWWHA Management Plan, p. 43)

The World Heritage Committee sought strong provisions to protect wilderness from tourism development. In response, the Turnbull Government has given unconditional assurances wilderness will be protected <sup>str</sup>ia management planning and other mechanisms, such as federal environment law.

The construction of new buildings, such as the hut and accommodation buildings proposed by Wild Drake Pty Ltd would have a demonstrable negative impact on the 'naturalness' and 'remoteness from settlement' components of wilderness. Similarly, the establishment of a private, commercial helipad will impact 'time remoteness' and degrade wilderness.

Given the significance of wilderness to this World Heritage property and the negative impact this proposal would have on wilderness, the Minister should be satisfied that the action to construct and operate private, commercial accomodation at Halls Island is clearly unacceptable. The proposal will have a significant impact on an attribute of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area that 'embodies, manifests, shows, or contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value and/or integrity of the property'. (TWWHA Management Plan, p. 28)

I do not believe any proposed management actions can mitigate these impacts on wilderness, making the project clearly unacceptable.

If the Minister is not willing to determine that the project is clearly unacceptable, he should determine that the 'action' is a 'controlled action' likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance and which must be subject to further, detailed assessment. This should include an Environmental Impact Assessment addressing the impact of the proposal on wilderness.

Yours sincerely, s22

This email was sent by s22 via Do Gooder, a website that allows people to contact you regarding issues they consider important. In accordance with web protocol FC 3834 we have set the FROM field of this email to our generic no-reply address at campaigns@good.do, however s22 ) which we included in the REPLY-TO field.

Please reply to s22

To learn more about Do Gooder visit www.dogooder.co To learn more about web protocol FC 3834 visit: www.rfc-base.org/rfc-3834.html

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 9 July 2018 10:12 AM s22 s22 EPBC Referrals FW: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas. EPBC Number 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Monday, 9 July 2018 9:58 AM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas. EPBC Number 2018/8177

Dear sir/ madam,

I am writing to strongly appose the use of helicopters to access Lake Malbena EPBC Number 2018/8177. This helicopter will destroy the wilderness experience for all other users of the near by lakes that have been available for public use for many years. The thought of a helicopter landing in front of you after spending many hours and sometimes days to hike into this location to enjoy this environment without the threat of a helicopter flying over head and even worse landing nearby is very sad. These lakes are for all tax payers and the use of a helicopter to access this area would impact this wilderness experience and cause stress to other users in the area as they would feel unwelcome and would no longer want to access this area because of the helicopter landing site.

Further more I can see no mention in the reports or applications regarding the use of the helicopter for flying in paying fishing customers for Mr Hacket trout guiding businesses which is his main business. This would further impact the fishing community which has been left out of the this application due to the strong opposition towards allowing helicopters or planes to land in this area.

If this proposal gets approved I can see many people who have been alienated by this somewhat underhanded proposal will vote very differently in the future if a business is allowed to use helicopters or planes to access this area ,which up until now has been illegal.

As a person who has grown up enjoying this area free of the threat of helicopters landing and spoiling the whole reason people hike back into these remote locations in the first place. It will be very sad to see. This proposal, if approved will become the thin edge of the wedge to open up the flood gates to allow more helicopters in this area and destroy the wilderness experience and freedom of normal tax payers, as it has already done in New Zealand.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to this proposal. I can only hope it is echoed my many.

Kind Regards

s22

From: Sent: To:

Subject:

s22

Cc:

EPBC Referrals Monday, 9 July 2018 10:05 AM s22 EPBC Referrals; s22 RE: Reference no.: 2018/8177, WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

### From: s22 Sent: Monday, 9 July 2018 7:54 AM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Reference no.: 2018/8177, WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to voice my strong opposition to the proposal: Reference no.: 2018/8177, WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

I have been angling and walking throughout the Western Lakes area for the past 30 years. A major part of what makes this area so special, even on a world wide scale, is that it is a true wilderness experience within reach of most ordinary, moderately fit people. We are also lucky enough not to have to pay for the privilege (yet), or be locked out of areas that have been developed.

I vehemently oppose the use of helicopters to fly people in or out of this area, as it is an intrusion to the peace and tranquillity that will be felt/heard over a very large distance from the operation, and worse still, the thought of being "dropped in on" in an area that I have made the effort to get to.

I feel that, while I think this proposal is extremely inappropriate for the Western Lakes as a whole, an even more alarming concern is that it is the thin end of the wedge and it will set a dangerous precedent if allowed to continue.

I truly hope this will proposal will be declined and a strong message sent that these precious places cannot be "bought" or spoilt for future generations.

Thankyou.

Kindest regards, s22





s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Monday, 9 July 2018 10:03 AM s22 EPBC Referrals; s22 FW: Reference no....2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Sunday, 8 July 2018 8:46 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Reference no....2018/8177

I wish to register my strong opposition to the proposed tourism development at Lake Malbena by Wild Drake PTY LTD.

I have no opposition for a properly established, low impact standing camp. I strongly oppose the use of helicopters within the Western Lakes fishery however. s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Monday, 9 July 2018 10:02 AM s22 EPBC Referrals; s22 FW: Comment on 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Sunday, 8 July 2018 8:25 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Comment on 2018/8177

Reference no....2018/8177. WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

Dear epbc

I wish to comment on this proposal.

I walk in this general area once or twice a year.

I have no issue with an eco-friendly low impact small tourist venture there but I object to helicopters flying over the world heritage area. Im happy for people to walk in, stay in huts there, kayak, walk, fish or just relax but I think that helicopters would affect the ambience of the area and the amenity for those bushwalking through the wilderness area.

s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Monday, 9 July 2018 10:01 AM s22 EPBC Referrals; s22 FW: Reference no....2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Sunday, 8 July 2018 6:19 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Reference no....2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I strongly oppose helicopters being allowed to fly into the western lakes to relieve bushwalkers and fly fisherman of walking distances.

This is totally unacceptable for a heritage listed area.

Thank you, s22

Perth

# I would like to "object" to the following proposal

Reference number 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism & Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

Hi

My name is s22 and I am a fly fishing angler, I am a member of the Tasmanian Fly Fishing Club in Hobart and the Devonport Fly Fishing Club.

I am strongly against the World Heritage area being turned into a commercial area to suit a hand full of people for monetary gain!

I think it is very important to keep the "*Wilderness*" area as is and not to turn it into another commercial money-making area like the Overland track. I have been into both area's and there is a huge difference between the both. The Overland track is a great experience and I feel was just a commercial well-manicured walk. Boardwalks, nice huts a continual stream of walkers following one another. The Western Lakes area is a totally different experience. It is isolated, you see no other people, it is a pristine environment and I feel should be left as is. Although I have only walked into Lake Theresa you feel the difference straight away when you enter this area, there is no one else around, it is a very unique experience. No continuous line of people walking the track to get to the next hut, no boardwalks and most importantly no helicopters transporting an elite group of people into an area which is considered a "*World Heritage Wilderness Zone*".

A question I would have to ask is to remember why the World Heritage Area was classed a Heritage area in the first place? And why now is it being compromised for the sake of money? Is the integrity of the environment worth losing over somebody's passion to commercialise it? I think not!!!

I think it is important to keep the Wilderness area as it is, preserve the natural environment and remote character of the wilderness for generations to come. Leave the boundaries as is, keep the helicopters out and the commercialism. For the sake of my kids and my grandkids I hope you have the good sense to stop this venture and future ventures that aim to compromise the uniqueness of this place.

**Yours Sincerely** 



s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:03 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Reference 2018/8177

From s22 Sent: Monday, 9 July 2018 6:41 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Reference 2018/8177

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Dear sir/Madam,

I wish to lodge an objection to the above development on the basis that helicopter flights of any description, save rescue or firefighting, are a complete anathema to the concept and continued viability of the Western Lakes area and the Tasmanian Wilderness as a whole. I am an avid angler though unable now to walk into these places, but would never want to be carried into such pristine areas for a selfish reason. Helicopters have no right to be in this area for recreation, no way, never!

Sincerely, s22 s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:03 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Halls Island proposal. Reference no....2018/8177

From: s22 Sent: Tuesday, 10 July 2018 11:27 AM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Halls Island proposal. Reference no....2018/8177

Reference no....2018/8177

I won't be using any form letters provided by groups opposing because I have a personal connection to this development.

**s22** I have always admired what he has done for Tasmanian tourism through his previous fly fishing businesses.

This time though he has gone too far.

I don't have any issues with the use of Halls Island for a small sensitive accommodation development (which it seems to be)

I do have a huge problem with the helicopter component of his application. I regularly fish the Western Lakes, appreciating the peace and feeling of being somewhere truly remote. This would all be shattered with the thump of helicopter blades, even far off in the distance.

It seems to me that this "top-end" model would only benefit people rich enough to not need to make any effort to reach these incredible places, and through doing so would diminish the experience for all the other users in the area who have made a very great effort to be out there under their own steam.

It also seems that the only people who would benefit financially are a few guides and the helicopter pilots, as I don't see these kinds of clients as being ones who would hang around the state for a week enjoying other activities (other than at other top-end all-inclusive lodges, which does little to bring money into the state).

I also worry that once the helicopter genie is out of the bottle, there's no putting it back in, and more of these developments could see further helicopter flights build up over time.

The cost-benefit ratio just seems too great to satisfy so few at the expense of so many others.

I am also deeply disappointed in the government's underhanded and secretive dealings with re-zoning the area to make this possible. They would no doubt tout "jobs jobs" as the top reasons, but it will truly only provide a handful of additional jobs (perhaps 3 or 4 full-time equivalent at best?)

If we leave the area unchanged, it may well be one of the last places of true forest wilderness that is still easily accessible for many Australians and visitors, which must be worth so much more than 3 or 4 jobs...?

Yours sincerely,



From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:09 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Public submission on Wild Drake proposal for Lake Malbena, Tasmania

From: s22 Sent: Tuesday, 10 July 2018 5:45 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Public submission on Wild Drake proposal for Lake Malbena, Tasmania

**Referrals Gateway** 

Environment Assessment Branch

Department of the Environment

GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601

I write regarding the referral regarding the proposal from WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

Lake Malbena in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park is recognised as being of high wilderness character. Wilderness is an important World Heritage value 'which underpins the success in meeting all four criteria for a natural property and is the basis for the maintenance of its integrity'. (TWWHA Management Plan, p. 43)

The World Heritage Committee sought strong provisions to protect wilderness from tourism development. In response, the Turnbull Government has given unconditional assurances wilderness will be protected via management planning and other mechanisms, such as federal environment law.

The construction of new buildings, such as the hut and accommodation buildings proposed by Wild Drake Pty Ltd would have a demonstrable negative impact on the 'naturalness' and 'remoteness from settlement' components of wilderness. Similarly, the establishment of a private, commercial helipad will impact 'time remoteness' and degrade wilderness.

1

Given the significance of wilderness to this World Heritage property and the negative impact this proposal would have on wilderness, the Minister should be satisfied that the action to construct and operate private, commercial accommodation at Halls Island in Lake Malbena is clearly unacceptable. The proposal will have a significant impact on an attribute of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area that 'embodies, manifests, shows, or contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value and/or integrity of the property'. (TWWHA Management Plan, p. 28)

I do not believe any proposed management actions can mitigate these impacts on wilderness, making the project clearly unacceptable.

s22

Sent from my iPad

From: Sent: To: Cc:

Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:09 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Halls Island development

From: s22 Sent: Tuesday, 10 July 2018 6:25 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Halls Island development

Ref. No: 2018/8177 Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas



My main problem with the current proposal is that it flies in the face of the community-endorsed management plan. The fact that two central tenants of that plan – the ones dealing with helicopter access and wilderness zoning – have been overridden by the state government in order to hasten processing threatens to further undermine the public's faith in democratic processes, and potentially places the TWWHA at existential risk. The 'additional information' provided by the developer merely exacerbates my concerns.

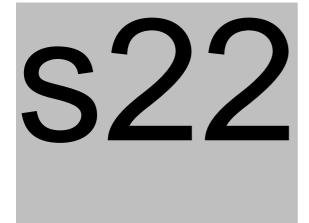
The *Walking Track Strategy* defined wilderness as a large area of land 'central at its core from mechanical access and modern technological society'. The Lake Malbena proposal is located bang smack in the centre of that core. (The recent rezoning of the land to accommodate the Lake Malbena proposal is totally unacceptable, especially since it was done without proper public consultation and greatly diminishes the wilderness value of a huge area surrounding the actual development site.)

The additional information shows the helicopter route tracking directly over the best and most popular fishing waters in the untracked parts of the Western Lakes' core wilderness, namely lakes Ina, Nive, Lenone and Ingrid. I cannot think of a route which would be worse for the amenity of current users, or of likely future users. Also, it is a completely different route to the one which the proponents have been describing to me for the last 12 months, which makes me worry that the proponents have been deliberately deceitful.

I am also alarmed that the helipad is not on the leasehold, but some distance away on public land, further exacerbating the impact of helicopters on existing users and on wilderness values. (I should point out that the additional pdf files provided by the developer contradict each other in respect to the site of the helipad. *Part1.pdf* (1.85 MB) locates the site on the mainland while *proposedhelicopterroute.pdf* (1.08 MB) – under the heading 'Searches of endpoints' – locates the site on the leased island. Undoubtedly, this will have caused confusion for some respondents.)

Finally, I am concerned with the way the lease on Halls Island was quietly changed without any attempt to gauge stakeholder sentiment. In fact certain aspects of business ownership were deliberately withheld from public scrutiny. While the project is promoted as a small family venture, the proponent (Daniel Hackett) has told me that outside investors will entirely fund the project and be rewarded with a 70% stake in the ownership of the business. Perhaps this is why the lease has been split in two, with the hut and island registered separately. I am concerned that under this precedent, there is no impediment to the government issuing private leases on a whim anywhere in the Western Lakes or elsewhere in the TWWHA.

#### Sincerely



From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:11 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas (Reference No. 2018/8177)

## From: s22 Sent: Tuesday, 10 July 2018 6:42 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas (Reference No. 2018/8177)

# Dear Sir/Madam

# I write in reference to WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas (Reference No. 2018/8177).

My main problem with the current proposal is that it flies in the face of the community-endorsed management plan. The fact that two central tenants of that plan – the ones dealing with helicopter access and wilderness zoning – have been overridden by the state government in order to hasten processing threatens to further undermine the public's faith in democratic processes, and potentially places the TWWHA at existential risk. The 'additional information' provided by the developer merely exacerbates my concerns.

The additional information shows the helicopter route tracking directly over the best and most popular fishing waters in the untracked parts of the Western Lakes' core wilderness, namely lakes Ina, Nive, Lenone and Ingrid. I cannot think of a route which would be worse for the amenity of current users, or of likely future users.

I am also alarmed that the helipad is not on the leasehold, but some distance away on public land, further exacerbating the impact of helicopters on existing users and on wilderness values. (I should point out that the additional pdf files provided by the developer contradict each other in respect to the site of the helipad. Part1.pdf (1.85 MB) locates the site on the mainland while proposedhelicopterroute.pdf (1.08 MB) – under the heading 'Searches of endpoints' – locates the site on the leased island. Undoubtedly, this will have caused confusion for some respondents.)

I have no opposition for a properly established, low impact standing camp. But like the majority of anglers who fish the area, do strongly oppose the use of helicopters within the Western Lakes fishery.

Through negotiation, access could potentially be granted (on foot) from Olive Lagoon, thus giving clients the 'real experience ' of the area.

Kind regards,

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:15 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Halls Island Proposal by wild drake, referral 8177

From: s22 Sent: Tuesday, 10 July 2018 8:30 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Halls Island Proposal by wild drake, referral 8177

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have some serious concerns about this proposal in the central plateau wilderness region of Tasmania at Halls Island, Lake Malbena (2018/8177 Wild Drake Pty Ltd Tourism and recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing camp, Lake Malbena, Tas)

On the surface it appears a valid business concept, but reading between the lines the major concern I have is that in allowing one operator to fly helicopters into the Central Plateau Wilderness Area will set a precedent for other heli culture/'fishing' tours/business ventures into this region and lead to a degradation of the experience for anglers and bushwalkers. If one was very cynical it could be seen as a disguised attempt to run heli flyfishing tours at Lake Malbena to access trophy trout lakes in the surrounding areas by some one who has very close business ties and interests in the guiding industry.

This central plateau area is very small by world standards (approximately 60 by 80km) and unique in that the vast majority of this world class fishery can only be accessed by foot (in fact the majority of the area can be easily accessed by walking at a maximum of one to two days from various access points). It is also a fragile fishery that would struggle to handle additional pressure with generally low fish stocks particularly in the more remote lakes. One of the major reasons people access this area is to escape modern life and to enjoy chasing trophy trout in pristine and remote areas, if heli tours became prevalent this experience would be destroyed. It was interesting to see that this proponent had apparently previously stated on face book that he would never allow helicopter access into the central plateau wilderness area, a position that appears to have been reversed.

As a keen flyfisher, former flyfishing guide and bushwalker who has travelled and fished all over the world and extensively throughout the central plateau wilderness area of Tasmania, I am keenly aware of how few areas remain worldwide that can still truly offer this wilderness experience. I have also seen the effects of inappropriate commercial development in wilderness areas in other parts of the world and fear that this development may have unintended consequences in setting a precedent for future operators. I would hate to see local, interstate and international vistors no longer fishing this area due to the prevalence of helicopter access into the area for an elite wealthy few.

It has also been concerning to see that changes to the wilderness area boundaries in the new plan for this area appear to favour the proponent prior to this development being put into process, which could be seen as a corruption of process by a minister who holds what appears to be two conflicting portfolios. Information released by the Greens suggests that this most certainly was the case with the proponent apparently being told 'to wait until the new plan comes out' when discussing the venture with the government. Anglers only became aware of this proposal after a recent leak, causing enormous outrage within the fishing community

(who have had little opportunity to air their opposition) and who have in the past actively and successfully resisted proposed helicopter access by other proponents on at least two occasions.

In fact Greg French, a noted author and expert on Tasmanian flyfishing and highly significant as having had a large part in drafting the original management plan for this area and who currently works for the proponent at times as a guide, <u>has publicly stated</u> that he is against this proposal (FlyLife Forum). No helicopter access was one of the points on which all parties to this original management plan agreed.

If this proposal **were** to be granted I would be satisfied (although still some what disappointed) <u>if</u> the venture remained a walk in walk out experience and stuck firmly to their stated purpose of a wilderness/cultural and historical centre with no guided fishing allowed through a worded contractual agreement thus preventing the area becoming an elitist wealthy patrons access area only. My preferred option however would be that the free hold lease for this island is revoked and the original boundary of the central plateau wilderness area reinstated, and if necessary compensation offered to the proponent.

Yours sincerely





Virus-free. www.avg.com

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 23 July 2018 10:28 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas ( 2018/8177) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

### From: s22 Sent: Sunday, 15 July 2018 9:38 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas ( 2018/8177)

## Malbena Helicopters

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposal by WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation/ Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas (2018/8177).

As a long time angler and walker who has spent much of my life fishing in the area, I value the isolation and wilderness experience that visiting the Western Lakes / Walls of Jerusalem National Park gives. The Western Lakes are a world class wild trout fishery, set in a unique and fragile environment. The use of helicopters within this area will destroy the natural environment, remoteness and severely degrade the wilderness values that I and many others like me, visit the area to experience.

Unlike some other parts of the world that utilise helicopters to cross large mountain ranges, unpassable forests or vast distances. Visitors on foot can reach most of the Western Lakes and Walls of Jerusalem areas within several hours walk, over relatively flat terrain. This is enough time and distance to reward those who put in effort with a true wilderness experience, but also acts to preserve and protect the wilderness and biodiversity of the area.

The proponent himself has stated that his development is aimed at 'top end, time poor clientele'. Why should a small percentage of well to be, time poor customers be given the right to ruin the natural, peaceful experience the majority people who visit the area value the most? Visitors who are willing to invest time and effort to hike into a pristine, remote location seeking solitude to camp, photograph or trout fish, don't deserve to be 'dropped in on' or 'cut off' by guides and paying clients.

The proposed helicopter route passes directly over some of the most popular waters in the 'Southern Western Lakes' region; Lakes Ina, Nive, Leone and Ingrid. The use of helicopters in this, or any part of the Western Lakes / WHA would degrade heavily on the wilderness experience and recreational opportunities visitors to these beautiful areas experience.

Furthermore, the fact that the proposed helipad is to be placed on public land, not on leasehold further exacerbates the impact the use of helicopters would have on this pristine area.

For Tasmania to remain unique and retain true wilderness values in a rapidly developing and changing world, we need to preserve our 'brand', retain areas of wilderness and respect the culture that generations of Tasmanians have developed using the 'backcountry'. The proposal also breaches the TWWHA Management Plan, which allows for only 'standing' camps in the self – reliant recreation zone. The developer plans to build permanently erected 'hut' and three 'accommodation' buildings constructed of 'a mixture of timber and steel'.

1

I urge the Minister to determine this proposal unacceptable. Please keep helicopters and building development like those proposed out of this special part of Australia.

EPBC Reference no: 2018/8177

Title of referral: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

Wild Drake Submission / s22 / 11/07/201

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS** 



# COMMENTS IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED HELICOPTER ROUTE AND ASSOCIATED LANDING SITE

The proposed helicopter route will impact a series of incomparable wilderness fisheries including Travellers Rest, Nive, Lenone, Ingrid and Malbena. Considering the potential disturbance it seems incongruous that the flight path also traverses Lake Ina, where the proponent already operates a successful walk-in standing camp for guided fly fishing (though perhaps the intention is to include the Ina camp as a helifishing option, or to transport clients between camps). The Wild Drake proposal seems to underestimate the frequency of flights required to ferry in and out groups of up to 6 guests with associated equipment, supplies and support staff. With a 4-day turn around the related disturbance will be frequent and sustained over the relatively short and weather-dependent summer fishing period.

Of particular concern is the application for a designated helicopter landing site outside the Halls Island lease area (refer Part1.pdf), presumably in favour of a single fishing-guide/eco-tourism operator. This will set a precedent for the State Government to approve further landing sites for competing tourism operators and highland fishing lodges in areas convenient to their operations. Or will the Malbena landing site be made available to other operators and public charter flights, with associated added disturbance?

Helicopter serviced fishing in the Western Lakes has traditionally been met with overwhelming and unanimous opposition from Tasmanian angling groups as it strikes at the core heritage values that make the wilderness fishery and the region in general so highly valued. The current proposal to my knowledge is not supported by any fishing-related organisation in Tasmania, and not even by the Professional Trout Fishing Guides Association.

The general consensus is that mechanised access (including 4WDs, ATVs and aircraft) to this remote region should be limited to existing approved vehicular access points, and not beyond.

# A SUGGESTED COMPROMISE

In keeping with the above, a sensible compromise would be to facilitate helicopter (and/or 4WD) access to a convenient point adjacent to the WHA boundary. The obvious place would be near Olive Lagoon, from where the walk to Lake Malbena is not at all arduous — I have walked it many times. This has been the traditional 4WD access route with vehicles stopped short of Olive Lagoon at the WHA boundary.

In this way, visitors would fully appreciate the Lake Malbena and Halls Island experience, much as the Hall family and other users have done since the 1950s. Conflict with anglers and bushwalkers would be avoided, and there would be no threat to WHA core wilderness values including nesting eagles.

# UNFORSEEN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

When researching this area in 1990/91 (assisted by well known author and Western Lakes devotee Greg French), we identified a number of significant trout-free systems in the Malbena area and others with very limited trout numbers. Trout-free, and in particular trout-and-galaxiid-free headwater lakes and streams in the region represent unique freshwater ecosystems where primitive Syncarid crustaceans, for example, thrive. These are prime areas for conservation and important benchmarks for future study.

Ease of access, and mechanised transport in particular, opens up the possibility of illegal trout introductions and the unintentional spread of undesirable plants and invertebrates. The faster and easier the transport, the greater the risk. Didymo, for

instance, has severely impacted wilderness fisheries in the South Island of New Zealand (no doubt introduced inadvertently by anglers from the USA or Europe).

Any heavily invested tourist-based fishing operation also raises the spectre of future lobbying to maintain and improve trout fishing through additional stocking in nearby lakes — a highly undesirable outcome in such an unspoilt wilderness area, with many attendant risks.

Although not addressed in the additional information, the proliferation of boating on Lake Malbena, facilitated by helicopter transport, is also of concern.

I am not suggesting the current proponent would be irresponsible in regard to trout stocking or other environmental impacts, but other parties backing the venture, investing in the business or retaining the lease in the future, may not be so well informed.

# ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Given the opportunity I would have liked to comment further on the proposal but I appreciate that comments called for at this time only relate to the additional information.

I am deeply disappointed that the State authorities appear to have approved this development without adequate (if any) consultation with stakeholders. I am also particularly concerned that the established Wilderness Zone boundaries seem to have been manipulated in advance to facilitate this approval.

I have not commented previously, as I was not aware of the Wild Drake proposal, nor of any associated period for comment at the State level prior to the EPBC referral.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for further information or clarification.



From: Sent: To: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 2:54 PM s22 FW: 2018/8177 Wild Drake Proposal - reject

-----Original Message-----From: s22 Sent: Monday, 9 July 2018 4:31 PM To: EPBC Referrals <EPBC.Referrals@environment.gov.au> Subject: 2018/8177 Wild Drake Proposal - reject

Hi,

This proposal will have a significant impact on the wilderness experience enjoyed by ordinary Tasmanians. Like the majority of anglers and bush walkers who have used this area for generations, I strongly oppose the use of helicopters within the Western Lakes fishery / World Heritage Region. This is one of the most unique places left in Tasmania and the world.

Sure Reg Hall flew a plane in there years ago but that's now part of history along with bits and pieces of what's left of his plane.

The area in question is currently accessible to anyone and everyone who has the passion and the will to "hike" in on foot. It shouldn't be for the wealthy few who can afford to pay to fly in and line the pockets of Mr Hackett who boasted not so long ago that he'd never use choppers to access this area.

What Mr Hackett is proposing will benefit his own pockets only. It will create "3" new jobs at the expense of hundreds of anglers and bushwalkers.

This is a far bigger issue than just allowing helicopter flights to Lake Malbena. The NZ "wilderness experience" has been ruined by a similar use of helicopters into remote areas. Do not let that happen here just to benefit one person.

There are 27,000 licensed anglers in Tassie and several thousand licensed visitor anglers. I haven't met or heard of one single person who supports this proposal. It must be rejected.



# Comments by BirdLife Tasmania on EPBC Referral 2018/8177

WILD Drake PTY LTD Halls Island development Lake Malbena, Tasmania

BirdLife Tasmania wishes to submit a comment with respect to this referral to the Department.

BirdLife Tasmania believes that the current referral threatens the avian population in this part of the Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). Wilderness is remote, natural country and built tourism accommodation and mechanised access like helicopters destroys these values.

The proponent wants to build a \$500,000 permanent structure under the quise of a "standing camp".

Construction materials will be delivered by heli-slings with an estimated 15 hours flying time. That is a sustained disturbance over a long period – and will the 15 hour limit be monitored?

Once constructed, the camp will be serviced by helicopters, facilitating 25 Halls Island bookings between mid-October and May. The flight path proposed from Derwent Bridge to Lake Malbena north of Lake St Clair follows an approximately 24km long mildly zig-zagging route.

Considering this statement, 25 trips by helicopter is actually 50 movements taking the return into account. So, over the main season, every couple of days a helicopter will be making two movements from Lake St. Clair along their "corridor" across this "wilderness", assuming that cloud allows them to stick to the agreed path and does not require the pilot to make a long detour.

Although the recommended flight path has been nominated to reduce the impact of the helicopter flights on the species, any flights (especially during breeding season) will be very disturbing to the avian population. There is the issue of compliance and enforcement of the helicopter flight frequency and flight path if the proponent is allowed to self-manage these aspects with no oversight.

Wedge-tailed Eagles Aquila audax fleayi are often seen in the general area, Whitebellied Sea-eagles Haliaeetus leucogaster sometimes. The former species is listed as endangered on the Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 and Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and a priority species under the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement and the latter is listed as vulnerable under the Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995). Any helicopter activity threatens these birds.

The Wedge-tailed Eagle (Tasmanian) breeds from late winter to summer. The nestlings of the Wedge-tailed Eagle (Tasmanian) are fed by both parents and can remain in the nest for up to 90 days. The young remain near the nest for several weeks after fledging (i.e. departing the nest). They depend on their parents for food

HOBART TASMANIA 7001

tasmania@birdlife.org.au birdlife.org.au

ABN 75 149 124 774



for at least three months after leaving the nest and may occasionally accompany their parents until the next breeding season.

Birdlife Tasmania is also concerned about the more general threat to all birds (including Brown Falcon, Collared Sparrowhawk, Owlet Nightjar, Swamp Harrier, Azure Kingfisher, Lathams Snipe, Australian Bittern and the plethora of smaller bush birds) and wildlife in this beautiful area with the increased potential risks of fire, pollution and the introduction of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

BirdLife Tasmania requests the Federal Government reject the current referral to establish a standing camp at Lake Malbena, Tasmania

BirdLife Tasmania contact details:



Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours sincerely



s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:26 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Reference no - 2018/8177 OPPOSITION AGAINST - WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

### From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 12 July 2018 8:47 AM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Reference no - 2018/8177 OPPOSITION AGAINST - WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I am writing to request that venture be disapproved.

My main problem with the current proposal is that it flies in the face of the community-endorsed management plan. The fact that two central tenants of that plan – the ones dealing with helicopter access and wilderness zoning – have been overridden by the state government in order to hasten processing threatens to further undermine the public's faith in democratic processes, and potentially places the TWWHA at existential risk. The 'additional information' provided by the developer merely exacerbates my concerns.

The additional information shows the helicopter route tracking directly over the best and most popular fishing waters in the untracked parts of the Western Lakes' core wilderness, namely lakes Ina, Nive, Lenone and Ingrid. I cannot think of a route which would be worse for the amenity of current users, or of likely future users.

I am also alarmed that the helipad is not on the leasehold, but some distance away on public land, further exacerbating the impact of helicopters on existing users and on wilderness values. (I should point out that the additional pdf files provided by the developer contradict each other in respect to the site of the helipad. Part1.pdf (1.85 MB) locates the site on the mainland while proposedhelicopterroute.pdf (1.08 MB) – under the heading 'Searches of endpoints' – locates the site on the leased island. Undoubtedly, this will have caused confusion for some respondents.)

This development, if approved, will be a stake in the heart for Tasmanian Wilderness.

I implore the delegate to reject this development.

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:26 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Comment re Ref 2018/8177.

From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 12 July 2018 8:57 AM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Comment re Ref 2018/8177.

My comments concern the following proposal titled 'WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/ Tourism and Recreation/ Halls Island/ Tasmania/ Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

I strongly oppose the current proposal for a number of reasons;

Firstly it completely goes against the 'community endorsed management plan'. Two central tenants dealing with helicopter access and wilderness zoning have been ignored by the state government which I believe destroys the public's faith in what is supposed to be a democratic process. It also places the TWWHA at risk.

It also appears that the helipad is actually on public land, not on the leasehold.

The proposed flight path goes directly over some of the best trout fishing lakes in the Western Lakes, such as Lake Ina and Nive and as such imacts negatively on those visiting the area.

I believe this proposal threatens the ambience in our unique western lakes and TWWHA for not only other users, but for the environment and remote values it offers locals and visitors alike. Foot access is our point of difference to most other unique fisheries in the world, and once we lose it, it's hard to regain, a precedence is set.

Should this proposal go ahead it would be a huge blow to 'wilderness trout fishing' and bushwalking in this state.

Your sincerely,

s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:28 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Reference 2018/8177

-----Original Message-----From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 12 July 2018 10:46 AM To: EPBC Referrals <EPBC.Referrals@environment.gov.au> Subject: Reference 2018/8177

Opposition to the helicopter access

There should be no access to the wilderness zoning by way of helicopter.

Additionally I am alarmed that the helipad is not on the leasehold, but on public land.

Sincerely, s22

# NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE ADVISORY COUNCIL (NPWAC) GPO Box 1751, Hobart, Tasmania

Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment

epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au

#### SUBMISSION REGARDING WILD DRAKE PTY LTD 2018/8177

Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

The National Parks and Wildlife Council (NPWAC) has the responsibility to advise both Commonwealth and State Governments on the management of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA).

NPWAC has reviewed the additional information provided to support the Hall's Island proposal outof-session. The proponent has provided a considerable amount of additional information to support the application and provides a better basis for an assessment of the proposal. The proponent has acknowledged many of the concerns raised through the original referral, including flight plans, sensitive vegetation, fire risk and biosecurity implications. The proponent (through the consultant's vegetation report) acknowledges that there are several listed plant communities and one listed plant species (*Pherosphaera hookeriana*), as well as fire sensitive vegetation (MSP, RKP, RSH).

The proponent does not adequately address the issue of exclusive private commercial use of an area in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area; the erection of permanent structures masquerading as standing camps; or the impacts of regular helicopter access and potential conflict with other users of the TWWHA.

#### The risk of fire

NPWAC rates fire as the highest threat to the TWWHA's Outstanding Universal Values.

While the documentation specifies that gas or electric cooking and heating will be used, there needs to be a clear statement that no open or wood-fuelled fireplaces will be allowed (is a wood fireplace for amenity purposes excluded with the current wording?), due to the extreme fire sensitivity of the vegetation and the likely impacts of nearby firewood collection.

Similarly, if helicopters are allowed, those with backward/downward facing exhausts are no longer used by PWS in montane areas in the TWWHA, due to 'burn scars' being inflicted on the vegetation and a possible ignition source - such restrictions should be applied to any helicopters servicing the site.

#### Impact on sensitive and/or threatened plant communities

The additional documentation specifies that routes/tracks/works should avoid Sphagnum bogs/rainforest communities, but if that's not possible then a perforated boardwalk will be constructed; the nationally listed plant species (*Pherosphaera hookeriana*) should be avoided but if necessary, a threatened species permit obtained to remove individual(s); several significant trees (including *Eucalyptus gunnii* ssp *gunnii*) should be avoided; conifers should be avoided - but all of these species/communities do occur within/adjacent to the proposed greater footprint and are potentially at risk. To ensure that the risks of disturbance and damage to these natural values is minimised, it would be appropriate (as recommended in the consultant's report) to have a botanist on site during the proposed construction phase.

The additional documentation acknowledges the need for strict biosecurity measures for both helicopters and clients - this is a potentially significant risk to the area and should include some sort of accreditation to ensure that DPIPWE/PWS standards are met by helicopter pilots, workers and clients.

As mentioned in our previous comments, the patterned mires are identified as an outstanding value of this area and should be completely avoided as they are very sensitive to trampling.

#### **Standing Camp**

Only standing camps are permitted within the Self-Reliant Recreation Zone (2016 TWWHA Management Plan, Table of Use, 79). It is understood that this standing camp was assessed against the current (2006) PWS standing camp policy as a type C camp (permanent). However, NPWAC has previously expressed its concern regarding the inadequacies of the current policy and its potential for misuse to construct permanent buildings in the TWWHA and other national parks.

Irrespective of this, the proponent does not address the fundamental concern that the proposal is for a development with several buildings, not a 'standing camp'. A structure of the type proposed cannot be considered as a standing camp and is incompatible for the Self-reliant Recreation Zoning.

In the document MNES p. 18, the proponent states that the standing camp will be 'rested' from June-September (i.e. over winter) - this is not a time when natural vegetation recovery can occur and is not supported by PWS and DPIPWE data on the time needed for recovery from trampling or camping. This appears to be a pretence at suggesting that the proposed buildings are a 'standing camp' that is not accessed all year. However, this is undermined by the next statement that up to 5 commercial trips (a total of 20 days) may run over this 'resting' period.

#### **Helicopter access**

NPWAC are concerned about the inadequacies in the current legislation and policy framework in Tasmania relating to the use of airspace generally and helicopters in particular, over national parks and wilderness areas. It is concerned that without adequate consideration, precedents will be set that will degrade the World Heritage values of the TWWHA. NPWAC notes that these issues have been addressed, at least in part, in other jurisdictions (e.g. Queensland, New Zealand and USA) and should be the subject of robust policy development in association with the current development of a Tourism Master Plan for the TWWHA.

The proposed landing site (to the east of Halls Island), Lake Malbena and Halls Island is within the Self-Reliant Recreation Zone but abuts the Wilderness Zone on the shoreline of the western half of the lake (2016 TWWHA Management Plan, Map 24).

While the current Plan permits commercial landings at a maximum of five (5) sites in the Self-Reliant Recreation Zone, the use of those flights to transport visitors is not consistent with the concept of self-reliant recreation. NPWAC is of the view that helicopter access other than that required for the purpose of servicing any approved standing camp is incompatible with the concept of a Self-reliant Recreation Zone. As mentioned in our previous submission, recreational fishers have contacted NPWAC members to express opposition to this type of development and in particular, helicopter access to the wild fishery. Lake Malbena is understood to be between two high quality wild fishing sites where the visitor experience will be seriously impacted by regular helicopter activity.

The preferred flight path is over Lake Ina - a particular drawcard in this part of the Central Plateau, and something that is likely to impact the recreational enjoyment of individuals.

These comments should be read in conjunction with the previous NPWAC submission on this project. NPWAC does not support this project progressing at this time and reiterates that contentious projects such as this should not be considered until there is an agreed framework to guide assessment. PWS is only in the initial stages of a Tourism Management Plan for the TWWHA that should include a well-developed policy on air access for tourism purposes to guide such assessments.

s22

13 July 2018



FOI 181005 Document 75



July 13, 2018

Department of Environment and Energy Submission #3133 Halls Island, Tasmania epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au

#### Submission Re: Proposal 2018/8177 Halls Island, Tasmania

#### Invitation for public comment on additional information

I have read the additional information supplied by the proponent.

My concerns include:

- 1. Helicopters
  - There are a number of inconsistencies in the amount of the proposed helicopter use.
  - The primary concern has not been addressed, ie., helicopter noise is **fundamentally inconsistent** with the values of World Heritage and Wilderness experiences and are inconsistent with the objectives of the World Heritage Area Management Plan.
  - Flying at 1000m might actually increase the impact of helicopter noise by making it travel further across the plateau.
- 2. Access to Halls Island
  - Access to the island appears to be more limited in the revised plan than in the original.
- 3. Viability
  - I am concerned about the viability of this enterprise. This aspect of the proposal has not been addressed apart from the proponents 'best case'. I am very sceptical; in fact I think it is fanciful, that the proponent expects tourists that utilise 'Saffire' would also use Halls Island.
- 4. Precedent
  - The arguments about precedent still apply.
- 5. Tasmania's reputation
  - The arguments about Tasmania's reputation still apply.

Yours faithfully,



From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:34 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Halls Island, Lake Malbena—Tasmanian Wilderness—submission on referral 2018/8177

From: s22 Sent: Friday, 13 July 2018 3:29 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Halls Island, Lake Malbena—Tasmanian Wilderness—submission on referral 2018/8177

The additional information provided has raised major concerns for me and my use of the WHA area in question, the helicopter route selected flies directly over Lake Ina, Lake Nive, Lake Lenone and Ingrid which are all lakes that I bush walk into and fish regularly during peak trout fishing season in which the proposal intends to run their tours... My ambience as well as the WHA values will be severely degraded by any chopper route to Malbena...

I also refer to the proposed landing pad site, which is public land and often traversed by walkers like myself to enjoy the area...

The proposal causes too much disturbance to the environment in the TWWHA and surrounding national park, and ruins my experience of the area as well as all anglers and walkers who enjoy the area...

I hereby object fully to the proposal in it's current form...

Sincerely



North West Walking Club Inc PO Box 107, Ulverstone 7315 s22

13 July 2018

Department of the Environment and Energy epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au

#### Dear Sir/Madam

Re: 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas... additional information published on the epbc website 05 July 2018

After reviewing the additional information published 05 July 2018, The North West Walking Club remains opposed to the proposed development on Halls Island Lake Malbena.

The reasons for our opposition to the proposed development are that it:

- Degrades the heritage values of Halls Island & Lake Malbena. The placement of the standing camp infrastructure on the only suitable tent camping area would result in the Traditional users, bushwalkers and fisherman, being excluded from camping on Halls Island. The traditional bushwalking & fishing camping heritage on Halls Island would be lost.
- Impairs the wilderness value of the region by the noise created by the helicopters used to transport customers.

We also express our view that allowing only ten days to respond to this development proposal is too brief a response time.

Yours faithfully



North West Walking Club

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: Attachments:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:35 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Submission re Lake Malbena proposal Riverfly statement.doc

From: s22 Sent: Friday, 13 July 2018 4:24 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Submission re Lake Malbena proposal

Reference no. 2018/8177

Wild Drake Pty. Ltd., Halls Island standing camp.

I draw your attention to the statement by the chief proponent of the development at Lake Malbena in the attachment to this email. That statement was made on his Riverfly 1864 website about seven years ago when concerns were being raised by the fishing and bushwalking community about his proposed standing camp at Lake Ina.

Daniel's sentiments expressed at the time are pretty much my feelings and those of the general flyfishing community, particularly with reference to helicopter access. I could come to accept luxury cabins with a fully equipped kitchen for the high flying guests, but I do believe such guests, allegedly there for the wilderness experience, should use their boots and not their wallets to get there.

Helicopters have always been banned from overflying the TWWHA and the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and it should stay that way. A helicopter can be heard from at least 800 metres away so any bushwalkers, campers or fishermen in a 1.6 km strip below the flight path would have the peace they go bush for rudely disturbed for the five to ten minutes it would take the helicopter to go out of earshot.

So please, even if the luxury standing camp is allowed to go ahead, do not allow helicopter access.

Thank you.

s22

fly fisherman with memories of peaceful days fishing the central highlands.

From: Sent: To: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 2:54 PM s22 FW: 2018/8177 Wild Drake Proposal - reject

-----Original Message-----From: s22 Sent: Monday, 9 July 2018 4:31 PM To: EPBC Referrals <EPBC.Referrals@environment.gov.au> Subject: 2018/8177 Wild Drake Proposal - reject

Hi,

This proposal will have a significant impact on the wilderness experience enjoyed by ordinary Tasmanians. Like the majority of anglers and bush walkers who have used this area for generations, I strongly oppose the use of helicopters within the Western Lakes fishery / World Heritage Region. This is one of the most unique places left in Tasmania and the world.

Sure Reg Hall flew a plane in there years ago but that's now part of history along with bits and pieces of what's left of his plane.

The area in question is currently accessible to anyone and everyone who has the passion and the will to "hike" in on foot. It shouldn't be for the wealthy few who can afford to pay to fly in and line the pockets of Mr Hackett who boasted not so long ago that he'd never use choppers to access this area.

What Mr Hackett is proposing will benefit his own pockets only. It will create "3" new jobs at the expense of hundreds of anglers and bushwalkers.

This is a far bigger issue than just allowing helicopter flights to Lake Malbena. The NZ "wilderness experience" has been ruined by a similar use of helicopters into remote areas. Do not let that happen here just to benefit one person.

There are 27,000 licensed anglers in Tassie and several thousand licensed visitor anglers. I haven't met or heard of one single person who supports this proposal. It must be rejected.



# Halls Island Standing Camp Project (EPBC 2018/8177)

The proponent has provided additional information that attempts to address some of the issues raised by the original referral that will potentially impact natural values and national heritage values. These issues include sensitive vegetation in/adjacent to the proposed site, fire risk and biosecurity implications. The consultant's vegetation report describes several State and/or nationally listed plant communities (*Sphagnum* peatland, MSP; *Athrotaxis selaginoides* rainforest RKP) and one listed plant species (*Pherosphaera hookeriana*), as well as fire sensitive vegetation (MSP, RKP, highland low rainforest and scrub RSH) and acknowledges that disturbance to these natural values should be avoided.

However, several fundamental concerns are not addressed. The buildings, helipad and tracks do not conform to the zoning prescriptions in the TWWHA Management Plan, which were designed to protect world and national heritage values. The proposal also raises the issue of appropriate activities in a self-reliant recreation zone (hut construction) and wilderness area (helicopter access). The World Heritage Committee (39 COM 7B.35, 2015) has called for strict criteria for tourism developments, and mentioned wilderness explicitly in this context:

5 c) Establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, including its wilderness character and cultural attributes;

No further information is provided in relation to the monitoring of impacts outlined in the original referral.

The consultant's report specifies that routes/tracks/works should avoid *Sphagnum* bogs, rainforest communities, the nationally listed plant species (*Pherosphaera hookeriana*), as well as several significant trees (including *Eucalyptus gunnii* ssp *gunnii*) - all of which are potentially at risk. To ensure that the risks of disturbance and damage to these natural values is minimised, it would be appropriate (as recommended in the consultant's report) to have a botanist on site during the proposed construction phase.

The additional documentation acknowledges the need for strict biosecurity measures for both helicopters and clients - this is a potentially significant risk to the natural values in the area and should include training and assessment to ensure that appropriate standards are met by helicopter pilots, workers and clients.

In the document MNES p. 18, the proponent states that the standing camp will be 'rested' from June-September (i.e. over winter) - this is not a time when natural vegetation recovery can occur and is not supported by PWS and DPIPWE data on the time needed for recovery from trampling or camping. Further, this insufficient recovery time is contradicted by the next statement, that up to 5 commercial trips (a total of 20 days) may run over this 'resting' period.

The additional information provided allows for a better assessment of the proposal. However, the cumulative impact on both world heritage and natural heritage values would be considerable, particularly noting the impact of helicopters on the outstanding natural aesthetic value of the wilderness area in which it is situated.

13 July 2018

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:36 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Lake Malbena submission - public comment

From: s22 Sent: Friday, 13 July 2018 8:20 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Lake Malbena submission - public comment

It would seem that the rushed and secretive nature of the Lake Malbena proposal should alert the general population to ask why new development in our World Heritage areas (which should be protected by the TWWHA Management Plan), are being proposed which impact on the very significant World Heritage Values awarded to Tasmania's wilderness, and more so when this development proposal at Lake Malbena is inconsistent with some aspects of the TWWHA Management Plan.

Given that the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) was withheld from public release, the democratic process of access to information and time for informed discussion has been denied to those people who may wish to have a say. The whole process appears a deliberate attempt to rush through with these new developments without due consideration to input from various interest groups.

What's the point in formulating management plans if these management plans are ignored?

s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Monday, 16 July 2018 3:37 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Lake Malbena - Public Submission

From: s22 Sent: Friday, 13 July 2018 8:40 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Lake Malbena - Public Submission

I strongly oppose the proposed development. It would destroy the wildness of this area. There is no place for this sort of tourist activity, which would end up destroying the one thing that attracts people to this and similar places (ie wilderness). There are plenty of other non wilderness areas in Tasmania where tourist operators could develop a similarly profitable business and leave these irreplaceable world heritage value regions alone.

# **Development referral number 2018/8177** WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

## PERSONAL SUBMISSION

s22

In response to the additional information provided:

#### Loss of heritage use of the hut and surrounding area.

The Halls Island hut is part of Tasmania's mountain huts heritage. These huts have long been used by bushwalkers on the usual understanding with the owners of huts that bushwalkers were welcome to use huts provided that they left the hut in the same condition as when they arrived. Some years ago I helped raise some money to help with some maintenance of the hut at Lake Malbena.

As previously indicated I have had a number of walks into the Lake Malbena area, visited Halls Island and have stayed in the hut a few times, and several times camped near the hut on the island. There are very few other camping opportunities close to Lake Malbena. Much of the ground is too rocky or / and scrubby. The best alternative camping site close to the Lake is now being proposed as the helicopter landing site for the development. The very few other open camping sites are often wet while this site is well drained. When there is helicoptering, downdraft and noise would be encountered otherwise it is loss of the site to camping – neither are commensurate with the use and values of the area.

The very limited access to the hut and island that is proposed by the developer do little to restore the traditional access by bushwalkers to this area. This may be exacerbated for some by the party size maximum of 4. The development will bring more interest in others gaining access to the area, so decreasing the chance of any of us (re)visiting the area.

Lake Malbena is near the centre of an area that has become a more frequent destination for some walkers as Overland Track fees and quotas and rising visitor numbers in other popular areas such as the Walls of Jerusalem, Freycinet and Frenchmans Cap have displaced walkers from these areas.

Should the project proceed, it will be a precedent for more proposals to develop the gems of the TWWHA while limiting access and amenity of the traditional user/ general public / bushwalker in the area and environs. This should not occur. Those interested in enjoying such areas, should do what others must do – walk there.

#### Threat to the unique island environment

The pocket of Halls Island remnant pine forest / rainforest and peat beds have largely been untouched by the frequent fires that have ravaged the Central Plateau before it gained environmental protection. These pockets are not more resistant to fires, but by their island location have luckily survived. A permanent campsite, building works and increased visitation still presents a higher risk to this unique and sensitive environment even with the proposed mitigation measures contained in the additional information provided by the proponent. This heavily contrasts the apparent 'absolute no go' to persons who would visit the island's rainforest. It is absurd that an assessment can give a higher wilderness rating to Olive Lagoon (which has a road to it) than to Lake Malbena which is only accessible by more extended walking.

#### Loss of wilderness values due to helicopter flights

The additional information does not change my contention that the establishment of a helipad and relatively frequent helicopter flights ferrying visitors in and out will interfere with the wilderness values of this area. This has long been an inaccessible area except via extended walking and has been a peaceful location.

The proposed helicopter flight path follows a walking route from Lake Ina to Lake Malbena that heads across country to meet the Nive River near Lake Tidler and follows up the Nive River to Lake Malbena – I walked this only two years back. Helicopters flying overhead across this route would compromise the wilderness experience for traditional bushwalkers.

#### Conclusion

The additional information does not adequately address the concerns previously expressed around the traditional use and enjoyment of the Lake Malbena area by Tasmanian bushwalkers. There continues to be an elevated risk to the Halls island environment, especially with the" standing camp" now to consist of more permanent buildings on the island.

This development is still opposed by me.



### HOBART WALKING CLUB Inc.

G. P.O. BOX 753, HOBART, TASMANIA 7001

FOI 181005 Document 84

Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601 Email: <u>epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au</u>

13 July 2018

#### HOBART WALKING CLUB SUBMISSION

**Development referral number 2018/8177** WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

In response to the additional information provided:

#### Loss of heritage use of the hut and surrounding area.

The Halls Island hut is part of Tasmania's mountain huts heritage. These huts have long been used by bushwalkers on the usual understanding with the owners of huts that bushwalkers were welcome to use huts provided that they left the hut in the same condition as when they arrived.

As previously stated, the Hobart Walking Club has led a number of walks into the Lake Malbena area and has visited Halls Island and has occasionally camped near the hut on the island. There are few other camping opportunities close to Lake Malbena. The best alternative camping site close to the Lake is now being proposed as the helicopter landing site for the development. Other open camping sites are often wet while this site is well drained.

The very limited access to the hut and island and the small maximum party size of 4 that is proposed by the developer do little to restore the traditional access by bushwalkers to this area. A party size of 4 is the minimum safe party size recommended for our Club for extended off track walking. Club groups are more likely to be in the range of 4 - 8 members.

As previously stated, Lake Malbena is near the centre of an area that has become a more frequent destination for the Hobart Walking Club as Overland Track fees and quotas and rising visitor numbers in other popular areas such as the Walls of Jerusalem and Frenchmans Cap have displaced Club walkers from these areas.

#### Threat to the unique island environment

The pocket of Halls Island remnant pine forest/rainforest and peat beds have largely been untouched by the frequent fires that have ravaged the Central Plateau before it gained environmental protection. These pockets are not more resilient to fires but by their island location have luckily survived. A permanent campsite, building works and increased visitation still presents a higher risk to this unique and sensitive environment even with the proposed mitigation measures contained in the additional information provided by the proponent.

The HWC would challenge any assessment that gives a higher wilderness rating to Olive Lagoon (which has a road to it) than to Lake Malbena which is only accessible by more extended walking.

#### Loss of wilderness values due to helicopter flights

The additional information does not change the HWC contention that the establishment of a helipad and relatively frequent helicopter flights ferrying visitors in and out will interfere with the wilderness values of this area. This has long been an inaccessible area except via extended walking and has been a peaceful location.

As previously stated, the proposed helicopter flight path follows a walking route from Lake Ina to Lake Malbena that heads across country to meet the Nive River near Lake Tidler and follows up the Nive River to Lake Malbena. Helicopters flying overhead across this route would compromise the wilderness experience for traditional bush walkers.

#### Conclusion

In summary, the additional information does not adequately address HWC concerns around the traditional use and enjoyment of the Lake Malbena area by the Hobart Walking Club. There continues to be an elevated risk to the Halls island environment, especially with the" standing camp" now to consist of more permanent buildings on the island.

This development in its current form is still opposed by the Club.

Representatives of the Hobart Walking Club would be happy to meet with the proponent to further discuss HWC concerns and to see if an agreed resolution to its issues can be reached.

# s22

#### **BUSHWALKING TASMANIA SUBMISSION**

P.O. BOX 1190 Launceston Tas 7250 or <u>bushwalking.tasmania@iinet.net.au</u>

s22

**Development referral number 2018/8177** WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

In response to the additional information provided:

#### Loss of heritage use of the hut and surrounding area.

The Halls Island hut is part of Tasmania's mountain huts heritage. These huts have long been used by bushwalkers on the usual understanding with the owners of huts that bushwalkers were welcome to use huts provided that they left the hut in the same condition as when they arrived. Some of our members have helped with maintenance of the hut at Lake Malbena.

As previously indicated our members have had a number of walks into the Lake Malbena area, visited Halls Island and have occasionally camped near the hut on the island. There are few other camping opportunities close to Lake Malbena. The best alternative camping site close to the Lake is now being proposed as the helicopter landing site for the development. The very few other open camping sites are often wet while this site is well drained. Downdraft and noise would be encountered otherwise loss of the site to camping occurs – neither are commensurate with the use and values of the area.

The very limited access to the hut and island and the small maximum party size of 4 that is proposed by the developer do little to restore the traditional access by bushwalkers to this area. A party size of 4 is the minimum safe party size recommended for our Club for extended off track walking. Club groups are more likely to be in the range of 4-8 members.

As previously stated, Lake Malbena is near the centre of an area that has become a more frequent destination for members as Overland Track fees and quotas and rising visitor numbers in other popular areas such as the Walls of Jerusalem and Frenchmans Cap have displaced Club walkers from these areas.

#### Threat to the unique island environment

The pocket of Halls Island remnant pine forest / rainforest and peat beds have largely been untouched by the frequent fires that have ravaged the Central Plateau before it gained environmental protection. These pockets are not more resilient to fires, but by their island location have luckily survived. A permanent campsite, building works and increased visitation still presents a higher risk to this unique and sensitive environment even with the proposed mitigation measures contained in the additional information provided by the proponent. This heavily contrast the apparent 'absolute no go' to persons who would visit the island's rainforest.

BWT would challenge any assessment that gives a higher wilderness rating to Olive Lagoon (which has a road to it) than to Lake Malbena which is only accessible by more extended walking.

#### Loss of wilderness values due to helicopter flights

The additional information does not change our contention that the establishment of a helipad and relatively frequent helicopter flights ferrying visitors in and out will interfere with the wilderness values of this area. This has long been an inaccessible area except via extended walking and has been a peaceful location.

As previously stated the proposed helicopter flight path follows a walking route from Lake Ina to Lake Malbena that heads across country to meet the Nive River near Lake Tidler and follows up the Nive River to Lake Malbena. Helicopters flying overhead across this route would compromise the wilderness experience for traditional bushwalkers.

#### Conclusion

In summary, the additional information does not adequately address the concerns Bushwalking Tasmania has around the traditional use and enjoyment of the Lake Malbena area by Tasmanian bushwalkers. There continues to be an elevated risk to the Halls island environment, especially with the" standing camp" now to consist of more permanent buildings on the island.

This development is still opposed by us.

#### s22

**Bushwalking Tasmania** 

s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Tuesday, 17 July 2018 9:38 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Public Comment for EPBC Case Number: 2018/8177. Wild Drake. [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Monday, 16 July 2018 11:11 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Public Comment for EPBC Case Number: 2018/8177. Wild Drake.

EPBC Case Number: 2018/8177

EPBC Case Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

The Wild Drake proposal should be rejected outright as it will have a significant impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance - the World Heritage Values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA).

#### WILDERNESS:

Wilderness values are often referred to, as the principal value of the TWWHA and they underpin four (vii, viii, ix, and x) of the seven TWWHA criteria for selection on to the World Heritage list. The following points 1- 8, all relate to these four values.

1. The environment that will be impacted by this proposal is much larger than the building footprint and the extent of the impacted environment is actually a major part of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park (WOJ), which in-turn is a major part of the TWWHA, occupying the northeast corner. The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (TPWS) have used the National Wilderness Inventory (NWI) for more than 20 years to measure wilderness values and this methodology clearly shows that wilderness values including "Time Remoteness" and "Remoteness from Settlement" will be reduced significantly by this proposal and especially within the WOJ area.

2. The value of the affected area is priceless to Tasmanian's and people from all over the world who seek out or even just imagine a wilderness experience. People are motivated for a wilderness experience by many things including: mental health, physical challenge, escape, vistas, silence, social bonding and so on. The TWWHA is recognised as one of the highest quality wilderness areas in the world as stated in the TWWHA Management Plan (section 8.2).

3. The proponent aims to soften the impact on wilderness by using natural colour tones on building materials, flying on a specified route, and dove-tailing tour groups back-to-back, but these measures and all other measures included I the proposal will have little or no effect on the overall impact which is demonstrated by the NWI data.

4. The duration of the impact to wilderness is all-year as the proposal includes the option for winter tours and the buildings/helipad are to be left in place permanently for the life of the lease and beyond.

#### TWWHA Management Plan:

5. The TWWHA Management Plan is designed to protect the World Heritage Values yet the proposal is inconsistent with the TWWHA Management Plan, as by being in the self-reliant recreation zone it should:

"Maintain as far as possible, characteristics of remoteness and isolation; and retain a largely unmodified natural setting for a challenging experience that meets the needs of a relatively low number of self-reliant recreation users". As such, standing camps for year-round use made of steel and timber, helicopter access, helipads, commercial kitchens, electric /gas heating, and new tracks do not fit this zoning definition.

6. As recommended by the WHC, the TWWHA requires a Tourism Master Plan to set holistic goals and guidelines for tourism within the TWWHA. The Tasmanian government is clearly pushing for development in the TWWHA, which seems to be a momentary reaction to the political climate, and the recent rise in demand for wilderness/nature experiences. Reacting to demand was concerning for the WHC Reactive Monitoring Mission to the Tasmanian Wilderness in 2015: "It would indeed be alarming to use demand as the dominating criterion in tourism planning in a mixed World Heritage property." As such, there needs to be a TWWHA Tourism Master Plan in place before any commercial approvals are even assessed.

#### Tracks:

7. The increase in visitation to Mt Oana and any other nearby site is significant with potentially a 100fold increase to current visitation. At full occupancy, the tracks/routes would need to cater for potentially 720 people (including guides) plus any additional public walkers/media trips that get drawn to the site from product marketing. This high level of visitation could not rely on a "route/fanout" track management approach and would therefore require some specific tracks installed. However, the TWWHA Management Plan states "new tracks or reroutes are for environmental/management purposes only" (p79). Existing commercial operators in Tasmanian Parks have been restricted by track classifications up until now and it would be biased for an exemption to be made for this proposal. (Visitation figures were derived from: the current TPWS track classification for a "route"-indicating client to guest ratio is 2 guides to 2 guests; max of 30 group departures with 6 clients = 180 clients, meaning 90 trips with2 guides and 2 guests; this figure doubles for an out-and-back route).

#### RAA:

8. The Tasmanian Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) process is flawed and is not transparent. The Tasmanian Planning Commission currently has the RAA process under review after voicing concerns about the process. Yet the RAA is still the main document used here to disseminate information and base decisions on. No commercial approvals should be assessed until the RAA review is complete.

9. The Wild Drake proposal has a specific activity in the RAA that is blacked-out from public view – how can appropriate public comment be made to the EPBC if the proposal is incomplete?

10. World Heritage Value III reads: "To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared".

If interpretation of Indigenous sites (e.g. at Mary Tarn) was permitted within this proposal, this could lead to unwanted degradation of the site once the general public knows its location. This is an unfortunate reality but the outcome would be worse than any positives arising from the interpretation. It has happened many times before including on 26/5/2016, when the ABC reported "Vandals have defaced "priceless" Indigenous rock art believed to be up to 8,000 years old in Tasmania's Central Highlands." In addition, as a precedent to managing indigenous sites in the TWWHA, significant indigenous sites along the Overland Track have been kept secret from the public/commercial operators and this management decision should continue with this proposal. 11. The full RAA is not approved yet so the full business plan is in question. If only stage one gets approval for development, it would mean all activities would be confined to Lake Malbena activities or activities within the standing camp. As such, no EPBC assessment should me made unless the RAA is first approved in full.

12. The proponent is claiming that having ownership of a Hall's Hut on Lake Malbena gives Wild Drake Pty Ltd a right to start a commercial development. However, Hall's Hut was never a commercial hut and the lease of the hut has never been of a commercial nature. Any impact to World Heritage values from the existence of the original Hall's Hut is trivial compared with a commercial development of this scale. If Daniel Hackett wants to pay tribute to Reg Hall, then he should use the existing hut for his own family and friends, just as Reg did.

13. The proposed raised boardwalk would not lead to "improved conditions and protection for the EPBCA listed sphagnum peatland" – to improve conditions you would need to take the track out of the peatland.

#### Helicopters:

14. Designating a flight path to minimise helicopter interference with wedge-tailed eagles and the public is commendable, however in the Tasmanian alpine area this is unpractical and unrealistic because low cloud, fog and high winds are often encountered in this area and due to various atmospheric conditions these conditions are never the same each day. Therefore helicopter pilots regularly use alternate flight paths.

15. Fly-neighbourly advice (FNA) is listed as a mechanism minimise the impact of helicopters but in reality, we still see helicopters breaking the FNA on a regular basis. In the proponents own words "The helicopter flight is a key element of the product facilitating high-quality aerial overview and interpretation of the cultural landscape". This adds pressure on the pilot to break the FNA e.g. to slow down for the sake of the client's experience.

Finally, I believe Tasmanians are fed-up with the state government (all sides of politics) moving the goal posts to suit their mates and/or political donors. The sneaky zoning amendments to the TWWHA Management Plan for 2016 and the EOI process both smell of corruption and this is an unnecessary evil. As a federal minister, please see through the smoke screen of state politics and help to preserve what Tasmanians have fought so hard to secure up to this point in time.

#### Regards, s22, 16/07/2018

Contact:



The referral from Wild Drake Pty Ltd is deficient and contains information that is potentially misleading and incorrect. The application should either be refused outright or considered a controlled action.

My evidence is presented below;

1. Helicopter impacts inside the TWWHA – Inadequately assessed and recognised as not consistent with the wilderness qualities of the area by the proponent themselves.

The referral documents says;

The flight corridor itself has been designed to ensure that no walking routes are crossed, and the route itself is to the eastern periphery of the TWWHA.

Due to the location of the flight corridor, there are no anticipated impacts to any Wilderness Zones in the TWWHA.

The assessment of the impact of helicopter usage within the TWWHA is entirely inadequate and the proposed noise levels are far greater than those recommended within natural areas elsewhere, including in New Zealand.

Figure 1 of the 'Helicopter Flight Route'<sup>1</sup> reveals just how inaccurate the referral documentation is.

The proponents Flight Path figure omits the TWWHA zone. I have overlayed the proponents flight path showing the actual TWWHA zone (purple).



Figure 1 TWWHA shown in purple. Proponents proposed fight path shown in red

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/\_entity/annotation/081b0233-1c80-e811-95dc-005056ba00a8/a71d58ad-4cba-48b6-8dab-f3091fc31cd5?t=1531436939085

The flight path is not on the "eastern periphery" of the TWWHA. A simple desktop exercise reveals that at its closest point, the flight path is actually closer to the internationally renowned "Overland Track" then it is to the eastern boundary of the TWWHA.

- The Flight path is in fact up to 10 kilometres inside the TWWHA.
- 98% of the Helicopter flight path is entirely within the TWWHA.

The statement that "Due to the location of the flight corridor, there are no anticipated impacts to any Wilderness Zones in the TWWHA" is false and the referral documentation is misleading.

The documentation actually highlights the inadequacy of the referral by stating;

A brief desktop study of helicopter sound-monitoring studies indicates that a discernible noise footprint is detectable within an approximate 4km lateral distance of a B2/B3 Squirrel helicopter.

### By the proponents own admission they have tried to quantify the impact of helicopter usage on the TWWHA based upon the findings of a *"brief desktop study".*

This is completely inadequate.

Further. The proponents 'Impact mitigation measures' are inconsistent with suggested helicopter noise impacts in natural areas around the world. The referral document says;

The FNA (Fly Neighbourly Advice) developed for the Halls Island includes a recommended flight altitude of 1000metres+, which reduces the maximum point-impact of any noise. A desktop study of previous papers relating to helicopter use suggest that at this altitude, noise from the B2/B3 Squirrel is reduced from ~75dB, to somewhere around 60dB.

75 to 60dB is a completely unacceptable noise level within the TWWHA. For example, the New Zealand Government has guideline levels of between 30 and 45 dB(A) as being appropriate for New Zealand national parks (Hunt 1999).<sup>2</sup>

The proponent is suggesting that noise levels of more than double those recommended in New Zealand is somehow consistent with the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

The flight path is directly adjacent to a large plateau area known as the 'Western Lakes'. Despite what the referral documentation appears to suggest this is a significant wilderness area that is frequently used by people to seek solitude, silence, fish, walk and enjoy the World Heritage Area.

Being a plateau environment I contend that the noise from a helicopter in this area will be heard at well over 4 kms as the proponent suggests.

How would this impact upon the wilderness values of TWWHA?

In the absence of any detailed noise modelling and the reliance on a "brief desktop study" to determine the noise impact of what will be a permanent development involving helicopters in the TWWHA the referral is simply not consistent with the management of a World Heritage Area and the statements made within the referral documentation in reference to the flight path are false.

The referral documents also state;

HLS siting ensures no noise impact on the TWWHA Wilderness Zone on start-up or setdown, and HLS is located outside of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park (WOJNP), in the Central Plateau Conservation Area (CPCA).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/science-and-technical/sfc314entire.pdf

Submission EPBC referral 2018 / 8177

WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

Based upon the TWWHA zoning maps and the proponents plan the "HLS location adjacent to Halls Island" in in fact entirely within the TWWHA well within 4 kilometres from the Wilderness Zone. From review of the zoning maps, the HLS is actually within 1 km from the Wilderness Zone.

Didn't the proponents admit that the helicopter will be heard at 4 kilometres away?

The impact upon the Wilderness Zone of helicopter usage in such a remote location is unacceptable and inconsistent with the TWWHA.

There is no stronger case to support the argument that helicopter usage in this part of the TWWHA known as the 'Western Lakes' than those from the proponent of this referral. The proponent Mr Daniel Hackett when discussing his plans for the Lake Malbena commercial development has previously stated;

"Re-enforcing World Heritage Area Values"

There are a few things we definitely won't be doing;

 We will not be applying to fly customers into the Western Lakes. We believes that one of the greatest parts of the Western Lakes fishery is the remoteness... The remoteness and solitude is further protected by the WHA management plan which actually prohibits the use of helicopters to takes angles in/out of the WHA"<sup>3</sup>. (See Appendix B)

What has changed aside from the revision to the Management Plan? The remoteness and solitude remains the greatest part of the Western Lake. By the proponents own admission what they are proposing will detract from these important values, indeed, the values are what formed part of the TWWHA nomination.

#### 2. Flora and Fauna Habitat Assessment November 2016

"I didn't survey the whole island. Concentrated on the footprint" (Author of the Flora and Fauna assessment documentation on social media on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2018)<sup>4</sup>

This comment appears to be made in reference to another person who posted a photo of a plant specimen, a shrub that they had found on Halls Island and that was not found during the Flora and Fauna Survey and subsequently not included within the *Flora and Fauna Survey and Habitat Assessment* that comprises the EPBC referral documentation.

In response the author of the flora and fauna report goes on to state;

#### "Didn't pick that one up when I was there but not surprising it's present"

This public statement is from the individual who conducted the flora and fauna assessment and authored the referral document titled *Flora and Fauna Survey and Habitat Assessment* 

The statements contradict point 1.2.2 of the flora and fauna report which states;

Field work was undertaken on foot by one observer on the 24th and 25th of October, 2016. Vegetation was mapped <u>across the island</u> in accordance with units defined in TASVEG 3.06. Three quarters of the island (excluding the northwest quadrant <u>where no actions are</u> <u>proposed and no impacts are anticipated based on the vegetation</u>) were surveyed for vascular plants using a meandering area search technique. Additional effort was focussed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> https://web.archive.org/web/20100624045300/http://riverfly.com.au:80/western-lakes-campoutssustainable-eco-tourism-into-the-future/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This is a publicly visible comment made on social media on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2018 from the author who undertook the Flora and Fauna assessment on Halls Island (see attachment A).

#### Submission EPBC referral 2018 / 8177

WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

around the <u>potential</u> impact footprint, within potential threatened species habitats and within threatened vegetation communities. Plant species lists were compiled within each vegetation type using the current census of Tasmania plants.

By admitting that they "didn't survey the whole island", the referral is inadequate, inconsistent and incomplete. Point 1.2.2 also states;

The potential impact areas on the island were not definitively marked on the ground, but the proponent was present to identify proposed actions and sites, which are approximately indicated in Figure 2.

The referral documentation appears to omit an entire species (*Olearia phlogopappa subsp. subrepanda*) the report implies that the whole island was surveyed and then admits that survey was focussed on the 'footprint' that was 'approximately indicated'.

Section 4.1 of the Flora and Fauna report also states with regard to an EPBC listed species;

Although it was not observed during our survey, the patches of MSP on Hall's Island are suitable habitat for the EPBCA vulnerable *Pseudocephalozia paludicola*. The species is <u>unlikely to have been overlooked</u>, but if it is in fact present, a significant impact is likely to be avoided by following the recommended prescriptions for the avoidance of trampling and prevention of fire within the MSP community. The probability of any other EPBCA listed flora species occurring within the impact area is negligible.

- (a) Given the information presented above, how can the Commonwealth be satisfied that the EPBC *Pseudocephalozia paludicola* "has not been overlooked"
- (b) Given the public comments from the author, how can the referral possibly be considered adequate for determining the presence of potentially EPBC listed species and the subsequent impacts from development within a site that is listed as a World Heritage Area?
- (c) How can the Commonwealth possibly be satisfied that the proposal will not significantly impact upon EPBC values if the flora and fauna report has omitted an entire species?
- (d) What other species "didn't they pick up"? Could there be EPBC species that were not identified?

#### 3. Provides no certainty with regard to true footprint or scale and therefore impact.

Page 15 and 19 of the 'response to request for further information' says;

- (i) Appropriate footprint design and techniques for the three accommodation huts and the communal kitchen hut, with exact locations and size of huts to be determined in conjunction with the (Tas) Minister;
- (ii) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the (Tas) Minister, helicopters must only land and take-off from the recognised landing pad, the final location to be determined in accordance with Schedule A;

Given this statement, the proponents plans as submitted and what forms the entire basis of the referral and almost all of the mitigation measures is effectively meaningless because it is open to be simply changed "in conjunction with the (Tas) Minister".

What would the impact of these changes be? What is the 'threshold' at which modification of the plans would require notification and referral to the Commonwealth?

The proponents own Management Plan says on page 64 'The Standing Camp site selection has been a result of adopting the North Barker Flora and Fauna Assessment (21 November 2016).

So, it is the footprint that forms the entire basis of the Flora and Fauna assessment including the assessment on EPBC communities.

The exact siting and size of the proposal is what forms the entire basis of the 'mitigation' measures specifically in reference to mitigating impacts upon the EPBC listed alpine sphagnum bog?

The location of the helicopter landing site is also completely open to be changed by the proponent and the Tasmanian Minister.

Any change in siting and size of the development fundamentally changes the proposal and the impacts.

### 4. Fails to fully address the impact of infrastructure on EPBC listed 'alpine sphagnum bog and associated fens' (endangered under the EPBCA).

The proposal involves two boardwalks being constructed "in order to cross two MSP bog areas identified in the Flora and Fauna Assessment". This will involve raised, 'perforated board walking<sup>5</sup> through and above the EPBCA community. The proponents discusses how the perforated design will ensure that the plants beneath will continue to have access to sun and rain.

What the proponents fail to acknowledge is that such infrastructure will remove snow cover beneath the board walk and in the immediate vicinity. Section 2.4 of the Commonwealth Governments own alpine-sphagnum-bogs-associated-fens-recovery-plan says;

Low temperatures, permanent water, and potentially long periods of <u>snow cover</u> each year also influence the occurrence of the ecological community and the specialised flora and fauna it is composed of.

The manner in which bog and fen communities gradually regulate water from the spring snow melt may also be important to the survival of numerous other ecological communities (Good, 1992).

If the bogs and fens become damaged, their water holding capacity is frequently reduced or destroyed as a result of erosion and channelling (Ashton and Williams, 1989; Wahren et al., 1996).<sup>6</sup>

The proponent makes no reference to the impact of permanent infrastructure on this fundamental ecological requirement of the community. They do use a reference on page 60 of the 'response to request for further information' where they state;

on the success of the raised boardwalk at Kosciusko by Hill and Pickering (2005) who revealed that 'for a raised steel mesh walkway there was no difference in vegetation under the walkway, on the verge, and 3 m away. In contrast, for a non-hardened track

Does this study relate to impacts of such structures above and next to 'alpine sphagnum bog and associated fens'?

If not, it is completely meaningless.

How can the Commonwealth be satisfied that any reduction in snow cover as a result of infrastructure over and near the EPBC listed 'alpine sphagnum bog and associated fens' will not have a significant impact when the recovery plan acknowledges the importance of prolonged snow cover on the community?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Section 2.3 (e) 'Additional Information'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/d38256d6-3e09-4906-a707-4659f0e42213/files/alpine-sphagnum-bogs-associated-fens-recovery-plan.pdf

#### 5. Addendum Documentation 'Vegetation Survey 14th June 2018'

The document contains a paragraph on the fire history Halls Island. The report acknowledges that the island has;

Fires far less frequently across the than elsewhere on the Central Plateau.

In stating this, the report acknowledges that the natural values and the vegetation composition on Halls Island is fact entirely unique within the Central Plateau of Tasmania and unique within the World Heritage Area. Such uniqueness would be completely lost with the significant increase in the risk of fire associated with increasing visitation. It is well documented that increasing visitation in natural areas increases the risk of fire<sup>7</sup>.

The fire history section relies upon two images. One of a coppicing eucalyptus and another on a eucalyptus containing 'trunk damage'. Eucalyptus trees coppice for multiple reasons including, stress, physical damage from fallen trees and browsing during the early stages of growth. The fire history paragraph is inadequate and baseless.

The issue of fire on the island is significant because it is what makes Halls Island so significant and arguably the most significant fire refuge within the Tasmanian Central Plateau and the World Heritage Area. This is a point that the referral documentation appears to acknowledge.

- (e) Is such an increase in risk to this unique environment consistent with the management of the site as a World Heritage Area?
- (f) What liability will the proponent incur if, as a result of their activities the irreplaceable and potentially genetically distinct fire intolerant plants on the island are burnt and lost forever?

#### 6. 'Helipad Sites'

The report contains an image (plate 4) of alpine fernland and states,

The character of this vegetation is moderately robust and able to tolerate compaction from helicopter landing.

### Aside from an area of solid rock, what vegetation type could possibly 'tolerate' a helicopter landing on it multiple times a week?

Such a definitive statement must be required to be supported with evidence.

In the absence of supporting evidence the statement is baseless and suggests a willingness to simply argue for the proposal rather than account for the obvious impact that a helicopter would have landing on *any* vegetation type.

#### 7. Location Plan – and Site Plan

The document named Location Plan Halls Island 1:4,000 by Culmulus Studios contains only a single helipad site (Helipad site 2). Helipad site 1 is missing. The proposal appears to have two helipad sites? It is not clear to the reader. This is inadequate.

The document named Site Plan – Standing Camp 1:500 shows a '10 metre boardwalk to the edge of the 'on island customer exclusion zone' (the remnant area of rainforest). Why is there a boardwalk going from the hut to the edge of a 'customer exclusion zone?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>https://books.google.com.au/books?id=HuaGXdMTTmcC&pg=PA80&lpg=PA80&dq=Fire+frequency+and+incr easing+visitation+natural+areas&source=bl&ots=DdgBc7JVM9&sig=7qadwiM85Pv\_FlD1QVoGcKCkM3A&hl=en &sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwidrM350JjcAhUGJJQKHSRHDqsQ6AEIYjAG#v=onepage&q=Fire%20frequency%20and%20 increasing%20visitation%20natural%20areas&f=false

#### 8. Document titled 'Consideration of Matters of National Environmental Significance'

#### The proponent states in reference to mitigating fire risk under section 6) A2.2 (f):

The design must satisfy, or be capable of satisfying, all applicable requirements for buildings being built in bushfire prone areas under the Building Code of Australia (Code). The design must encompass appropriate fire risk mitigation principles.

The Building Code of Australia in bushfire prone areas requires the establishment of an area of reduced fuel loads around infrastructure. i.e. the removal and or modification of vegetation. This would also likely be a requirement of ensuring the safety of customers would it not? The proposal makes no reference to potentially requiring modification of fuel loads on the island which would have a significant environmental impact.

#### 9. Public access

The proponent's statements regarding public access are contradictory, based upon a false assumption of public usage and are entirely inconsistent with the fundamental principle of World Heritage Places;

World Heritage sites are places that are important to and belong to everyone, regardless of where they are located. They are an irreplaceable legacy that the global community wants to protect for the future.<sup>8</sup>

Under 9.1 of the additional information the proponents says;

Recognising the importance of Reg Hall in the history of Tasmanian bushwalking and the foundation of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, and his association with Halls Island, the new lessees of Halls Island intend to continue to allow similar arrangements and levels of public access.

The new lessees of Halls Island <u>intend</u> to continue to allow similar arrangements and levels of public access.

And under 9.2 the proponent says says;

Records from the past 26 years of use at Halls Island indicate 92 visits, with a total of 271 guests. The lessees <u>may</u> permit public access to up to 3 groups per year, with a maximum group size of 4 persons.

Such a reference to 'records from the past 26 years' appears to be based upon log book entries in the Halls Island Hut. I have never written in the log book despite having been to the hut more than 4 times. I contend that this statement and the figures on public usage are baseless and not accurate. I know of at least 15 individuals who have visited Halls Island in the past 10 months alone.

The figure from the proponent of 92 visits in 26 years is not an accurate indication of public visitation.

The common feature of all properties inscribed on the World Heritage List is that they meet the requirement of Outstanding Universal Value. Outstanding Universal Value is defined as cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/tasmanian-wilderness

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/tasmanian-wilderness

The referral leaves the proponent with the freedom to simply exclude the public from Halls Island all together.

This is completely unacceptable and is in no way consistent with the management of a World Heritage Area.

#### 10. Does not show location of all infrastructure

The proponents listed lease conditions 5) 4.1.8.1: (Water quality / CFEV Values) requires;

Installation of complete-capture sewage and greywater pods. Greywater will be back-loaded with each trip, for disposal outside of the TWWHA. Sewage will be collected annually in pods and emptied off-site.

This infrastructure does not appear to be shown anywhere in the referral documentation. Furthermore, given that the huts are proposed on the edge of and uphill of the EPBC listed community it is entirely possible that they will be located in or next to the EPBC community.

Without this knowledge it not possible to understand impacts including on EPBC values.

#### 11. Inconsistent statements

#### (a) Unable to determine true extent of infrastructure

The 'Halls Island site plan' shows two sections of boardwalk construction. The flora and fauna report assessed the impact of these two proposed sections of boardwalk.

Page 64 of the proponents 'Protected Matters Environmental Management Plan' says;

Ensure on-island routes/tracks avoid Pherosphaera hookeriana. Where existing routes pass this species (eg: near the natural rock landing), use short lengths of boardwalk

This suggests additional boardwalk construction will occur, none of which is shown on any site plans or which has been included in the flora and fauna assessment.

How much board walk, where will it be located, what will the impact be? Will this involve impacts upon EPBC listed values?

No one knows.

#### (b) Impossible commitment

Page 27 'Additional proponent proposed measures';

HLS siting ensures no noise impact on the TWWHA Wilderness Zone on start-up or setdown, and HLS is located outside of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park (WOJNP), in the Central Plateau Conservation Area (CPCA).

Based upon a look at the zoning maps and the proponents plan the "HLS location is adjacent to Halls Island". This is entirely within the TWWHA and less than 1 kilometre from the Wilderness Zone.

It is impossible to state "no noise impact on the TWWHA Wilderness on start up or set down".

The only way that the proponent can comply with this condition is to not use helicopters at all.

### (c) The applicant has previously recognised the inappropriateness of helicopter usage in the TWWHA

"We will not be applying to fly customers into the Western Lakes. We believe that one of the greatest parts of the Western Lake Fishery is the remoteness, and the need to use your own energy and initiative to get there. This remoteness of solitude is further protected by the WHA management plan

Submission EPBC referral 2018 / 8177

WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

which actually prohibits the use of helicopters to take anglers in and out of the WHA" River Fly Pty Ltd.  $^{\rm 10}$ 

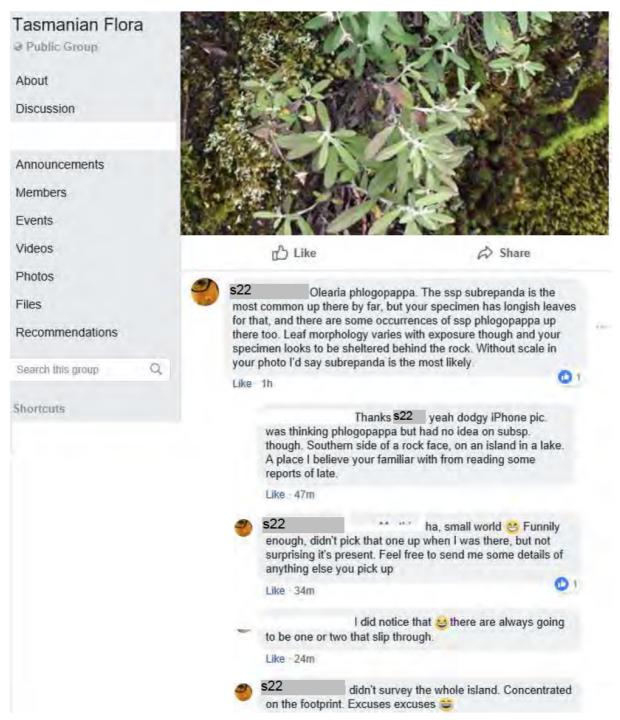
What has changed? The Area is still a World Heritage Area and as the applicant states, one of the greatest parts of the Western Lake Fishery is the remoteness.

The proposal, by allowing people to be on Halls Island is under 25 minutes is the antithesis to remoteness it is an affront to those who do venture into the Western Lakes.

It is entirely inconsistent with the management of the TWWHA and it is not appropriate and should be refused.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> https://image.ibb.co/d3fzhH/riverfly\_WHA.jpg

#### Appendix A



#### **APPENDIX B**

| internet archive | http://riverfly.com.au:80/western-lakes-campouts-sustainable-eco-tourism-into-the-future/ |  | Go MAY JUN                    |
|------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|
|                  | <b>11 captures</b><br>24 Jun 2010 - 8 Mar 2017  |  | <b>24</b><br>2009 <b>2010</b> |
| ►                |   | Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. This would see our business pay a<br>commercial lease back to Parks and Wildlife Tasmania (and the Tasmanian<br>people), which will then be used to manage our great National Parks and<br>World Heritage Areas. This is a great example of how our small business<br>can contribute directly back to the management of the Western Lakes for<br>the future.   |                               |
|                  |   | Re-enforcing the World Heritage Area values  |                               |
|                  |   | As we work towards environmental best practice, there are a few things that we definitely won't be doing:  |                               |
|                  |   | <ol> <li>We will not be applying to fly customers into the Western Lakes. We<br/>believe that one of the greatest parts of the Western Lakes fishery is the<br/>remoteness, and the need to use your own energy and initiative to get<br/>there. This remoteness and solitude is further protected by the WHA<br/>Management Plan, which actually prohibits the use of helicopters to take<br/>anglers in/out of the WHA.</li> </ol>   |                               |
|                  |   | 2. We will not be building a private hut or lodge! One of the great<br>enjoyments of our Western Lakes campouts is indeed the camping. In a<br>world full of stuffy-office blocks and hotel rooms filled with recycled air, we<br>can see the value and appeal of sleeping under the canvas. As such, our<br>camp will remain as just that – a tent camp utilizing 2-3 man canvas tents<br>for accommodation. To ensure these values are protected in the Western<br>Lakes, the WHA actually prohibits the building of private huts or lodges in<br>the World Heritage Area. |                               |
|                  |   | If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Daniel Hackett<br>at RiverFly Tasmania. You can read testimonials, including those from<br>campouts customers here  |                               |

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Tuesday, 17 July 2018 9:40 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: EPBC Number 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Monday, 16 July 2018 11:44 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: EPBC Number 2018/8177

EPBC No. 2018/8177 Wild Drake Pty. Ltd./Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

Submission bys22

<u>, 17th April 2018</u>

I am an avid fly fisherman and bushwalker I have made many trips into the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. I have been to Lake Malbena and the Chinamans plains area. This is a remote part of Tasmania that has had little human intervention and as such the fauna and flora in this area abounds including the Tasmanian wedge tailed eagle. I wish to put an objection to this development proposal based on the environment impact on the fauna and flora in the area, in particular the threatened Tasmanian wedge tailed eagle due to the helicopter access.

Australia Day Long weekend 2007, s22 and I walked into the Lake Malbena area. s22 and I were standing in the clearing at the position marked out by proponent Daniel Hackett as a possible helipad. This area is open heathland we witnessed an abundance of fauna, their tracks and droppings.

1

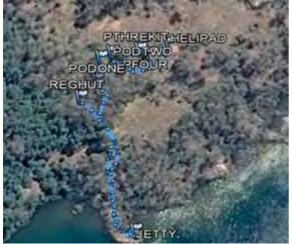
Helipad position from proposal <sup>(1)</sup>.



s22

Whilst in this clearing we spotted a wedge tailed eagle sitting in a tree on the ridge line overlooking this open area between us and Lake Malbena. From its position it would have an ideal vantage point for prey. It took flight and past overhead at close range and proceeded to circle above us for a long period.

The Flora and Fauna Assessment <sup>(2)</sup> dated 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 by North Barker Ecosystem Services notes that they did not find any wedge tailed eagle nest on the island and that the island would not support a brood or litter. Their assessment was based on the proponent specifying that the proposed helipad was to be on the island itself.



The current proposal  $^{(1)}$  sees the helipad situated in the clearing off the island .

A proper assessment or survey of the area around the helipad and flight path has not been undertaken. North Barker was commissioned by the proponent Daniel Hackett to do the assessment. It however cannot be considered an independent assessment. They openly advertise.

"At North Barker we focus on client success; we achieve this through innovative thinking that reconciles development with regulatory requirements"

Their only off island assessment was:

"No eagle nests are known or likely to occur within 500 m or 1 km line of sight"

Assuming the helicopter flight path is from Derwent Bridge it will pass close to eagle sightings and nests. The map from <u>http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/threatened-tasmanian-eagles-recovery-plan-2006-2010</u> shows a large number of nests in this general area. The Threatened Tasmanian eagle recovery plan 2006-2010 also specifies as its no 1 action.

- Map areas and Search Strategic Areas of Habitat
- Search for Nests Prior to Disturbance on all Land Tenures
- Identify New Threats

The Threatened Tasmanian eagle recovery plan 2006-2010 also states.

The vast majority of known nests occur on State Forest and private property, 47.8% and 42.7%, respectively. This is partly due to the majority of suitable eagle habitat occurring on State Forest and private land but also **due to the majority of nest site searches conducted as a result of forestry activities**.

It is obvious from this statement and maps contained within the Threatened Tasmanian eagle recovery plan 2006-2010 that a comprehensive wedge tailed eagle survey of the Walls of Jerusalem National park has not been undertaken. It is inconceivable that nest sites and actively foraging eagles do not occur inside the park given the large number particularly to the south east that have been found just outside the park boundaries, as a result of search areas in forestry.

The wedge-tailed Eagle Nesting habitat model found here

http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/fpa\_services/planning\_assistance/advisory\_planning\_tools/wedge-tailed\_eagle\_model

Clearly shows that the area within 1 km of the proposed Helicopter landing sites have favourable habitat for nesting.

The 2018-8177-additional-info-proposedhelicopterroute.pdf states that the undocumented search around Lake Malbena is only valid till May 2018.

Prior to any decision being made on this proposal an independent assessment should be made not only based on Hall's island resident fauna and flora but on the likely impact including off island helipads, walking tracks and flight path.

It is very clear that the proponent is changing the goal posts on this development, the proponent has no interest or qualifications in poetry reading or astronomy, he is a fishing guide, and is using this as guise to run helicopter flights for his flyfishing customers. The State Government have been very secretive in the lease of Halls Island that they have signed away to the proponent. They have refused an FOI request for the information around this lease to be released to me. Saying it is not in the public interest.

I am pretty sure that once the proponent establishes his permanent standing camp on the island he will refuse any request for public access to the island. Along with the lack of funding to the PWS service in Tasmania very little checking will be done on the island to make sure Flora and Fauna are protected.

Please protect this wilderness area from being exploited and trashed.



S77

(2) The Halls Island , Lake Malbena, Walls of Jerusalem Flora and Fauna Assessment date 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 by North Barker Ecosystem Services

16 July 2018

### Re: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas (2018/8177)

Lake Malbena in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park is recognised as being of high wilderness character.

The proposed commercial tourism development at Halls Island, Lake Malbena by Wild Drake Pty Ltd will have a demonstrable negative impact on the 'naturalness' and 'remoteness from settlement' components of wilderness. Similarly, the establishment of a private, commercial helipad will impact 'time remoteness' and degrade wilderness.

The Lake Malbena 'top end' resort, serviced by helicopters, will have a destructive impact on the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area's wild Central Plateau region. It is difficult to conceive of a more wilderness-destructive place on the plateau for such a development.

Given the significance of wilderness to Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area and the negative impact this proposal would have on wilderness, the Minister should be satisfied that the action to construct and operate private, commercial accommodation at Halls Island is unacceptable. The proposal will have a significant impact on a unique attribute of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area which underpins the TWWHA's Outstanding Universal Values and is crucial to their integrity.

Aboriginal heritage. The nearby site which the developer intends taking top-paying visitors to view is a remote rock feature, enhanced centuries ago by human carving. This development lifts the threat to the site from vandalism of the sort against Aboriginal art works on the Tarkine coast and in the Derwent Valley in recent years.

Halls Island is in the remotest region of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, which has been part of the World Heritage Area since 1982. Halls Island has not been burnt. It is a safety zone for king billy pine rainforest and sphagnum peatland which have suffered widespread depletion through grazing, fire and drought since European occupation. It is a refuge for alpine Mawson pines, listed as vulnerable to extinction, which hug its southern shore. It is a fastness for fragile low alpine rainforest.

The remoteness and fragile ecosystem of the Lake Malbena environs should not be lost or put at risk for a project to accommodate one in 20,000 visitors to Tasmania, even if, as the proponent claims, it results in "improved on-island conditions protecting peatlands and waterways through the installation and availability of sewage containment systems on-island".

No proposed management actions can mitigate these impacts on wilderness. The project is unacceptable.

On behalf of Bob Brown Foundation s22

BOB BROWN FOUNDATION ACTION FOR EARTH

(03) 6294 0620

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LEVEL 4, 116 BATHURST ST HOBART TAS 7000 PO BOX 4586 HOBART TAS 7000 ABN 51 634 785 002 BOBBROWN.ORG.AU



Assessments Victoria and Tasmania Section, Assessments and Governance Branch, Department of the Environment and Energy, CANBERRA, ACT, 2601

By email: <a href="mailto:epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au">epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au</a>

19 July 2018

### Re: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania (Ref: 2018/8177).

The Wilderness Society has a long interest in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA), having been involved in processes regarding its inscription, extension, defence and management. Over many years, we have engaged strongly with the World Heritage Committee, Reactive Monitoring Missions (RMM) and Management Plan development processes, among other things.

The Wilderness Society does not support the approval of the proposed commercial tourism development at Halls Island, Lake Malbena ('the proposal') and believes it will have an unacceptable impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), particularly World Heritage Values and Australia's commitments to its World Heritage Convention obligations.

The proposed development is inconsistent with the protection of Outstanding Universal Value, including wilderness character. The wilderness character of the TWWHA underpins its Outstanding Universal Value and is crucial to its integrity. Degrading wilderness with new tourism developments contradicts World Heritage Committee requests and Reactive Monitoring Mission (RMM) recommendations; the proposal violates provisions of the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan and is inconsistent with the legislated management objectives of national parks under Tasmanian legislation.

The 2018 World Heritage Committee decision has welcomed the "*development of additional assessment criteria for commercial tourism proposals and requirements to consider impacts on the wilderness values of the property*" as reflected in the 2016 TWWHA management plan. However, any objective analysis of the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) confirms that consideration of the proposal's impact on wilderness value is superficial. No detailed wilderness assessment has been undertaken and proposed mitigation measures are either irrelevant (eg. limiting group size) or ineffective (construction from "muted bush tones").

Additionally, informing the World Heritage Committee's decision, its expert Advisory Bodies' State of Conservation report specifically "raises concerns" over the rezoning of parts of the wilderness zone to allow tourism development. Lake Malbena is an example of where this zoning change has manifested in the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan. This undermines the credibility of the state-based assessment and genuine efforts to protect wilderness and meet the expectations of UNESCO.

It should be noted that the proponent himself made a submission to the TWWHA Management Plan consultation process, opposing the establishment of commercial air access to Lake Ina, several kilometres to the south of Lake Malbena, in an area assessed as of significantly lower wilderness value than Lake Malbena (TWWHA Management Plan 2016). In a welcome acknowledgement of the negative impacts new points of air access has on the experience of others, including the wilderness experience, the proponent submitted that:

The Wilderness Society (Tasmania) Inc 130 Davey Street, Hobart, TASMANIA 7000 AUSTRALIA Telephone 03 6224 1550 Facsimile 03 6223 5112 Email tasmania@wilderness.org.au www.wilderness.org.au "The landing of sea-planes on Lake Ina would have a strong negative affect on our ability to offer our high-end, private and secluded guided fly fishing trips based on Lake Ina, due to the disturbance and increased human pressure associated with landings and additional use of the immediate area, just 300 metres from our camp. People fish with us due to the secluded nature of the product, the wilderness setting, and the private nature of the camp, all of which the proposed helicopter/seaplane access within 300metres of our camp would deny."

Given the available information it can be determined that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the high-value wilderness character of the area. Wilderness is a core value of the TWWHA, was a critical component of nomination documents, is acknowledged as an underpinning component of Outstanding Universal Value and is "fundamental to the integrity" of the property.

As such, the Minister should be satisfied that the proposed action is clearly unacceptable.

Failing this, the proposal should be considered a controlled action and subject to rigorous assessment following the proponent's publication of a Public Environment Report. This should include an Environmental Impact Assessment that specifically looks at the impact of the proposal on the wilderness character of the property.

Please refer to the full submission below.

Yours sincerely,



The Wilderness Society

#### Full submission

Re: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania (Ref: 2018/8177).



Lake Malbena

#### Context

Since 2015 the World Heritage Committee has urged the Australian Government protect wilderness from new tourism development, explicitly identifying wilderness as a component of the Outstanding Universal Value of the TWWHA.

For example, decision 39 COM 7B.35 in 2015 urged Australia to review the then draft Management Plan for the property to:

"ensure that it provides adequate protection for its OUV" including through the "...establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, <u>including its wilderness character</u> and cultural attribute" (emphasis added).

This was reinforced by the recommendations of the 2015 UNESCO Reactive Monitoring Mission. All 20 RMM recommendations were unconditionally accepted by both the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, including via media statements and State of Conservation Reports (SOC) to the World Heritage Centre in 2016 and 2017. As per the SOC Reports, the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan is the vehicle by which these commitments were to be enshrined.

The wilderness values mapping undertaken by the Tasmanian government, included as Map 7 in the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan, identifies Lake Malbena as having high wilderness value (pg 14-18). It describes wilderness as the "quality which underpins the success in meeting all four criteria for a natural property and the basis for the maintenance of its integrity" (pg 43).

The same plan uses a threshold of 12 (together with an understanding of existing use and future rehabilitation outcomes) in the determination of the location of the "wilderness zone" (pg 177).

Wilderness value has been a consistent theme of nomination and assessment documents pertaining to inscription and extension for the TWWHA. Until 2016, the TWWHA Management Plan contained an overarching management objective to "maintain or enhance wilderness quality" and wilderness has long been considered the "primary tool" (1999 TWWHA Management Plan) by which Australia can demonstrate the ongoing protection of World Heritage Values.

Approval of the Lake Malbena development, with its associated impacts on wilderness, would undermine the protection of OUV, including integrity.

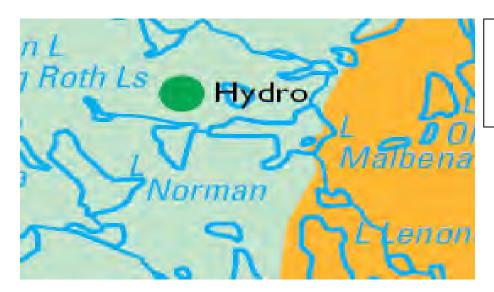
The 1999 TWWHA Management Plans zoned Halls Island on Lake Malbena as "wilderness", a zonation that explicitly prohibits built commercial tourism developments, including "standing camps".

The 2014 TWWHA Draft Management Plan proposed renaming and weakening the provisions of the entire wilderness zone, however, in line with a recommendation of the RMM, the Wilderness Zone was reinstated in the final 2016 TWWHA Management Plan.

But close inspection of this final Management Plan shows Lake Malbena was excised from the wilderness zone and rezoned self-reliant recreation, specifically to allow the Hall's Island development.

This zoning change was not publicly announced, nor was it subject to public consultation or justified in the Director's Report or assessed against the need to protect OUV.

#### Zone changes between the 2014 and 2016 management plans



Zonation in the 2014 Draft Management Plan – green being what was Wilderness Zone in the 1999 Plan, yellow being Self-Reliant Recreation Zone.



Zonation in the final 2016 Management Plan – demonstrating the excision of Lake Malbena from the Wilderness Zone to allow the proposal to be compliant. Expert advisers to the World Heritage Committee recently (July 2018) expressed "concern" over this and other excisions from the wilderness zone.

State-based assessments have not assessed the proposal's impact on wilderness value.

Private, commercial tourism accommodation is not currently an "existing use" of Halls Island, Lake Malbena, and it is not, and has never been the destination of private commercial helicopter flights with the specific purpose of transporting customers.

Putting aside the underhand rezoning of Lake Malbena to "self-reliant recreation", it has to be said that – to quote the proponent - a "niche operation" aimed at paying customers at the "very top-end of the market" and delivering a "high-level of visitor comfort", with personal transport via helicopter, is about as far from "self-reliant recreation" as one can get.

#### **1.2 Proposed Action**

The referral's description of the proposed action is inconsistent. At point 1 it is described as a "small scale Standing Camp", a significant description as this is the only type of development permitted in the Self-Reliant Recreation zone under the weakened 2016 TWWHA Management Plan (pg 79).

However, the referral goes on to describe what appears to be a far more accurate representation of the proposal, including a hut and buildings. Significantly, these type of developments are prohibited in the Self-Reliant Recreation zone.

The referral describes the proposal as:

- Three accommodation "buildings"
- One central "hut"
- Construction to be "a mixture of timber and steel"
- Occupying an area of "800 m2"

The Wilderness Society does not accept that the proposed action is a Standing Camp. Further, the additional information provided still fails to specifically detail the design and scale of the buildings and we note, there are discrepancies with regard to the size of the hut when compared to the Tasmanian Government RAA.

At clause 8.8 of the Response to Request for Further Information, the proponent confirms that "exact locations and size of huts [will] be determined in conjunction with the [Tasmanian] Minister." The Commonwealth Minister cannot be satisfied that he has sufficient information to determine the impacts of the proposal on World Heritage values without clear information regarding the scale of the proposed accommodation facility.

As the 2016 Management Plan prohibits new visitor accommodation in the Self-Reliant Recreation zone (except Standing Camps) this development is inconsistent with the spirit and intent of the Plan.

The construction of a private, commercial helipad and use of helicopters for construction, servicing and guest transfer will have a serious and negative impact on the wilderness character of the area. The issue is not just one of noise and the flight path, but also the dramatic impact on the time-remoteness component of the area's wilderness character.

As a component of OUV, a critical value of the TWWHA and something seriously diminished by built developments and new points of mechanised access, the referral fails to adequately address the proposal's impact on wilderness. A response to the document 'other impact considerations of Halls Island' is detailed later in this submission.

The proposal also details the construction of significant associated infrastructure, namely boardwalks. The Wilderness Society notes that the construction of new tracks, let alone boardwalks, is inconsistent with the Self-Reliant Recreation zone in the TWWHA Management Plan, which states that "new tracks or reroutes for environmental/management purposes only" (pg 79). It is self-evident that a boardwalk/track of sufficient grade to accommodate commercial guests, from a new helipad to the lake shoreline, and from the island shoreline to the project development site, are neither existing tracks, nor for environmental or management purposes.

#### 1.11 Estimated start and end date of the action

The referral references an end date of the action as 02/2038, a span of almost 20 years. This acknowledges the action is not just the construction of the proposal, but its operation, something we accept, given the proposal's ongoing need for significant helicopter use and the anticipated impacts of this.

However, given the acknowledgement that "this EPBC self-referral <u>only pertains to Stage One</u> <u>activities</u>" (emphasis as in the referral), and that Stage Two involves further track construction, including into the wilderness zone, the cumulative impacts of the proposal should be assessed as part of this referral.

Stage Two involves the development of "routes" to local sites of interest, including Mt Oana, within the wilderness zone. The Wilderness Society questions the credibility of the claim these are "routes" - as opposed to tracks. Tracks would breach the TWWHA Management Plan and have increased negative impacts on wilderness values.

#### 1.12 Planning

The Wilderness Society rejects the assertion that the proposal has been adequately assessed against applicable Acts.

Specifically, Tasmania's *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* has an explicit management objective for national parks "to *preserve the natural, primitive and remote character of wilderness areas*".

Given the fundamental negative impacts this proposal would have on wilderness values, including recreation values, it is inconsistent with the management objectives for the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and confirms state-based assessments have not adequately considered wilderness impacts.

#### 1.13 Consultation

The Wilderness Society rejects the proponent's assertion in the referral that it has been consulted with over this project.

While Vica Bayley and the proponent have had several informal and brief conversations about the proposal (one where Vica was a panel member and the proponent an audience member, and

another where Vica entered the proponent's retail outlet after an unplanned encounter on the street in front) neither could be considered a consultation.

These conversations were not declared formal consultations at the time and no detailed project information was provided.

#### 1.14 Environmental impact assessments

Of significant interest to many, including the World Heritage Committee, is the project's assessment against "*key criteria for commercial tourism in the TWWHA*" (as per page 150 of the TWWHA Management Plan 2016), and assessment to "*identify how any impacts in World Heritage values will be managed or mitigated*".

The Wilderness Society rejects the assertion that impacts on wilderness values can be mitigated. Constructing a new, built commercial tourism development and establishing a new commercial mechanised access point will have impacts that simply cannot be mitigated.

The RAA appears deficient with regard to formal advice on the proposal. While the referral outlines several entities that have offered advice on the proposal, it omits advice from the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council (NPWAC).

As per recommendation 1 of the 2015 RMM, governments should "take full advantage of NPWAC". The Wilderness Society supports full transparency with regard to advice from statutory bodies and would support the release of all such related advice, including that of NPWAC.

#### 1.15 Staged Development

As discussed, this referral pertains to Stage One only of a two-stage proposal.

While at face value both Stage One and Two independently breach the TWWHA Management Plan and obligations to protect OUV, including wilderness character, this referral should cover *both* stages and the EPBC assessment consider the cumulative impacts of stages One and Two.

This approach would be consistent with the <u>EPBC Act Policy Statement on Staged Developments</u>, given that Stage One and Two are clearly related, will be undertaken by the same operators, and the impacts of the stages (particularly on wilderness character) are cumulative and inter-related. We urge the Minister to exercise his discretion to refuse to accept the referral of Stage One only.

#### 1.16 Other Proposals

While this proposal is not linked via the proponent to other proposals in the region, there exists a significant number of new, commercial tourism development proposals in the TWWHA, including another suite of huts within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

These proposals are linked via the Tasmanian Government's Expressions of Interest process, designed to solicit new tourism developments in Tasmania's parks and reserves.

It is important that this proposal is considered in the context of the cumulative impacts these projects will have on the Outstanding Universal Value of the TWWHA.

This proposal also pre-empts the Tourism Master Plan, a plan explicitly recommended by the RMM to *"refine the balance between legitimate tourism development and the management and conservation of the cultural and natural values of the TWWHA"* (rec 7).

The recent (July 2018) decision of the World Heritage Committee expressed concern that the promised Tourism Master Plan had not been developed and expressly urged the Australian Government to "*expedite the development of the Tourism Master Plan in order to ensure a strategic approach to tourism development*".

Given this Tourism Master Plan is a mechanism to manage and protect values from commercial tourism development, approval under EPBC in advance of the finalisation of this plan would appear to be pre-emptory, unwise and disrespectful. It would also undermine the commitments made by the Australian Government to implement the RMM's recommendations.

#### 2.1 World Heritage Values

The Wilderness Society agrees with the referral that the proposed action is likely to have impacts on the values of the TWWHA.

#### 2.1.1 Impact table

The referral acknowledges that the project will have "*potential impacts on wilderness character, including remoteness from settlement and apparent naturalness*", though it ignores the component of wilderness assessment relating to "time remoteness". Given the establishment of a helipad and new commercial availability of helicopter access, time remoteness is demonstrably affected.

The referral provides no reference to assessment or justification as to why "impacts relating to general values of wilderness" are not considered a "significant impact".

Indeed, additional information released on 5 July 2018 seeks to detail wilderness issues via a "general statement on wilderness characteristics of Halls Island".

This analysis is contradictory, utilises old data and ignores the recent extension to the TWWHA, the reservation of neighbouring properties, subsequent closure of mechanised access tracks and the positive impact on wilderness values these actions have had.

While this "statement" acknowledges the impact on wilderness values of a small, 1956-built, rustic hut, it undertakes no analysis of the additional impacts of multiple new "timber and steel" buildings, a commercial helipad and associated flights, boardwalks and associated infrastructure.

The statement gives an analysis of the 2006 wilderness mapping project, ignoring that a subsequent mapping project was undertaken as part of the TWWHA Management Planning process (discussed at pp177-178 of the Management Plan).

Analysis of the National Wilderness Inventory ratings ignores the fact that wilderness values have been improved via the closure of access tracks and protection of significant adjacent privately-owned land. The statement details each criteria of NWI however:

• Remoteness from Access (4+) - would NOW likely to be assessed as a 5 given the closure of access tracks on neighbouring properties and, as acknowledged in the statement that:

"Since ~2013 the traditional access point to this part of the TWWHA, the private property now known as trawtha makuminya, has come under new ownership, and through-access to the eastern periphery of the TWWHA at Olive Lagoon now requires formal permission (which is not guaranteed), and travel beyond two permanently locked gates. The historical walk-in regime to Halls Island is now problematic, and up to 17km in length (each way), an increase from ~9.7km."

Irrespective of the above, the introduction of a new, commercial helipad with regular flights will significantly diminish the rating attributed to Remoteness from Access and thus, negatively impact in overall wilderness value.

Apparent naturalness (1+) – this component is rated the lowest of the four criteria due to the
presence of a rustic, private hut on Halls Island. While acknowledging this impact, one
would expect this value to decrease to 0 with the construction of an 8x4 m hut, three
accommodation buildings, toilets, boardwalks, a helipad and other infrastructure. This will
negatively impact on the overall wilderness value.

(It is worth noting that the wilderness mapping methodology, while useful, is relatively crude and does not distinguish between a small hut and an accommodation complex in its rating system.)



The historical Halls Hut may affect wilderness value but is minor when considered against the hut and helicopter developments proposed as part of the referral.

The "statement" draws on historical comments and provisions in the "notes on aerial access" section as a means to legitimise establishing a new point of aerial access for the transfer of paying guests.

However, as flagged in the statement, many of these aerial activities pre-date the inscription of the property and relate to pre-existing activities (such as the Melaleuca airstrip). These statements have no relevance to justify the establishment of a brand new, regular commercial point of mechanised access and thus, the subsequent impact on wilderness.

While the presentation of OUV is an important component of World Heritage principles, it should not be accepted that diminishing those values in the pursuit of presentation is justified.

Time remoteness is also central to many users' experience of the TWWHA, whether as walkers, bird-watchers or anglers. The noisy intrusion of helicopter overflights will significantly detract from this experience. Any assessment of the impact of the proposal on World Heritage values must consider the impact on other users, not simply assessing whether those guests of the project maintain a sense of 'time-remoteness' during their time on Halls Island.

#### 2.1.2 Significant impact on World Heritage values

The Wilderness Society believes the proposal will have a significant impact on MNES relating to the values of a World Heritage property and must rejected as clearly unacceptable, or failing that, be assessed as a controlled action.

#### 3.3 Soils and vegetation

The referral addresses "proposed off-island walking tracks and routes", however, elsewhere is constrained to "Stage One" only, which is the helipad, on-island accommodation and linking boardwalks. This is entirely inconsistent.

Additionally, anywhere off-island to the north, south and west is zoned wilderness under the TWWHA Management plan, prohibiting the construction of new walking tracks. The term "routes" appears more concerning again, and signals the expansion of unplanned, unauthorised and unassessed tracks for guest use.

Clarity needs to be sought from the proponent for the full extent of the action and the cumulative impacts of all activities, which need to be fully assessed as part of a larger action under s.74A of the EPBC Act.

#### 3.4 Outstanding natural features and other important or unique values relevant to the area

The referral fails to reference wilderness as an outstanding feature of this region, despite being mapped as a high wilderness character area and previously being zoned wilderness under the 1999 TWWHA Management Plan.

The 2016 Management Plan describes the TWWHA as containing "...most of the temperate wilderness remaining in Australia and one of the last remaining such areas in the world. It is a quality which underpins the success" in meeting all four criteria for a natural property and is the basis for the maintenance of its integrity (pg 43). This is significant and given World Heritage Committee concern for the protection of wilderness from tourism development, risk to the integrity of the property is unacceptable.

The referral should identify wilderness as a significant value of the area and any credible assessment must consider the project's impact on wilderness value, guaranteed to be significant.

#### **3.7 Current condition of the environment**

Any consideration of this action in the context of the existence of a 'hut' and historic grazing, horse or Haflinger access must consider the passage of time.

The construction of the hut predates listing (1989 extension) of the property by over 30 years and the hut is small and discreet by comparison to the proposed developments. Vehicle access and sheep grazing have been prohibited for decades and the remnant impacts from each are now likely negligible.

Despite this, and a marketing pitch around "citizen science" of the "Outstanding Universal Values" (sic), including "off-island", the referral describes the current condition of the environment of Halls Island as modified and/or disturbed. This claim lacks credibility.

#### 3.10 Tenure

Tenure arrangements for Halls Island have not previously been declared and the relevant Tasmanian Government website<sup>ii</sup> still lists the lease arrangements for this proposal as "under negotiation". If indeed a lease for the entire island has been signed, its finalisation is relatively recent, pre-empts proper assessment of this proposal and should not be considered relevant to deliberations.

#### 3.11 Existing or proposed uses relevant to the project area

This section fails to identify recreational use as an existing use for the area. This includes independent bushwalking and fishing.

#### 4.1 Measures to avoid or reduce impacts

Given the built nature of the development and use of helicopter for access and servicing, it is impossible to mitigate impacts of the proposal on wilderness.

#### 4.2 Proposed environmental outcomes to be achieved

Outcome 1: The Wilderness Society believes there will be unacceptable impacts on MNES.

Appendix 1: Proponent's submission to the TWWHA Management Plan process, opposing air-access to Lake Ina – a lake that is *less* remote than Lake Malbena.

Submission 7403

To : WorldHeritageAreaMP, TasWilderness (DPIPWE) Cc : Bcc : Date/time Received : 18/03/2015 3:44:25 PM Subject : WHA Draft Management Plan representation

RE: Proposed nominated float plane and helicopter landing sites, specific to Lake Ina. My business RiverFly 1864 operates a commercial wilderness camp on Skullbone Plains (a private parcel of land within the WHA), just 300metres from Lake Ina, and the eastern boundary of WOJ NP. The camp was a finalist for Best New Tourism Development in 2013, and is a past Green Guardian participant. It is a significant part of our larger tourism business.

The issue: Lake Ina has been nominated as a landing site for helicopters and sea-planes. I do not believe that this nomination has taken into consideration the operation of our business in the immediate area, as well as the current ease of foot access to the area being enjoyed by recreational users, via Skullbone Plains and / or Clarence Lagoon.

The landing of sea-planes on Lake Ina would have a strong negative affect on our ability to offer our high-end, <u>private and secluded</u> guided fly fishing trips based on Lake Ina, due to the disturbance and increased human pressure associated with landings and additional use of the immediate area, just 300 metres from our camp. People fish with us due to the secluded nature of the product, the wilderness setting, and the private nature of the camp, all of which the proposed

helicopter/seaplane access within 300metres of our camp would deny. As a background, we access the camp by foot, which is located 2.4km from the private-road terminus.

On a typical day we fish the entire shoreline of Lake Ina, and often already (happily) share it with the general public (we often come across 2-3 public anglers during our three-day trips). Lake Ina is currently relatively easy to access via foot from Skullbone Plains (about 3.5km walk from the end of road), or Clarence Lagoon (10KM or so by foot). As such, I do not believe that enhanced access needs to be facilitated, as access and use is already well established.

In a general geographical area with in excess of 300 other significant lakes and lagoons, we believe that it would be a non-sensical decision to locate a public landing site adjacent to a successful new tourism business, in an area that is already well patronised. We'd certainly see it as a threat to our business operations, and the significant capital that we have invested in our Standing Camp over the past three years.

In the interest of providing a constructive alternative, I'd recommend somewhere along the Julian / Pillans four-wheel drive track, which would provide access to excellent fishing opportunities. As the track is already used by unrestricted numbers of 4wd's, motorbikes and large mechanical vehicles, the additional presence of helicopter or sea-plane landings is much more comparable to the existing uses of that area.

# Kindest Regards, Daniel Hackett

2013 & 2014 Tasmanian Tourism Awards Finalist

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>i</sup> http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3684

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>ii</sup> https://www.cg.tas.gov.au/home/investment\_attraction/expressions\_of\_interest\_in\_tourism/eoi\_tourism\_projects



## COMMENT ON REFERRAL ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

15 JULY 2018

Referral Number: 2018/8177

Wild Drake Pty Ltd /Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/ Tasmania/ Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena Tas.

#### SUMMARY:

- The Pandani Bushwalking Club Inc. has reviewed the additional information that was released for public comment on 6 July 2018.
- It is noted that some of that information provides additional detail associated with the proponent's claims in relation to Matters of National Environmental Significance and impacts on Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) criteria iii, vi, vii, viii, ix and x.
- However, this additional detail does not provide adequate assurance for the amelioration of the impacts, because the concept is fundamentally flawed in that the proposal inevitably destroys these wilderness values that must be protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- In particular, the risks associated with fire, trampling, disturbance, track formation, impact on habitat and exotic flora and fauna remain together with the impact of helicopter flights.
- The Club reiterates its concern that the island and its surrounding areas will be placed in significant jeopardy if this proposal for a standing camp, boardwalks, kayaking, hill and bushwalking, as well as "citizen-science activities" is implemented using helicopter access.

• The Club therefore considers that the proposed activities outlined in this referral should not receive the approval of the Minister for the Environment and Energy.

## CRITERION (III) TO BEAR A UNIQUE OR AT LEAST EXCEPTIONAL TESTIMONY TO A CULTURAL TRADITION OR TO A CIVILIZATION WHICH IS LIVING, OR WHICH HAS DISAPPEARED.

- The additional information merely suggests the use of an "Unanticipated Discovery Plan" for any Aboriginal heritage found on the land.
- It is noted that "the Aboriginal heritage site listed in the RAA" is redacted in the additional information.

CRITERION (VI) TO BE DIRECTLY OR TANGIBLY ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS OR LIVING TRADITIONS, WITH IDEAS, OR WITH BELIEFS, WITH ARTISTIC AND LITERARY WORKS OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL SIGNIFICANCE.

- The preservation and maintenance of the settlement that currently represents an association with historical and living traditions is not adequately addressed in the additional information. It is noted in the Reserve Activity Assessment that a "woodstove will be installed in the heritage hut".
- While it currently represents a link with past traditions, that will be diminished with the implementation of the proposal.

## CRITERION (VII) TO CONTAIN SUPERLATIVE NATURAL PHENOMENA OR AREAS OF EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL BEAUTY AND AESTHETIC IMPORTANCE.

 Additional information does not address the Club's concerns that the proposal's potential impacts on the relatively undisturbed landscape will be significant and that its implementation would clearly detract from the natural beauty of the area. CRITERION (VIII) TO BE OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES REPRESENTING MAJOR STAGES OF EARTH'S HISTORY, INCLUDING THE RECORD OF LIFE, SIGNIFICANT ON-GOING GEOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANDFORMS, OR SIGNIFICANT GEOMORPHIC OR PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES.

- The additional information does not alter the fact that Halls Island is a unique island in a remote part of the TWWHA in a relatively undisturbed landscape and that the proposed relatively large increase in visitation heightens the likelihood of significant impacts.
- Its very uniqueness as a physiographic feature means that it should not be alienated from the Walls of Jerusalem National Park nor leased for private purposes to the exclusion of others.

CRITERION (IX) TO BE OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES REPRESENTING SIGNIFICANT ON-GOING ECOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TERRESTRIAL, FRESH WATER, COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND COMMUNITIES OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS.

- The quantity of additional information related to helicopter use suggests that there are significant concerns about the impacts on Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles (*Aquila audax fleayi*) and other bird life.
- The "recommended flight altitude of 1000metres+" may reduce the probability for these impacts but helicopter access to the island along the proposed flight line is still clearly within the foraging range of these eagles.

CRITERION (X) TO CONTAIN THE MOST IMPORTANT AND SIGNIFICANT NATURAL HABITATS FOR IN-SITU CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, INCLUDING THOSE CONTAINING THREATENED SPECIES OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF SCIENCE OR CONSERVATION.

• The island is a unique example of a biological refuge. Huge fires in the 30s and 80s of last century destroyed much of the vegetation of the Central Plateau WHA, including native pines such as *Arthrotaxis selaginoides* and

*Arthrotaxis cupressiformis*. The island provides a refuge for the original suite of species, including the endangered Mount Mawson pine.

• While the information proposes that "Halls Island will be offered as a nonsmoking destination", increased visitation and additional infrastructure would mean multiple potential ignition points and an increased risk of fire.

#### SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON GENERAL WILDERNESS VALUES.

- There is little assurance in the additional information that this proposal will not have significant impacts on the wilderness character of both the area subject to this proposal and related areas like the Overland Track.
- The inclusion of extensive documentation about helicopter noise is an acknowledgement that this would be a significant issue. While the information about likely noise impact is noted, the claim that "Careful observation by pilot and passengers (guides) of any independent walkers ... to avoid disturbance" appears to be an ineffective measure for minimising such disturbance as any walkers would already be within range of the helicopter noise.

#### MISLEADING OR INCORRECT INFORMATION IN THE REFERRAL

- The additional information adds to the confusion about the status of licences and leases in the area. The referral suggests (3.10) "Halls Island is leasehold (under lease to the proponent), within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park". Inspection of the current leases from the Crown shown in theLIST (<u>www.thelist.tas.gov.au</u>) shows that the existing hut site is the only current lease.
- The information did not clarify the proposed extent of any lease or licence for the proposal. The spatial extent of any lease and the relationship of lease boundaries with any built infrastructure and related operations should be clarified.
- The Reserve Activity Assessment that was provided as part of the additional information recommends referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999. It is noted that "it was

agreed with the proponent that they would refer the proposal to the Australian Government for assessment under the EPBCA. This would assist in determining stakeholder and public thoughts on the issue."

- The management measures for construction and operation suggested in the additional information also seem inherently weak. There are suggestions that at least seventeen (17) Plans and an Operations Manual will be used to manage the impacts and that an annual review of Halls Island operations will be completed "through reviews of the Operations Manual by the PWS, as per the Halls Island Lease and Business Licence Conditions".
- This gives the impression that the actual management in each of the areas covered by a Plan is not yet determined and that measures won't necessarily be in place before the proposed activities. Control of the proposed activities would require independent continuous monitoring, assessment and reporting to ensure no significant impacts on an on-going basis.
- The Club does not support the proposal.

#### CONTACT DETAILS



PANDANI BUSHWALKING CLUB INC PO BOX 146 NORTH HOBART 7002





GPO BOX 44, Hobart TAS 7001 Phone (03) 6165 3136 aboriginalheritagecouncil@heritage.tas.gov.au aboriginalheritagecouncil.tas.gov.au

18/7/2018

Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of Environment GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Minister Frydenberg,

#### Re: Submission 2018 / 8177 WILD DRAKE Pty Ltd Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island / Tasmania Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

The Aboriginal Heritage Council (Tasmania) is the statutory body under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975* responsible for providing advice on Aboriginal heritage matters to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs / Aboriginal Heritage and the Director of National Parks & Wildlife.

As part of its statutory function, the Aboriginal Heritage Council has a role and responsibility to provide high level advice to government on matters relating to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). The TWWHA Management Plan 2016

http://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/Documents/TVVWHA Management Plan 2016.pdf (accessed 14 July 2018) identifies that commercial tourism is a legitimate and important component of meeting the obligation of presentation under the World Heritage Convention. Fundamental to the Management Plan is the vision and objective for cultural values of "To develop and implement a joint management arrangement that ensures the strategies and actions for identification, protection, conservation and presentation [and transmission] of the World Heritage and other values of the TWWHA are developed in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal people" (section 1.7, page 34).

At the Council meeting on Friday 6 July 2018, Mr Daniel Hackett, representing the proponent Wild Drake Pty Ltd, provided an overview of their vision for the Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania. The presentation largely centred on:

• The requirement for the use of a helicopter to access the standing camp due to there being a lack of suitable walking/vehicular tracks and,

• A desire to offer clients the opportunity for an Aboriginal cultural experience that includes a visit to a nearby highly significant and rare Aboriginal heritage site, which is largely untouched following its rediscovery in recent times. The proponent acknowledged the importance and expressed a desire to have the interpretation and presentation of heritage site done by Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

The Council accepted the proponent's acknowledgement that to date there had been very limited consultation with Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and advised the proponent that there are a number of Tasmanian Aboriginal community organisations who should be consulted on the proposal and provided with the opportunity to engage and comment. The Council advised that Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania would provide the proponent with a list of contact details of Tasmanian Aboriginal community organisations.

The proponent indicated that he had knowledge of other special places and significant sites in the area. Council were heartened to hear of this prospect and advised the proponent that under current legislation any new sites should be reported to Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania for formal registration.

Regarding the heritage site in question, this has only been re-discovered in recent times. Aside from a small select group, both the Aboriginal Heritage Council and the broader Tasmanian Aboriginal community know very little of its existence. There has been no opportunity to assess the likely high value and status of the site to better understand its value and significance in the broader cultural landscape, particularly given the potential of there being additional sites. Aboriginal people have a strong connection to Country and cultural places as they are like windows opening directly into our past, which are lovely to see but can easily be broken forever.

Before this site can even be considered for presentation in tourism, Aboriginal people should first have the opportunity to visit and re-connect with this site. This is extremely important and a sensitive matter as in the past many of our highly significant sites have not been accessed by Aboriginal people until after there have been impacts on them by non-Aboriginal people. A management plan needs to be developed for the site and this may result in restrictions on future access. Sites such as these are rare, highly significant and hold immeasurable value for Aboriginal people. Their protection is paramount and their significance far outweighs any potential short term gains from tourism or other activities.

The TWWHA Management Plan details a number of Key Desired Outcomes around the vision and objective for there being meaningful and effective joint management, tourism, protection, access, interpretation, presentation, and transmission of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and the broader cultural landscape. Currently, there is no model or process for what joint management looks like or how it will be implemented. Similarly there is no tourism masterplan, and to date, Council have not been presented with a draft. As a consequence there has not been the engagement with the broader Tasmanian Aboriginal community around which (if any) Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are going to be identified, interpreted and presented within the TWWHA.

In summary, apart from its very high significance to Aboriginal people, there is currently little known about the Aboriginal cultural heritage site which the proponent would like to showcase as part of the development proposal, or its context within the broader Aboriginal cultural landscape. There has been insufficient progression within the TWWHA Management Plan in relation to the vision and objective of joint management and the interpretation and presentation of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites within the TWWHA.

As a result, at the present time Council is opposed to the referral. Until there has been a thorough Aboriginal cultural values and significance assessment, and further work has been done to address the concerns outlined above, it is the Council's view that there should be no approval for the current proposal by Wild Drake Pty Ltd.

Further, in light of our concerns and the matters raised above, we believe that it is your obligation as Minister to not approve this project proposal.

We await your urgent advice on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Aboriginal Heritage Council



GPO BOX 44, Hobart TAS 7001 Phone (03) 6165 3136 aboriginalheritagecouncil@heritage.tas.gov.au aboriginalheritagecouncil.tas.gov.au

24 / 7 / 2018

Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of Environment GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Minister Frydenberg,

#### Re: Submission 2018 / 8177 WILD DRAKE Pty Ltd Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island / Tasmania Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

The Aboriginal Heritage Council (Tasmania) are very concerned that it appears the proponent has not informed you of his full intentions regarding the proposal for the Halls Island Standing Camp.

When the proponent addressed the Council at its meeting on 6 July he informed the Council that visiting the Aboriginal cultural site near Mary Tarn and interpreting the Aboriginal cultural values were key elements of his proposal. He indicated the potential to employ Aboriginal people in providing interpretation to the tourists whom he expects to visit the Standing Camp.

The Aboriginal Heritage Council is concerned that the proponent has not included reference to visiting the Aboriginal heritage site or interpreting the Aboriginal cultural values of the area as part of the referral when it is clearly his intention to engage in these activities.

As noted in the Council's submission, at the Council meeting on Friday 6 July 2018, Mr Daniel Hackett, representing the proponent Wild Drake Pty Ltd, provided an overview of their vision for the Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania. The presentation largely centred on:

- The requirement for the use of a helicopter to access the standing camp due to there being a lack of suitable walking/vehicular tracks and,
- A desire to offer clients the opportunity for an Aboriginal cultural experience that includes a visit to a nearby highly significant and rare Aboriginal heritage site, which is largely untouched following its rediscovery in recent times. The proponent acknowledged the importance

and expressed a desire to have the interpretation and presentation of heritage site done by Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal cultural values are clearly part of the proposal and must be considered in your assessment of the proposal. It is deeply concerning that the proponent appears to be seeking approval for a project when the full extent of the proposal is not disclosed.

The Council believe the Commonwealth, as the State Party to the World Heritage Committee, endorsed the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 2016 as the instrument through which Aboriginal cultural values in the area will be managed. Therefore a full assessment of the Halls Island proposal must be undertaken, including its impact on the Aboriginal cultural values.

To reaffirm our view, at the present time Council is opposed to this project proposal and is concerned that the proponent has not provided you with all the relevant information about the proposal. Until there has been a thorough Aboriginal cultural values and significance assessment, and further work has been done to address the concerns outlined above, it is the Council's view that there should be no approval for the current proposal by Wild Drake Pty Ltd.

Yours sincerely,



Aboriginal Heritage Council

Appendix 1:

Excerpt from unconfirmed Minutes of Aboriginal Heritage Council 6 July 2017

7.4 Halls Island Development (Daniel Hackett)

The State Government's invitation for 'Expressions of Interest' for tourism proposals in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area were invited 3 years ago. These came through AHT for review.

Permits under *ARA 1975*, are required if relevant to the proposal. AHT were invited to respond to the proposal and did so. No Aboriginal heritage sites were identified within the proposed development, therefore there was no requirement for an Aboriginal heritage assessment. The usual Unanticipated Discovery Plan is in place. Previous reviews noted the proposed development is in an area that contains Aboriginal heritage sites. Therefore AHT recommended the proponent consult with the Council. As part of the usual PWS Reserve Activity Assessment of proposals within National Parks and Reserves, AHT noted the potential for Aboriginal people and organisations contributing to the project in interpretation, employment and site access that are also described in the TWWHA Management Plan.

The proposed development is about 2km from the rock markings near Mary's Tarn and also near *trawtha mukaminya* / Gowan Brae property owned by ALCT. The proponent has spoken with several Aboriginal people and organisations about the project. The proposal is currently within the assessment process under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC). EPBC Referral 2018/8177 Wild Drake Pty.Ltd. <u>http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/invitations/</u>

Council resolved to provide the consultation list to Daniel Hackett and request that copies of feedback from organisations be forwarded to the Council. Council resolved to request the Commonwealth Minister not support anything at this time, that the Council have concerns about the project and has asked the proponent to consult with the Aboriginal community and provide copy of feedback to Council. s22 From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Wednesday, 18 July 2018 3:02 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Halls Island, Lake Malbena—Tasmanian Wilderness—submission on referral 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Wednesday, 18 July 2018 1:05 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Halls Island, Lake Malbena—Tasmanian Wilderness—submission on referral 2018/8177

## Halls Island, Lake Malbena—Tasmanian Wildernes submission on referral 2018/8177

I am disturbed by the surreptitious and deceptive way in which this proposal has reached this point. It was almost by chance that it came to public scrutiny.

The proposal is likely to have a significant impact on World Heritage Values—considered 'Matters of National Environmental Significance' under the law. As such the Wild Drake proposal should be rejected outright.

#### Context

The State Government was meant to have produced a Tourist Management plan for the TWWHA, years ago. This has not happened and tourist ventures are happening in an ad hoc way that is in detriment to the values of the WHA.

#### Removal of Lake Malbena from the Wilderness Zone

The change of zoning for L.Malbena and other areas, was done surreptitiously after the public scrutiny of the Draft Management Plan was completed.

I note that the WH Committee adopted a decision based on an expert report that criticised the underhand way that the area was rezoned.

Lake Malbena is of high wilderness value. Commercial huts and helicopters badly degrade wilderness.

L.Malbena should be returned to the Wilderness Zone

#### Self Sufficient Recreation Zone

Any reasonable person would consider that there is nothing self sufficient about tourists flying in by helicopter to be accommodated in luxury permanent buildings, most likely with a cook to make them gourmet food! The proposal is totally inconsistent with TWHWHA Management plan, even for the Self Sufficient Zone Clearly the term for this zone has been re-defined to suit the developers, and is now totally deceptive.

#### Contined secrecy makes true scrutiny impossible

The proposal is shrouded in secrecy, with the full, state-based Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) withheld from public release. Until the RAA is fully released, genuine community consultation for this referral is impossible.

#### Summery

Our Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is a special place that Australia should be proud of.

Lake Malbena is truly wild and remote. Far from the racket of helicopters.

We should be proud to protect such special places from the forces of greed. Surely there should be some places left on earth that allows nature to flourish.

This proposal is totally inconsistent with the WHA values and should be rejected.



# s22

### 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation / Hall's Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

I am writing to express my concern regarding the planned Lake Malbena proposal currently under consideration as I believe there is likely to be a significant impact on the Tasmanian World Heritage Area's (TWWHA) values.

I have read all the environmental impact statements submitted by the proponent and would respectively point out that they are negligent in failing to address one of the key elements of the environmental impact within the TWHWA; specifically the noise generated by the as yet undisclosed number of helicopter flights to and from Lake Malbena.

A study commissioned by Hearing Health Matters (HHM) on the environmental impact arising from helicopters found that helicopters rank especially high in causing undesirable noise. (hearinghealthmatters.org/lawandhearing/2011/helicopter-noise)

According to the HHM paper eight different studies have found that the annoyance created by a helicopter does not correlate with the decibels (dBs) they register. The helicopter's unique sound, created by blade vortex interaction, causes people to rate its sound level as much as 10 dB's higher than it actually registers, doubling the noise impact.

The study found that typically helicopters in flight average around 105dB's whilst the average sound currently experienced by hikers within the world heritage area will typical experience around 30dbs of background noise principally from the wind or birdcall etc. 30dB is one-sixteenth as loud as105 dB.

#### Comparison of Helicopter NOISE to Everyday Sound:

[Each 10-decibel increase in sound level is perceived as approximately a doubling of

loudness.] http://www.sengpielaudio.com/calculator-loudness.htm

| Sound                 | Decibel<br>Level        |   |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Rustling<br>Leaves    | 20 dB                   |   |
| Whispering<br>Library | 25 dB<br>30 dB<br>40 dB |   |
| Average<br>Home       | 50 dB                   |   |
| Normal conversation   | 60 dB                   | Normal speech at 3-5 feet.  |
| Telephone<br>ring     | 65 dB                   |   |
| Idling<br>motorcycle  | 70 dB                   | Idling motorcycle sounds twice as loud as<br>normal conversation, because 10 dBs<br>louder. |

| Busy Traffic                                    | 75 dB  |   |
|---|--------|---|
| Accelerating<br>motorcycle                      | 80 dB  | Motorcycle at full throttle sounds twice as loud as at idle, because 10 dBs louder. |
| Electric drill,<br>weed<br>whacker at<br>6 feet | 85 dB  |   |
| Screaming<br>Child                              | 85 dB  |   |
|   | 95 dB  | •   |
| Jack<br>Hammer                                  | 100 dB |   |
| Helicopter                                      | 105 dB | Generated on approach to a landing site.  |

Additionally a quick research of the proponents preferred helicopter reveals that the Squirrel AS350 has featured in 10 major incidents since 2007, the latest incident earlier this year. (Wikipedia)

The impact of a helicopter crash within the environmentally fragile TWWHA would have far reaching ecological impacts, not least from the resultant fire and worse the ensuing pollution from Avgas and hydraulic oils leeching into the surrounding aquifers of the TWWHA.

The Tasmania world heritage area is rightly famous and valued world-wide for its beauty and solitude well away from the noisy impact of modern living.

Yours Sincerely



18 July 2018

#### Comment on Proposal No. 2018/8177

#### Wild Drake Pty. Ltd./Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

#### Submission from the Tasmanian Fly Tyers Club

The Tasmanian Fly Tyers Club Inc. is a very active club of more than eighty Tasmanian flytying and trout-fishing enthusiasts. It was established in 1956, and our members include several state-, nationally- and internationally-recognised anglers.

This Lake Malbena issue was again discussed at our recent monthly general meeting, and the very clear view of the club is that we **<u>strongly oppose</u>** the Wild Drake proposal.

Many of our members are familiar with the area of the proposed development and love it for its beauty, isolation, solitude, serenity, challenging environmen,t as well as its wild trout fishing – in short, its **wilderness values**.

Quite obviously the Wild Drake proposal is commercially motivated and entirely based on rapid and easy access to the area by helicopter for a select group of paying clients. In our view these aspects are <u>completely antithetical to the concept of wilderness</u>.

Based on Wild Drake's suggested visitation figures there are likely to be an average of <u>at</u> <u>least five people</u>, not including maintenance and ancillary staff, at the site <u>every day</u> for approximately 180 days. (Thirty 4-day visits each of six clients and two guides). This will far exceed the current visitation and will undoubtedly put pressure on the immediate surroundings, not to mention the local trout fishing. Anglers and walkers who currently visit Lake Malbena will stop doing so simply because it will have become too crowded and the wilderness experience they have enjoyed in the past is no longer available.

Similarly, the use of helicopters will severely disturb the tranquility of the area and make it likely that people who have walked in will unexpectedly have to compete for space and solitude with clients flying in unannounced. Furthermore the commercial imperative of the guides to "catch" fish for their clients will cause unpleasant competition.

Given these concerns, we are very worried that approval of this "development" will create precedents for future similar proposals whose approvals will have been facilitated and to which objection will become increasingly futile. The eventual result of this trend will be the complete degradation and destruction of the concept of wilderness in the Tasmanian context, with consequent serious damage to the Tasmanian brand regarding "clean, green and wild". Areas affected in this way will have become the playground of clients paying for instant gratification, while enjoyment for Tasmanians and others who value true wilderness will be seriously diminished and the region permanently damaged by commercial exploitation.

Further contact should be made via<sup>s22</sup>at



From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Thursday, 19 July 2018 12:19 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: 2018/8177 - Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 19 July 2018 9:47 AM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: 2018/8177 - Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

As a long time angler and walker who has spent much of my life fishing in the Western Lakes, I value the isolation and wilderness experience that visiting the Western Lakes / Walls of Jerusalem National Park gives. The Western Lakes are a world class wild trout fishery, set in a unique and fragile environment. The use of helicopters within this area will destroy the natural environment, remoteness and severely degrade the wilderness values that I and many others like me, visit the area to experience.

Unlike some other parts of the world that utilise helicopters to cross large mountain ranges, unpassable forests or vast distances. Visitors on foot can reach most of the Western Lakes and Walls of Jerusalem areas within several hours walk, over relatively flat terrain. This is enough time and distance to reward those who put in effort with a true wilderness experience, but also acts to preserve and protect the wilderness and biodiversity of the area.

The proponent himself has stated that his development is aimed at 'top end, time poor clientele'. Why should a small percentage of well to be, time poor customers be given the right to ruin the natural, peaceful experience the majority people who visit the area value the most? Visitors who are willing to invest time and effort to hike into a pristine, remote location seeking solitude to camp, photograph or trout fish, don't deserve to be 'dropped in on' or 'cut off' by guides and paying clients.

The proposed helicopter route passes directly over some of the most popular waters in the 'Southern Western Lakes' region; Lakes Ina, Nive, Leone and Ingrid. The use of helicopters in this, or any part of the Western Lakes / WHA would degrade heavily on the wilderness experience and recreational opportunities visitors to these beautiful areas experience.

Furthermore, the fact that the proposed helipad is to be placed on public land, not on leasehold further exacerbates the impact the use of helicopters would have on this pristine area.

For Tasmania to remain unique and retain true wilderness values in a rapidly developing and changing world, we need to preserve our 'brand', retain areas of wilderness and respect the culture that generations of Tasmanians have developed using the 'backcountry'. The proposal also breaches the TWWHA Management Plan, which allows for only 'standing' camps in the self – reliant recreation zone. The developer plans to build permanently erected 'hut' and three 'accommodation' buildings constructed of 'a mixture of timber and steel'.

I urge the Minister to determine this proposal unacceptable. Please keep helicopters and building development like those proposed out of this special part of Australia.

s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Thursday, 19 July 2018 12:21 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Halls Island [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

-----Original Message-----

From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 19 July 2018 8:56 AM To: EPBC Referrals <EPBC.Referrals@environment.gov.au> Subject: Halls Island

I am deeply concerned about development in the Central Highlands, especially World Heritage areas.

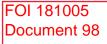
This is a fragile environment and one of the few fairly untouched areas of the state.

I'm quite happy about people walking in there to go trout fishing, the walk in adds something to the experience. Just because people have lots of money doesn't mean they should be entitled to fly in anywhere they want and build camps.

This constant " nibbling" at the edges of the WHA is very worrying.

| Sincerely, |  |
|------------|--|
| s22        |  |

Sent from my iPad





131 Macquarie Street Hobart TAS 7000 tel: (03) 6223 2770 email: edotas@edotas.org.au

19 July 2018

Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment & Energy GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601

By email: <u>epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au</u>

Dear Madam / Sir,

EPBC 2018/8177 Halls Island Standing Camp, Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

EDO Tasmania is a community legal centre specialising in environmental and planning law, and particularly interested in the regulation of use and development within protected areas. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the above referral (the *Halls Island proposal*).

We recently delivered a series of workshops around Tasmania regarding the assessment process for development within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (**TWWHA**). The content of those workshops was general, rather than focussed on any particular development. However, it was clear from the level of attendance and discussions with attendees that there is considerable concern regarding the impacts of the Halls Island proposal on the wilderness character of the TWWHA and the experience of other users of the TWWHA.

Our comments are limited to addressing that issue.

The Australian World Heritage Management Principles state:

**1.01** The primary purpose of management of natural heritage and cultural heritage of a declared World Heritage property must be, in accordance with Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention, to identify, protect, conserve, present, transmit to future generations and, if appropriate, rehabilitate the World Heritage values of the property.

The Management Principles also state that actions with the potential to significantly impact on World Heritage values should be subject to detailed assessment and any action that would be inconsistent with the conservation of those values should not be approved.<sup>1</sup>

In light of the significant disruption to wilderness character resulting from helicopter flights and intensified use of Halls Island, Lake Malbena, we recommend that the Minister determine that the Halls Island proposal:

- is a controlled action; and
- should be subject to assessment by way of Public Environment Report or Environmental Impact Statement to ensure that the impacts on wilderness values, and the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation measures, can be well understood.

Our comments supporting that recommendation are set out below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000, Schedule 5, 3.01-3.04.

#### World Heritage Values of the TWWHA

The wilderness character of the TWWHA, recognised in its name, underpins the property's World Heritage values. This is clearly acknowledged at pp173-174 of the *TWWHA Management Plan 2016*:

The large extent of remote and largely undisturbed country forms the tangible component of wilderness value in the TWWHA. These areas are fundamental to the integrity of the TWWHA and many of the natural and aesthetic values that form part of its Outstanding Universal Value. The scale and remoteness of these areas is also important in the protection of the Aboriginal cultural values contained within them.

Wilderness also has an intangible value. In the TWWHA, wilderness is valued both for the recreational opportunities it provides and from a social and intrinsic perspective...

The intrinsic value of wilderness was a key element in the advocacy for the protection and listing of the TWWHA. Its continuing integrity is therefore an important social value for many people. It is a central element in what many people value with respect to the TWWHA as a whole, and in effect it is often viewed as the principal value of the TWWHA.

Maintenance of this wilderness character, and the proper assessment of any action likely to detract from that character, is therefore critical to meeting Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention.

#### Wilderness character

Throughout the referral, reference is made to the accommodation complex and the helicopter landing site being outside the Wilderness Zone, and the flight path avoiding the Wilderness Zone. Significantly, the accommodation complex site was within the Wilderness Zone under the *TWWHA Management Plan 1999* and its excision from that zone has been noted with concern by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies:

[S]ome of the provisions in the 2016 Management Plan raise concerns, in particular the rezoning of some areas from "wilderness" to "remote recreation" in order to allow for acceptable tourism opportunities and make provisions for wider aircraft access, which may have impacts on wilderness values of the property.<sup>2</sup>

Further, the TWWHA Management Plan itself recognises that wilderness values are not confined to the Wilderness Zone:

Although the cornerstone of managing wilderness values is the inclusion of the majority of the TWWHA in the Wilderness Zone, a principle guiding the management of wilderness is that the whole area of the TWWHA has some wilderness value.

The Wilderness Values mapping on p.176 of the Management Plan indicates that the Halls Island site has been assessed as having high wilderness value (14-18 of a possible 20). The mapping method considers four factors: Remoteness from Settlement, Apparent Naturalness, Biophysical Naturalness and Time Remoteness (an analogue for "away from it all / sense of isolation").

#### Impact on wilderness character

The document entitled "Halls Island EPBC Self-referral – Response to request for further Information" provides a cursory assessment of the impact of the Halls Island proposal on wilderness values. That assessment considers both the impact of the built infrastructure and the impact of helicopter flights.

We do not believe that the information provided is adequate to allow the Minister to understand how wilderness values will be affected by the proposal. To assess the significance of any impact on wilderness values, it is necessary to undertake quantitative modelling and analyse the predicted reduction in values compared with the values currently mapped in the TWWHA Management Plan (see Map 7, Wilderness Values 2015 Assessment).

Such modelling should have regard to the matters outlined below.

EDO Tasmania Submission – 2018/8177 – Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Analysis and Conclusion by World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in 2018, World Heritage Committee, available at <u>http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3684</u>. Please note, the reference to "remote recreation" is assumed to be a reference to the Self-Reliant Recreation Zone.

#### Built infrastructure

- The existing hut is of a significantly smaller scale than the proposed accommodation complex (which comprises 3 accommodation huts, communal kitchen area and related infrastructure – see Map 2 of the "Halls Island Maps" Attachment for a comparison of the footprints):
  - Any degradation of the Apparent Naturalness resulting from Reg Hall's original hut cannot be compared to the impact of the proposed structures;
  - Remoteness from Settlement and Time Remoteness will also be reduced as a result of introduced helicopter access;
  - The historical usage levels described in 9.2 of the Protected Matters Environmental Management Plan record a total of 271 guests over 26 years. The current proposal would involve visitation of up to 250 people each year (30 trips of 6 guests + 2 guides, 3 private trips 0f 4 guests). This is a significant intensification of usage of the area.
- Standing Camps are permitted in the Self-Reliant Recreation zone, however huts are prohibited. The proposed accommodation complex is described as a Standing Camp in the referral. That term is used in the Tasmanian government's *Standing Camp Policy 2006* to mean "temporary commercial bush camp". While the Policy allows for Type C standing camps to be of lightweight material but remain intact, the camps must be "constructed so they are temporary in nature and appearance". The scale and design of the proposed Halls Island accommodation facilities, while sympathetic to the surroundings, are not temporary in appearance.

Throughout the referral material and additional information, the accommodation facilities are variously referred to as pods, standing camps, and huts. The Protected Matters Environmental Management Plan consistently refers to the facilities as 'huts', a description we consider is more in keeping with the extent of timber and steel infrastructure proposed than a 'standing camp'.

- The lease conditions, as replicated in 8.8.1 of the Protected Matters Environmental Management Plan, state that the "exact locations and size of huts to be determined in conjunction with the [Tasmanian] Minister." The Federal Minister should not be satisfied that the impact of the huts can be understood without confirmation of the exact location, size and layout of the buildings.
- The risk of 'infrastructure creep' is exemplified by the discussion in the referral of a range of additional tracks proposed as Stage 2 of the proposal. There is a danger that, if Stage 1 is constructed and degrades wilderness values, the additional impacts of Stage 2 infrastructure will not be considered "significant" when assessed against that revised baseline. Further details regarding Stage 2 should be provided to allow a cumulative assessment of the impacts associated with the Halls Island proposal as one larger action.

#### Helicopter access

- As discussed above, "avoiding traversing the Wilderness <u>Zone</u> for extended periods" or ensuring no noise from helicopter landing site within the Wilderness <u>Zone</u> does not avoid impacting on wilderness <u>values</u>.
- The helicopter landing site will result in localised impacts on the Apparent Naturalness and a reduction in remoteness for the site. The Wilderness Value mapping methodology explicitly recognises helipads as affecting "Remoteness from Access."
- More significantly, helicopter overflights will degrade wilderness values over a much larger area. The TWWHA Management Plan states (at 175):

The recreational value of wilderness in the TWWHA arises principally from the opportunity it provides for people to experience large remote areas that have little or no facilities, management presence or evidence of modern society and are largely free from disturbance and mechanical access.

We heard consistently at the workshop series that current recreational users highly value the isolation they experience in the area of the proposal, a "sense of getting away from it all" that they fear will be damaged by overflights – not just from the immediate intrusion of noise, but the

intrusion into the sense of remoteness. This impact on time remoteness has not been adequately quantified or analysed in the referral or additional information.

The calculation of anticipated impacts as once-off point-impact of less than 2 minutes<sup>3</sup> ignores this intrusion on remoteness. Further, each trip is expected to involve four helicopter flights in a day (2 trips in to deliver guests, and 2 return trips). Experiencing four overflights within an hour is likely to significantly detract from sense of remoteness for other recreational users.

- The additional material estimates maximum flight usage at 48 hours annually.<sup>4</sup> This does not account for flights to stock and maintain the huts, or to regularly remove grey and black water (as required by the lease condition A2.2(m)). The lease conditions allow for unlimited trips for construction, supply and servicing runs in connection with the operations (see C4.B(ix)). It is not clear how many additional trips / flight hours will be involved in these activities.
- The additional material states that the helicopter landing site is within the Central Plateau Conservation Area and is a "compliant activity with both the current 2016 TWWHA Management Plan, and the preceding 1999 TWWHA Management Plan."

However, the 1999 Management Plan made clear that "the use of aircraft to gain access to remote parts of the WHA is generally incompatible with the recreation experiences sought by on-ground visitors to such areas." Helicopter landings would be considered in the Central Plateau Conservation Area subject to investigation against criteria such as:

- Nil or very little conflict between proposed commercial users and other users of the site
- Nil or minimal impact on the World Heritage and other natural and cultural values at the site
- No facilities are to be constructed

It is incorrect to say the proposed landing site would have been compliant with the 1999 Management Plan – the proposal may have been considered, but would not have been likely to satisfy the relevant criteria (particularly in light of the long-standing opposition from anglers to helicopter use in the Central Plateau).

The customised Fly Neighbourly Advice can be amended by the parties (PWS and the proponent) "acting reasonably", therefore provides little guarantee that its terms will provide long term protection of World Heritage values.

None of these issues have been adequately addressed in the assessment of impacts on wilderness character in the referral and additional information.

Given the explicit recognition in the TWWHA Management Plan that commercial development in remote areas, noise and mechanised access can significantly detract from wilderness experience, the Minister should be satisfied that the Halls Island proposal is likely to have a significant impact on World Heritage values. The Minister cannot be satisfied on current information that these impacts are not significant or can be appropriately mitigated.

On that basis, we urge the Minister to declare that the Halls Island proposal is a controlled action and nominate an assessment approach that will, at a minimum, allow a rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis of the impact of the proposal on wilderness values.

Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss these comments in further detail.

#### Kind regards,

Environmental Defenders Office (Tas) Inc.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Attachment 11: Notes on Helicopter use and impact minimisation, 11d

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Attachment 11: Notes on Helicopter use and impact minimisation, 11a

FOI 181005 Document 99

18 July 2018

s22

#### epbc.referrals@environment.gov.aus

Dear Sir,

## RE: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I would like to make a submission re the above. I am a long time user of the general area around Lake Malbena (I was first in the area at the age of 11 with my father in 1957). **s22** 

Since returning from the mainland in the mid 1980's, I have been a visitor to the area on numerous occasions to bushwalk and trout fish and I assisted with the maintenance and management of tracks to many of the lakes. This included the access to Lake Malbena Hut which was used by Mr Hall and the Barnard Family hut at Lake Lyne . As such, I have a particular interest in this area, (which I call lakes to the north of the Gowan Brae property) under the Commonwealth EPBC Act 1999 Schedule 5. That is, I have ;

- have a particular interest in the property; and
- may be affected by the management of the property

I made a submission on the Draft Management Plan and pointed out the values of this area to me on a cultural basis. This area is mostly zoned self reliant recreation – which is appropriate.

In recent years the Commonwealth has seen fit to provide financial assistance in the purchase of the Gown Brae Property (which contains the traditional access route) for the exclusive use of the aboriginal community in Tasmania, without seeing fit to require guarantees to allow continued access to the area by traditional users.

Access is now restricted.

I am therefore opposed to the proposal for a commercial camp at Malbena with private helicopter access, as I believe this will the "thin edge of the wedge". I note that this process to date has not been through a State approvals public comment period and has been done in secret. I am suspicious that the proponent may also have an agreement with the Aboriginal Land Council to restrict the traditional access route (by road and tracks) for commercial gain. I have been told that this is what they attempted to do with the Tas Land Conservancy after setting up a standing camp near Lake Ina. That is; requested TLC to longer allow public access. To their credit, they refused this and I can still go into this area which gives access to the remote lakes immediately to the north.

Why should commercial activities be allowed in the WHA area, while access to the same area by traditional users is restricted?

Regarding a helicopter landing pad being constructed I have no issue as long as is a general use facility which will allow access into the area, which as noted above, has been restricted via traditional tracks on private land. I would use this to access the area, with my family and friends.

However, the proposed route should be modified to follow the public roads to Bronte Park, then to the Gowan Property and along the traditional road access. This will avoid impacts on the WHA. The proposed access via straight line from take-off to landing has made no consideration of the noise and visual intrusion on the WHA.

Your faithfully



Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601

### EPBC 2018/8177

Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena – Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

# s22

This submission is made in response to the "Invitation for public comment on additional information" (EPBC number 2018/8177) dated 05/07/2018, and following the "clock stop" period on the original self-referral.

While I believe that there are many valid proposal-specific reasons why this particular proposal should be rejected (many of which have been clearly described in excellent submissions of others, for example that of the Tasmanian National Parks Association, which I have seen) I wish to concentrate mainly on the broader picture, that of the Australian Government's clear responsibilities as a State Party to the World Heritage Convention. That is, responsibilities to maintain and protect the values for which the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) was listed (and extended), and responsibility to take seriously requests from the relevant international bodies to consider specific issues.

However, I do mention a few particular concerns of mine regarding the proposal of Wild Drake Pty Ltd later in what follows.

#### What they propose

The proposal from Wild Drake Pty Ltd is for what they euphemistically call a "standing camp", consisting of three timber-and-steel accommodation buildings for tourists, aimed (in the words of the proponent in his referral) "at the very top end of the market". These preferred guests would be flown in by helicopter, and, as the "additional information" since provided by the proponent makes clear, other, independent self-reliant visitors would be almost always unwelcome – they intend to allow only three groups of up to four persons to visit the island annually. And then, they prefer people with an already-established connection to the pioneer Reg Hall and his hut, completely excluding most people in the world, unless they have the inclination and the wherewithal to pay top dollar and travel by helicopter, thus insulating themselves from the essence of this very high-quality wild area.

#### Precedent

My overriding concern is that the approval of this project would set an indicative and persuasive, indeed, effectively binding, precedent for the subsequent approval of other private niche facilities within the TWWHA, incorporating built accommodation (far more fancy than what a reasonable person would regard as a "camp", standing or otherwise), and including helicopter servicing. "If you have approved his, then why not mine?"

The Tasmanian government is well-known for its "friendliness" to private tourism developers in any of its parks and reserves, including the TWWHA. The "expressions of interest" process and the consequent "reserve activity assessment" procedure are notoriously secretive, both being non-statutory and usually excluding public comment phases. I would be very surprised if a number of developments like the Halls Island proposal were not already in the pipeline, and with approval of one the floodgates would surely open.

The precedent factor is essentially why the Dept of Environment and Energy, as the relevant arm of the Australian Government, must not approve the proposal for Halls Island. Helicopters render trivial the access to any desired site in the TWWHA, and the development of any site (and the repeated helicopter servicing flights) severely reduce the wilderness quality value of the surrounding area, since (apart from "apparent naturalness") the key to "wilderness" is *remoteness*, and that means both physical distance from modern built developments, and "time remoteness", basically the difficulty for people to get there.

We must not allow multiple sites (more and more as time goes on) to be so degraded.

#### The importance of maintaining wilderness

The TWWHA is listed as World Heritage for satisfying four natural values criteria and three cultural values criteria, more comprehensive than any other WH property in the world. And it is one of very few WH properties within which "wilderness" is currently one of the pre-eminent features; indeed the word "Wilderness" is in the name of the property.

Since *any* human incursion (and particularly one involving buildings and/or vehicles, with repeated visits to the same spot) has *some* impact on natural values (some incursions obviously much more than others of course), it is widely appreciated by all responsible bodies that 'wilderness' (i.e. remoteness, intrinsically discouraging large-scale and repeated visitation to a given site) is not only a value in itself but a key "tool" in maintaining the other specific natural values of the property, (such as underreserved plant communities, to give just one example).

This idea of a "tool" (to describe it in rather unflattering fashion) is expressed, for instance, in the current (2016) TWWHA Management Plan. It describes wilderness

as the "quality which underpins the success in meeting all four criteria for a natural property and the basis for the maintenance of its integrity" (p 43).

(Incidentally "the Plan" identifies Lake Malbena as having high wilderness quality value (pp 14-18), despite it's having been excised from the "wilderness zone", in a cynical move apparently engineered specifically to allow acceptance of this so-called "standing camp").

In the same vein, a 2015 decision of the World Heritage Committee 39 COM 7B.35 "also urges the State Party to review the proposed new management plan for the property to ensure that it provides adequate protection for its OUV, including: a) Recognition of wilderness character of the property as one of its key values **and as being fundamental for its management**" (my emphasis).

#### Tourism

With specific regard to tourism, the Reactive Monitoring Mission (RMM) from IUCN and ICOMOS which visited the property in 2015 made 20 recommendations (all publicly accepted by both Tasmanian and Australian governments), including:

#### "Recommendation 6

In line with a recent Committee request (Decision 39 COM 7B.35), the Management Plan should establish strict criteria for new tourism development within the property, which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, including its wilderness character and cultural attributes."

and

#### "Recommendation 7

The comprehensive Tourism Master Plan details should refine the balance between legitimate tourism development and the management and conservation of the cultural and natural values of the TWWHA...."

In response to the RMM, the 2016 TWWHA management plan as it appeared indeed did flag the "*development of additional assessment criteria for commercial tourism proposals and requirements to consider impacts on the wilderness values of the property*".

In spite of this, the recent (July 2018) decision of the World Heritage Committee still had to express concern that the promised Tourism Master Plan had **not yet been** *developed,* and specifically urged the Australian Government to "expedite the development of the Tourism Master Plan in order to ensure a strategic approach to tourism development".

"A strategic approach" would imply some sort of overarching consideration of the World Heritage property as a whole – some sort of limit on the cumulative increase in the number of developments like the Halls Island example. Otherwise, the natural values of the TWWHA would clearly be progressively eroded – the death of a thousand cuts.

And given that this Tourism Master Plan is still to appear, the clear guidelines expected by the World Heritage Committee are still undecided. In the circumstances, approval of any development under the EPBC Act at present is disrespectful and entirely inappropriate.

#### Presentation of the WHA

The regulations made under the EPBC Act specify in part that:

"The primary purpose of management of natural heritage and cultural heritage of a declared World Heritage property must be, in accordance with Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention, to identify, protect, conserve, present, transmit to future generations and, if appropriate, rehabilitate the World Heritage values of the property".

"Identify", "protect" and "conserve" are obvious. "Transmitting to future generations" clearly implies that significant cumulative degradation of values on a timescale of years or decades can't be allowed.

It is the matter of "presentation" which opens up cans of worms. Despite there being contrary opinions, World Heritage is usually regarded as being *owned by people* (all the people of the world), and therefore people need to be allowed to see or experience it. Fairly reasonably, existing long-distance walking tracks like the Overland Track or the South Coast Track in Tasmania may be retained and maintained (with appropriate management prescriptions) so that those who wish can visit. Likewise, visitor centres with extensive interpretive material (such as those at Lake St Clair), and carefully-managed historic sites (such as Waldheim near Cradle Mountain) and their access facilities are desirable as embodying "presentation" to a wider class of people.

What would be less desirable would be the development of many new tracks giving relatively easy access to hitherto remote parts of the WHA, for the reasons (degradation of wilderness) given above. Or extensive recreational helicopter use in the WHA, likewise.

It is likely that proponents such as Wild Drake Pty Ltd would defend their proposal on the grounds that it is "presenting" aspects of the TWWHA (e.g. a hut built in 1953 by Reg Hall, a pioneer bushwalker and advocate for the Walls of Jerusalem area) to groups of interested people.

I would argue against that idea, because the people concerned have to pay substantial money to be considered, almost everyone else being expressly excluded (as outlined above). An ordinary person who develops an interest in Reg Hall has virtually no chance. And the mandated mode of access (a quick chopper flight) trivialises the geographical and historical realities of the place.

#### Other considerations

As I foreshadowed, there are plenty of reasons to reject the Halls Island "standing camp" proposal apart from the overarching ones I describe above. Most of them have been well presented by others, including:

- The proponent envisages a "staged" development, stage 2 incorporating walking track (or informal "route") development (contrary to the Management Plan), but expects prior approval of just his "stage 1". The whole thing is what defines the likely impact on WH values, and it should be assessed in its entirety.
- Helicopters are highly visible from afar and somewhat noisy. In a short 11 minute trip they may be quite low for a substantial part of the trip. All of which could affect the enjoyment of other TWWHA users.
- No comprehensive Aboriginal cultural values assessment for the WHA has yet been done. The proponent states that the likelihood of special cultural sites in the vicinity is low – yet the RAA does mention one such place (to which the proponent intends to direct his tourists!). Clearly, in the absence of a proper assessment, there may be others, and there may be unacceptable impacts on them.
- There seem to be rare plant communities on the island, possibly quite special instances, given that an island will have its own particular wildfire history. Can the proposed protection mechanisms be trusted to protect them, when all successive groups of six tourists, year after year, will be wandering around the same small (10ha) island?
- The proponent's claims to have "engaged in consultation" with neighboring property owners and other interested parties fail to specify the nature of the "consultation". Indeed, some of the people involved claim nothing but the quick exchange of pleasantries, or a shared history quite unrelated to the current proposal.
- The "additional information" from the proponent released on 5 July 2018 includes a "general statement on wilderness characteristics of Halls Island". This is defective in that it uses old (2006) wilderness mapping data, since superseded. It also makes much of the loss of wilderness quality resulting from the presence of Hall's tiny 1950s hut, and implies that the subsequent addition of four much flasher and totally modern buildings will make little difference. It also suggests that since historical access (1950s to 1970s) was occasionally by horse, float plane or Haflinger 4WD, that Lake Malbena is no longer remote. This ignores natural regeneration of the paths, and subsequent closure for conservation reasons of the property which would have afforded the easiest vehicle access.

#### Conclusion

For all of the above reasons, and in particular the dangerous precedent which would be set, I urge the Australian government to prohibit the Halls Island - Lake Malbena development. To do otherwise would be contrary to Australia's obligations as a signatory to the World Heritage Convention. From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Thursday, 19 July 2018 1:05 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Reference number and title: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourismand Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania. [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22
Sent: Wednesday, 18 July 2018 3:46 PM
To: EPBC Referrals
Subject: FW: Reference number and title: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourismand Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

#### From: s22

Sent: Wednesday, July 18, 2018 3:36 PM

To: epbc.referrals@environment.gov.aus

**Subject:** Reference number and title: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourismand Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

My contact details are as follows: s22

To whom it may concern,

As a bush walker and fly fisherman who has lived in Tasmania since 1970, I am deeply concerned by the above proposal on a number of grounds:

- 1. Precedent. To allow such a proposal to proceed within an area of World Heritage, sets a precedent that this Minister and all future ministers will find difficult to back away from without claims of bias, unfairness and inequity. Once one such standing camp exists with helicopter access, how will future claims by enthusiastic proponents to set up similar camps throughout World Heritage areas be legitimately and legally resisted?
- 2. Noise. No amount of downplaying of helicopter flight paths and frequency, is able to disguise the fact that this proposal will introduce far more man-made noise into a pristine area of World Heritage. Hikers and fishers value the quiet and serenity of the area above all else and this serenity is especially valued on still (windless) days when the noise of beating rotors will carry furthest!

3. Elitism. The fact is, once 'ordinary' hikers and fishers know there is a standing camp in an area and therefore the likelihood of other people being there, or noisily helicoptered in at short notice, it creates a psychological 'barrier' that will prevent them from venturing there themselves – an artificial and unfair 'exclusion zone'! This is nothing short of elitism in an area of World Heritage – a place owned by us all, surely?

Yours Sincerely,s22

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Thursday, 19 July 2018 1:46 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: lake malbena 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 19 July 2018 12:45 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: lake malbena 2018/8177

To Whom It May Concern,

I am quite concerned about the laws being changed to suit a small percentage of the people as opposed to all of us.

As Baby boomers we retired to Tassie because it was more peaceful than the other states.

This is just one example of how you are changing Tassie's uniqueness to end up being just like everywhere else. Thinking of moving again.

Sad days for peaceful existence.

Regards S22

Comment on proposed development by WILD DRAKE PTY LTD for Halls Island and Lake Malbena — Reference Number 2018/8177

I visited the area of the proposed development in the summer of 2012, and based on this experience I would like to offer the following thoughts on the development. Essentially I believe the development is inappropriate for this area. In my view there will be two key negative impacts of the proposed development, both of which are protected under the EPBC Act. These are:

#### 1. Fragile environment

The proposed site of the buildings is Halls Island. This island has been isolated and contains flora that is both very beautiful and distinct from the surrounding area. I understand the latter makes protecting this flora extremely ecologically important. The island is not very big, so I have concerns that the plants on the island would be very vulnerable to relatively heavy increased use of the island.

It appears the proposed venture is aimed at wealthy fly fishers. Much of the water around the Island are not ideal fly fishing waters, and they are in places quite difficult to access. Has any assessment been made of such a heavy concentration of fishing activity on the island? Normally fishing access does not cause environmental problems on the Central Plateau, but it would seem this proposal will see quite a high concentration in a small area on this vulnerable island.

2. Degradation of wilderness and heritage character of the camp area and the western central plateau.

The proposed development lies within the self reliant zone and is very close to the wilderness zone of the western central plateau. This area is currently very remote, which importantly contributes to value to the broader Australian community. This proposal is essentially planting a significant pieces of infrastructure in the middle of this very remote area, thus significantly reducing the remoteness of the area.

Furthermore, the proposal sees regular helicopter flights fly over the world heritage to and from the proposed camp. From experience, I am aware of how much the use of this type of mechanised transport would diminish the wilderness character of the area. The presence of such flights would not only affect Lake Malbena but the entire western part of the central plateau - which includes self reliant and wilderness zones.

The existing Hall's Island Hut has some heritage value too. An important part of its charm is that it is so remote and basic. Putting a permanent 'hi tech' camp right next to it will clearly reduces its remoteness, and thereby reduce some of its charm.

In addition, the proposed permanent campsite will tend to crowd out other people visiting Hall's Island. This would, in effect, 'privatise' this part of the world heritage area, giving preferred access to the develops customers. This type of preferred access is not, in my view, a desirable way to manage a world heritage area.

It is worth noting that the above two negative impacts also make the project inconsistent the Tasmanian World Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan 2016.

In addition to the above two concerns, I also have doubts that the proposed development will be financially viable. The area currently is both extremely scenic and remote, which this aspect would no doubt appeal to many visitors. However undertaking the proposed activities, such as kayaking up the lake and climbing Mt Oana would require visitors to be quite fit. I wonder how many wealthy, fit willing to rough it (relatively speaking) for 4 days, potential visitors there are? I can't imagine there are many. And while it is true that Tasmania is currently flavour of the month for travellers, how long will this last? The question then is, should the venture go ahead and subsequently fails financially, what strategies are in place to rehabilitate the area?

Over recent years Tasmania has seen developments on the edge or in the recreation zone of the world heritage area. In my view these projects have had a positive impact on the community, with relatively large and broadly distributed benefits (e.g. significant visitor numbers and employment opportunities) and negligible impact to wilderness values.

However, even if the Lake Malbena venture succeeds financially, the benefits of the project are very small and narrowly distributed. Small because the total number of customers would only be 150 per year. However, for the reasons noted above, the costs associated with the project would be quite significant and be borne by the broader community through a reduction in wilderness values of the area. For this reason I would argue that the project should not proceed. At the very least, a detailed and independent assessment of the entire set of impacts should be undertaken so it is clear what the true cost of this project is.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

## s22



Assessments Victoria and Tasmania Section, Assessments and Governance Branch, Department of the Environment and Energy, CANBERRA, ACT, 2601,

By email: <a href="mailto:epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au">epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au</a>

18 July 2018

## Re: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas (ref. 2018/8177)

#### Our group

Friends of the Great Western Tiers (*kooparoona niara*) Inc., (FOGWT), from Northern Tasmania, has an interest in this proposal because we see many adverse impacts on the integrity of the internationally-recognised Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). The Australian Government is a State Party to the World Heritage Convention and has a responsibility to protect the values of this Property.

Our member group has voted overwhelmingly to oppose this development proposal. Many of our members have connections to the Lake Malbena part of the WHA through its relative proximity, through visiting the region and enjoying its natural state and through numerous encounters with visitors to our region. We are conservationists and business tourism owner/operators, who have grave concerns regarding future developments in the TWWHA. We are fortunate to have members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community amongst the FOGWT membership group, and thus we are routinely advised about their community's perspective on these matters.

This submission seeks to give voice to our reasons for the opposition to the proposal and we call on the Minister to halt any further progression of this proposal.

FOGWT was formed in 2012. We are a group of local residents, with at present around 20 financial members who meet regularly. However our membership now has supporters from around the country. We are connected to other environmental groups in Tasmania, via the umbrella group Environment Tasmania and also the diverse conglomeration of groups who make up Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania. Our direct supporters list numbers around 50.

#### Wilderness values

FOGWT is seriously concerned with the loss of wilderness character, especially given that our State's Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) for the proposal (only recently leaked to us) is superficial in nature, being largely limited to the (proposed) built accommodation, with a lack of detailed wilderness assessment. The few mentions of wilderness rely on outdated (2006) data, notwithstanding that a later mapping project has been carried out. The current (2016) TWWHA Management Plan specifically alludes to '*development of additional assessment criteria for commercial tourism proposals and requirements to consider impacts on the wilderness values of the property*'. This was cited as being an essential requirement at the 2018 World Heritage Committee meeting. Such a "Tourism Master Plan" has yet to appear.

#### Aboriginal cultural values assessment

A further prime concern is the absence to date of a comprehensive Aboriginal Cultural Values Assessment (ACVA), despite much talk of the need for such in the TWWHA Management Plan. We understand that funding for this has now been supplied; however it will proceed in three stages. It may be some time therefore before the complete ACVA for existing National Parks, Reserves and Conservation Areas is finished as we understand that this is the third stage prescribed. Thus, at present, we have no detailed documentation of the Aboriginal Cultural Landscape, including such important elements as songlines, trade routes, and suchlike.

We note that the proponent in his referral states that Aboriginal Cultural sites are "unlikely" in the vicinity of Halls Island; however the (leaked) RAA makes several references to a specific site (with the name redacted). Further important sites are hardly "unlikely".

#### Secrecy of Tasmanian government processes

Another apprehension our group holds is the absolute lack of transparency surrounding this proposal, prior to its referral to your department. We remain deeply worried about the ad hoc nature of the Expressions of Interest (EOI) process, which the Tasmanian Government utilizes for developments in the TWWHA. Every EOI, including this proposal, assessed by the non-statutory and secretive RAA process, is made in the ongoing absence of a Tasmanian Tourism Master Plan. We urge your department to advise the Minister not to approve this referred proposal in the absence of such a plan, one openly endorsed by the relevant World Heritage bodies.

Further to this, we remain deeply concerned about the ad hoc alteration of zonal boundaries to allow for such tourism developments within the TWWHA. This occurs without community consultation. There are multiple instances to date, including (most blatantly) redesignation of the whole of Lake Malbena. The 2014 Draft TWWHA Management Plan showed Lake Malbena to be inside the 'wilderness' zone. Without any consultation, after the EOI process for tourism developments within the TWWHA had been initiated by the State Government, but before publication of the finalized management plan, the zonation was altered (apparently specifically to

allow for this tourism development, of which the public was then blissfully unaware). So the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan reveals Lake Malbena now to be in the 'self reliant recreation' zone, where something called a "standing camp" happens to be permitted.

## Elitism and exclusion

Quite apart from this unacceptable lack of transparency, the referred proposal here is for a commercial development, aimed at very-high-end paying tourists (in the proponent's words), who will be helicoptered to Hall's Island within Lake Malbena. It is therefore a very long way from "self reliance" and very close to elitism.

We had been wondering if true "self reliant" visitors would have unfettered access to Hall's Island, to appreciate Hall's legacy? Does the development in any meaningful way encompass "presentation to the world's people" of this part of the World Heritage Property – the essential reason for allowing *any* sort of tourism within such a property? But the matter is made abundantly clear by the "additional information" provided by the proponent, the subject of 2018/8177. Under his section 9.2, *"the lessees may permit public access to up to 3 groups per year, with a maximum group size of 4 persons".* So, twelve people per annum, apart from his 180 "high end" paying tourists. Furthermore, such people have to get permission from Wild Drake Pty Ltd, and preference is given to those who have already been there over the years. Equitable "presentation" indeed!

Yes, the proponent claims to have a lease over the entire island (the details of which seem to be publicly unavailable), but the essentials of the leasing arrangement date from the pioneer Reg Hall himself in the 1950s, well prior to the TWWHA listing. The leased area is not excised from the TWWHA. It is subject to the TWWHA Management Plan (unlike some privately owned blocks elsewhere, voluntarily incorporated into to the WHA). Halls Island is publicly-owned land, WH listed for the benefit of the world's people. Exclusion of independent visitors is illegitimate.

## A standing camp!

Nor is this project a 'standing camp', the most substantial sort of development allowable in the "self-reliant recreation" zone (and sensibly entirely prohibited in the "wilderness" zone). The facility is constructed of timber and steel; there are four distinct buildings; and they occupy 800 square metres. It is not proposed to dismantle it at any stage in the project's 20 year life.

Threatened and endangered plant communities have been identified on Hall's Island and the only amelioration proposed is for a boardwalk over the sphagnum bog. There is every reason for plant communities on the island to be significantly different from the other surrounding land because an island is relatively protected from wildfire and will have a different fire history.

If the paying customers decide to, there is nothing preventing them from trampling over the entire island, ignorant of such special plant communities, some of which have been identified by the proponent's own Environmental Impact Survey. Who would not venture to "stretch the legs" after being delivered by helicopter? A small island doesn't provide a lot of different places to go.

Furthermore, there will be an area from which the helicopter will arrive and depart, off the island (we believe it is yet to be decided how such a helipad will be constructed). Clearly there will be additional impacts here too, during both construction and ongoing operation.

## This is a staged operation

The proponent submits his self-referral, stating that it covers just the construction and operation of the "standing camp" and its helicopter access, but flagging that his visitors will also be offered additional experiences in the vicinity of Halls Island, including the use of purpose-built or forged tracks to local attractions, including within the wilderness zone (e.g. Mt Oana). The proponent clearly refers to this as "stage 2 of the development. A further assessment by your Department would be required.

But since major impacts on the values of the World Heritage Area are involved, it only makes sense to consider the project as a whole to get a clear picture of the likely overall impact.

The proponent must be made to state clearly the entirety of his plans so that a properly-informed assessment may be made.

Apart from everything else, development of new tracks within the wilderness zone is prohibited under the TWWHA Management Plan except for essential management purposes.

## Impact on further Tasmanian tourism

Tasmania is fortunate to have the only World Heritage property listed for four natural criteria, for which "wilderness" (with its essential remoteness from modern development, and lack of trivially easy access, e.g. by helicopter) is the key maintaining factor. The WH committee and advisory bodies have repeatedly stressed the need to emphasise the preservation of *wilderness* as the key to protecting the values for which the Property was listed.

There are also the Aboriginal cultural values and the concurrent listing of the TWWHA for three cultural criteria. FOGWT believes that all these facts significantly contribute to the boom in visitor numbers which Tasmania is currently experiencing. Elitist tourism developments within the TWWHA mean that our state is in danger of destroying the very attraction that brings visitors here.

Wilderness character can be measured and its value is decreased by proximity to infrastructure (access) and constructions (settlements). 'Apparent naturalness' is an integral element. The wilderness quality of the TWWHA has essentially been mapped, and much of what is outside the "wilderness zone" (including Lake Malbena) has a high quality value. Permanent built habitation and permanent helicopter access sites erode wilderness character. The Tasmanian Government seems to be oblivious to this erosion - despite the universal (government as well as private) promotion of 'wilderness', which ensures that it is the key attractor of virtually all visitors, be they intra/inter-state, or overseas.

## Conclusion

Our group believes that this development is inconsistent with the protection of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), including wilderness character. It contradicts World Heritage Committee requests and Reactive Monitoring Mission (RMM) recommendations (all of which have been expressly accepted by both Tasmanian and Australian governments); violates provisions of the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan; and is inconsistent with the legislated management objectives of National Parks and the Nature Conservation Act under Tasmanian legislation. We believe that tourism proposals within the TWWHA should be assessed as a whole, because the effect on wilderness character is cumulative.

FOGWT believes that tourism developments should be encouraged around the outskirts of the TWWHA, rather than within. This would facilitate much more "whole of community" involvement in Tasmania's tourism boom, rather than having the benefits flow mainly to a few of the Government's favourite developers. It also protects into the future the wilderness character and suite of Aboriginal cultural values from erosion and potential desecration.

We therefore urge the Minister to reject this proposal.

Yours faithfully,



s22

Friends of the Great Western Tiers (kooparoona niara) Inc.

Referrals Gateway Environmental Assessment Branch Department of the Environment

18<sup>th</sup> July 2018

To whom it may concern,

## RE: Proposal number 2018/8177 Halls Island Standing Camp.

As invited I would like to share my comments with regard to the above proposal by Daniel Hackett.

Firstly, this proposal is nothing more than a venture into Heli-fishing in Tasmania. Daniel Hackett is a trout guide and trout guiding is where he makes his money. This proposal would give Daniel Hackett a clear business advantage over all other trout guides and tourism operators in Tasmania.

Sadly, his trout retail business has failed twice in Launceston which should ring alarm bells to anyone considering this proposal. His previous failures demonstrate that he does not have the credentials to meet the 'Proven business' requirement for this venture nor the public support. Also, throughout this process Daniel has not been personally contactable by the general public. Furthermore, he has not attended local the public meetings to discuss his intentions or hear our concerns.

As you would be fully aware, this is not the first time that Heli-fishing has been proposed in Tasmania. Thankfully due to the public response from multi-generation Tasmanians this was not allowed to happen. I strongly urge your department to not let it happen again on this or any future occasions. An indefinite flight ban needs to be put in place over our World Heritage areas with the exclusion of for rescue purposes.

I have been made aware that the zoning was changed to allow for Daniel Hackett's proposal and I don't believe that the public consultation process was adequate or accessible to the average Tasmanian. One could almost assume he has been given a pen and asked to circle off the area that he wanted! Also, it is questionable how Daniel Hackett obtained the lease for Halls Island.

World Heritage areas are best left as they are, this is their appeal and what makes them unique internationally. World Heritage areas our point of difference in Tasmania. The wilderness never dates and this is what will keep bringing people to Tasmania for many years to come. Also local Tasmanians will continue to use and respect these parts of the state and want them just the way they are.

We don't need helicopter access to any World Heritage areas, they are accessible by foot. Tasmania offers plenty of other luxury wilderness experiences for anyone who has access issues. We do not need to increase our footprint any more. We also have driving options into the word heritage areas for people who are less capable of walking.

Tasmania's World Heritage areas are predominately walking only destinations and the fact that we have maintained this status is the reason why we are now experiencing a tourist boom and worldwide publicity from people such as David Attenbourough. The walk is the journey to the destination and an important part of the experience. When you arrive you treat the destination with the respect that it deserves. A tourist who can afford a \$4000 plus experience will expect luxury and nothing less. It is highly unlikely that they will respect the 'leave it as you found it' philosophy and it's unfathomable that Daniel has the capacity to enforce this. They will expect others to clean up after them!

No amount of guidelines, procedures, rules, restrictions, studies and risk assessments reflect the social damage to Tasmanian users of the World Heritage areas nor our reputation internationally as a unique World Heritage destination. As a fifth generation Tasmanian I have used and appreciated the World Heritage areas without commercial ventures and this needs to remain status quo for the future generations to enjoy.

Kind regards,



From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Thursday, 19 July 2018 1:52 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: submission on referral 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Wednesday, 18 July 2018 5:03 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: submission on referral 2018/8177

To Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg

I have been following the proposal of the Halls Island Standing Camp (EPBC Number 2018/8177 Halls, Island Tasmania) development for some time and would like to voice my concerns.

The secretive way in which the Wilderness Zone boundry around Halls Island and Lake Malbena was redrawn so that the island falls under the "Recreation Zone" to allow the proposed development to occur should be enough of a reason to reject the proposal outright until a thorough assement can be made.

Initially the the project was approved as a standing camp under the Tasmanian Governments EOI process. Contrary to what one would think, a standing camp can include a number of permanent structures that are interconnected with boardwalks and a helipad used to shuttle guests and deliver supplies. Islands within the WHA are often the pinnacle of preciouness, largely due to their isolation from introduced animals and the threat of bushfire. It is well known that Halls Island is home to endangered endemic flora such as Sphagnum moss, King Billy Pine and sensitive lichen. Any form of development would negatively impact this ecostsyem. Removing the island and surounding lake from the Wilderness Zone will not make the island any less resilient to development and I believe it should be reinstated as an area of significant wildnerness value as it was only a few years ago.

A statement from the proponents (Wild Drake Pty Ltd) own website in 2012 outlines clear opposition to heli fishing and the building of private accomodation within the TWWHA.

## **Re-enforcing the World Heritage Area values**

As we work towards environmental best practice, there are a few things that we definitely won't be doing:

1.

We will not be applying to fly customers into the Western Lakes. We believe that one of the greatest parts of the Western Lakes fishery is the remoteness, and the need to use your own energy and initiative to get there. This remoteness and solitude is further protected by the WHA Management Plan, which actually prohibits the use of helicopters to take anglers in/out of the WHA.

#### 2.

We will not be building a private hut or lodge! One of the great enjoyments of our Western Lakes campouts is indeed the camping. In a world full of stuffy-office blocks and hotel rooms filled with recycled air, we can see the value and appeal of sleeping under the canvas. As such, our camp will remain as just that – a tent camp utilizing 2-3 man canvas tents for accommodation. To ensure these values are protected in the Western Lakes, the WHA actually prohibits the building of private huts or lodges in the World Heritage Area.

sourced from: <u>https://web.archive.org/web/20100624045300/http://riverfly.com.au:80/western-lakes-</u> campouts-sustainable-eco-tourism-into-the-future/ I am in no way opposed to the use of helicopters to service existing huts, track building and repairs, emergency use or bushfire management but I, and many others, are fundamentally opposed to the use of helicopters to shuttles patrons to and from areas within the TWWHA. Allowing this proposal to go ahead will undoubtably open the door to other tourism operators to apply for similar projects that go against the TWWHA managament plan and ruin the wilderness brand that Tasmania is known for internationally and is so important to our state.

Regards,

s22

Sent from  $\underline{\text{Mail}}$  for Windows 10

## 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation / Hall's Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas Submission from Southern Tasmanian Licence Anglers Association (STLAA)

It is our view that this proposal is not suitable for this location. We believe that the proposal should not be approved, and the Government should stop this and any similar proposal from proceeding.

The area has been allocated by the people of Tasmania, for the world, as a World Heritage Area (WHA) and a Wilderness area (TWWHA). As well as a disruptive effect on the native flora and fauna, this proposal would have a detrimental impact on the environment and its wilderness, which has been set aside by the people of Tasmania for the enjoyment of anybody, whether Tasmanian or an interstate visitor or a world traveller. The area should not be exploited by a few to the exclusion or detriment of others.

The proposal offers a "wilderness experience" for its clients, however helicopter flights into the TWWHA is not a wilderness experience. They detract from the other "wilderness" offerings and have a negative impact on the wilderness experience for other visitors to the area, eg bush-walkers, nature observers who may be there to experience the quiet solitude of our wonderful natural and wild highlands.

Whilst the number of helicopter flights is not quantified, the number of client groups is stated as up to 30 each season. This gives the impression that there are not many flights however this proposal would mean almost 200 flights when you consider flights in and out for these clients, their guides and cultural experts, support staff and construction and maintenance staff.

It also means a massive annual increase of activity in the specific (Hall's Island) area with 6 customers, plus 2 guides, plus consultant experts plus other support staff for 4 days per trip, i.e. over 1000 persondays, not allowing for possible specialists and for maintenance staff. Climatic conditions will compress these visits into a 6-month operational window, which may mean greater impact in a shorter period.

Some questions need to be asked:

- Will this commercial venture result in the exclusion of access to non-clients? Anecdotal information is that the persons behind this project have actively discouraged access to visitors, other than their own clients, to their existing camp at Lake Ina.
- Will all this activity and these helicopter flights discourage other visitors to this part the WHA set aside of all who are prepared to abide by the requirements to preserve its nature?
- Is this project in the spirit of the concept of nature reserves and World Heritage values? Surely not!

It is noted that according to the report on the investigations by a consultant hired by the proponents did not disclose any Wedge-tailed Eagles in the vicinity. However, we have reliably heard that a walker did notice a Wedge-tailed Eagle nearby to the Island. We submit that the helicopter flights associated with the proposal will discourage the return of Wedge-tailed Eagles. This should be assessed with the knowledge that the availability of habitat acceptable to this endangered species (the largest eagle in the world) is declining.

The Minister must ensure that the environmental values, flora and fauna, are preserved and not affected by this invasive commercial venture favouring those with extra disposable income prepared to outlay for a pseudo-wilderness experience and ignore that they may be financing adverse effects on those prepared to make an effort to enjoy the wilderness without any impact on others.

Visitors to the TWWHA do not want to have their solitude, and the native fauna, invaded by the noise of helicopter flights. These visitors appreciate the pure wilderness values, such things as remoteness, isolation, the challenges of the environment and the endeavour and commitment involved.

Clearly this project will have a significant impact on World Heritage values (including wilderness values) and therefore the Minister must take stock and disallow this project as it is contrary to the legal concept of World Heritage Area designation and contrary to the public's concept of wilderness, so <u>not</u> blocking the project may have legal and political ramifications.

## For and on behalf of Southern Tasmanian Licensed Anglers Association, including

- Australian Polish Anglers Club
- Bothwell Angling Club
- Bridgewater Anglers Association
- Clarence Licensed Anglers Club
- Huon Licensed Anglers Association
- Kingborough Angler Association
- Lake Pedder Anglers Club
- New Norfolk Licensed Anglers Association



Sent to Email: <a href="mailto:epbc.referrals@environment.gov.aus">epbc.referrals@environment.gov.aus</a>

Reference number and title: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas



Anglers Allance Tasmania

18 July 2018

## EPBC 2018/8177 Wild Drake P/L, Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania

Anglers Alliance Tasmania is the peak body that represents some 27,000 licenced freshwater anglers has long held the view that there should be no commercial development or aircraft incursions in the TWWHA. Many members are long time traditional users of the area, enjoying its natural values of remoteness, silence and connectivity to nature, free from the pressures and influences of modern society that contrast so sharply with the natural values of the of the TWWHA.

The General Management Plan (8.2) recognises that "*The recreation value of wilderness in the TWWHA arises principally from the opportunity it provides for people to experience large remote areas that have little or no facilities, management presence or evidence of modern society and largely free from disturbance and mechanical access.*" The Wild Drake proposal seems to be wildly at odds with these values, and although the Tasmanian Government has, without public comment, contemptuously re-named this part of *the wilderness area 'Self-Reliant Recreation', and ignored the World Heritage Committees recommendation to review the matter; it physically still remains a wilderness area that exhibits* Outstanding Universal Values required for World Heritage listing.

Helicopter flights and landings will constitute a *'significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance'* and this action will require approval from the Minister under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The Outstanding Universal Values, for which the World Heritage Area has been listed, will be seriously compromised by the intensity, duration and geographic extent of the proposed helicopter flights. The noise and visual intrusion of large six seater helicopters over the proposed 25km route which can be heard up to 4km away by humans (and presumably more by fauna) gives a noise footprint of disturbance of some 20,000 hectares for each flight. The proposed intensity of over 40 hours flying time/year at 24 minutes return gives a possible 200 flights/ year which is at odds with the proposed 30 flights/year and needs clarification. Similarly noise levels at various stages of flights, over the entire audio footprint are needed; the submission does not include enough information to understand the noise impact. Since most people find the intrusive nature of helicopters operations highly annoying and fauna are particularly sensitive to aircraft noise, comprehensive noise modelling should be included in the proponents proposal.

The proposed standing camp and flight path are located in known habitat of the endangered Wedge-tailed Eagle which has been observed by one angler on Halls Island. Some 2km to the west Eagle Lake runs into Lake Malbena which was presumably not named after a football team. The proponents search for eagle nests of some surrounding 314 hectares is a tiny area compared to the helicopters flight path area of influence of some 20,000 hectares which is also over eagle habitat. Although eagle nests are not recorded in the immediate vicinity of the proposal on the Natural Values Atlas, this may be because the remote area

gets few visits and so fewer possible sightings compared to the nests that are close to the flight path to the south and must be recorded prior to forestry operations that take place in that area.

The majority of the helicopter flights would coincide with the Wedge-tailed Eagles highly sensitive courting breeding season and *"disturbance occurring even many hundreds of meters away can cause birds to temporarily leave eggs or chicks at risk, or even to desert their nest site for years. Disturbances involving visible people or helicopters can be particularly serious "* (Tas Gov Threatened Species link). This combined with the usual offspring of only one chick make this species highly vulnerable to the helicopter movements proposed.

The helicopter disturbance will be noticeable from the popular fishing waters of Lake St Clair and especially Lake St Clair Lagoon, close to the Derwent Bridge take-off and landing area, and continues for approximately 1/3 of the length of the Self-Reliant Recreation zone, leaving a 25x8km audio footprint, to the proposed standing camp. This pathway overflys many remote lakes that anglers and bushwalkers make an effort to walk into. Similar scenarios with helicopters in the New Zealand back country have caused much angst and deep social divisions with wilderness users that have lost the very reason they walk into the back country – the natural values of remoteness, silence and connectivity to nature, free from the pressures and influences of modern society.

The observations above surely point to the Parks and Wildlife RAA Level 3 assessment being deficient and should surely be a Level 4 assessment, "Level four RAAs are usually large scale and have high public interest and/or substantial potential for impact on values" (Reserve Activity Assessment, Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania)

The proponent has yet to produce plans for the proposed buildings, the sketchy concept plans give no indication of the height, fenestration, materials or building mass - making it impossible to comment on the suitability of their design or impact on the landscape.

Anglers Alliance Tasmania argues that the Wild Drake P/L proposal is clearly unacceptable; it does not comply with the World Heritage Convention which requires that activities in the World Heritage Areas should not damage the Outstanding Universal Values for which the property has been listed. It also fails to follow the Vision and Management Objectives of the TWWHA Management Plan.

Anglers Alliance Tasmania considers that this proposal and the EOI process that engendered it gives grounds for the World Heritage Committee to conduct a Reactive Monitoring Mission to investigate how the TWWHA is being managed.

## s22

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# Addendum to Response to Request for Public Comment on Wild Drake Pty Ltd Proposal to build Hall's Island Standing Camp

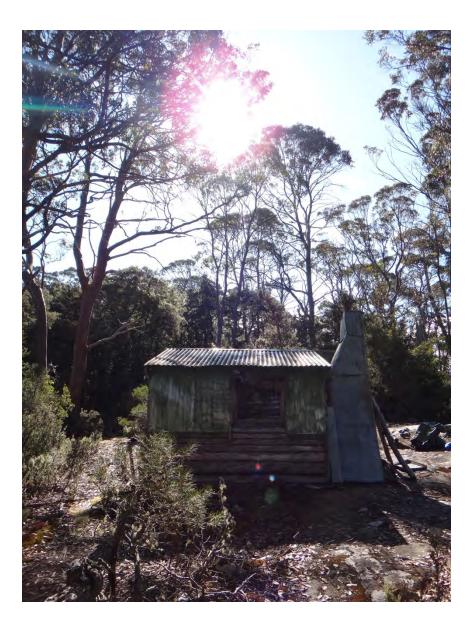
Reference No. 2018/8177





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## 1. Summary

On April 15 2018 I submitted a detailed response to EPBC Reference No. 2018/8177, 'Halls Island Standing Camp'. On July 5, additional information was provided by the proponent. I have reviewed this additional information, and nothing in it has altered my strong opinion that the proposal would have a very significantly negative impact on matters protected by the EPBC Act. This opinion is expanded on in my original submission, which I have also attached.

This document is intended as an addendum to my original submission. It only deals with the additional information that the proponent has provided. For completeness, both my original submission and this new addendum document should be viewed together

My primary concerns regarding the proposal are that:

- The proposal would damage the 'relatively undisturbed nature of the property' to a very significant degree, due to the formation of new tracks, construction of extensive new infrastructure, and provision of a large number of helicopter flights per year.
- **2.** The proposal would greatly increase the risk of fire on Halls Island, by introducing many new potential ignition sources and greatly increasing visitation over present, recreational levels.
- **3.** The proponent has included further information that is misleading or incorrect. Most significantly the proponent references a large amount of information that significantly exaggerates existing impacts on apparent naturalness of the property. The implication seems to be that the construction of extensive new infrastructure and greatly increased visitation including via helicopter would not represent a significant further decrease in apparent naturalness.

Further information that is, in my view, misleading or incorrect includes:

**a.** Claim that Halls Island has been burnt as recently as 50 years ago. Significant as if true, it would imply that vegetation there is far more fire-resistant than is actually the case.

- b. Claim that no new tracks will be built, and that 'fan out' walking techniques will be adopted to prevent new tracks being formed. Significant as it implies that greatly increasing visitation will not have any significant effect on the surrounding environment, despite proposing new walks to local points of interest.
- c. Claim that Halls Island has been occupied semi-continuously since 1956. Significant as it contributes to claim of ongoing disturbance to apparent naturalness. Elsewhere in the context of impacts to existing users by privatisation of the site, it is claimed that Halls Island is now very rarely visited.
- **d.** Claim that Halls Island specifically has a history of access by floatplane. Significant as this establishes access via air as an existing use. Information from published recently in the media indicates that Halls Island has actually only be accessed by air twice, both times in the 1970s and for private, not commercial purposes.
- e. Claim that the area generally has a history of access by floatplane or helicopter. Significant as this supports the idea of established use. While aerial access for commercial tourism has been proposed previously in the Central Plateau – TWWHA, it has never been adopted.
- **4.** The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Reserve Activity Assessment appears to contain evidence of bias toward the development and the proponent that calls into question the objectivity of the entire proposal. Most significantly, the RAA document seems to imply that the development would actually *increase* the wilderness value of Halls Island by eliminating supposed unauthorised firewood collection.

Given the relative impact of the large standing camp construction, new tracks, 240 helicopter flights per year and increasing visitor numbers from 10 per year at present to a proposed 240 per year, this claim is absurd.

In summary, the proponent appears to advance a number of contradictory narratives simultaneously:

- That Halls Island is simultaneously a degraded area with many impacts to apparent naturalness / Halls Island is also a desirable wilderness destination that tourists will also pay a large sum of money to be flown to.
- That the presence of a 4 x 4 m historic hut on Halls Island reduces the wilderness value of the location significantly / the wilderness value will actually be increased significantly by building a large luxury standing camp on the site, as this will reduce firewood collection!
- That very few people currently visit Halls Island presently, approximately 10 per year, yet these 10 people have apparently created an extensive network of braided tracks in the area.
   / However, the 240 people per year the proponent is proposing to bring to site will not result in any additional track formation.

These, and the other contradictory perspectives contained in the proponent's information suggest that very careful consideration and investigation of all information provided is required.

## 2. Impact of the Proposal on Matters of Natural Environmental Significance protected under the EPBC Act

In my view, the proposal would damage the 'relatively undisturbed nature of the property' to a very significant degree, primarily due to:

 The construction of extensive new tracks, permanent accommodation buildings, and associated infrastructure, where currently only one small historical hut and minor formed tracks exist.

This is inconsistent with the Tasmanian Government TWWHA Management Plan 2016, which prohibits the construction of new tracks except for 'environmental/management purposes' (pg. 79). The proposed tracks are for commercial tourism purposes.

ii. The introduction of 240 helicopter flights to transport paid clients to the site, where currently there are no helicopter landings permitted. The introduction of helicopter transport for paying clients is unprecedented within the TWWHA.

The proposal would result in a very significant increase in visitation to the area, with attendant risk of fire and further decrease in apparent naturalness due to track formation. According to the proponent's own data, at present only 10 people visit the site per year (self-referral pg. 76).

The proponent proposes to increase this to as many as 240 people per year (30 trips with six guests and two guides per trip). Increasing visitation by a factor of twenty four will greatly increase the risk of accidental fire, due to the large increase in potential ignition sources that will be introduced.

These include:

- a. Aviation accidents occurring during landing, take-off or slinging operations
- **b.** Clients smoking and not extinguishing cigarettes. While it is noted that proponent will only offer the product as 'non-smoking', it is unclear how this could be enforced in practice
- c. Faults in gas heating, gas cooking, or lighting resulting in fires.
- **d.** Fires resulting in the use of the existing Halls Island Hut open fire or proposed wood stove. The hut is located within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. This park is designated 'fuel stove only', so it is not clear how the proponent is able to light open fires within the Halls Island Hut at present.

## 3. Information in the proposal that is misleading or incorrect

Furthermore, the additional information that the proponent has provided includes information which I believe is misleading or incorrect. This includes the following:

## 1. Implication that Halls Island has a 'complex fire history' that includes significant fires as recently as 30-50 years ago.

The NorthBaker report correctly identifies that Halls Island contains completely different vegetation to the surrounding area. The presence of extensive rainforest, King Billy pines, Pencil Pines, celery top pines and dwarf pines are all indicators that Halls Island has not suffered any significant fire for a long period of time.

The evidence of fire provided by NorthBaker is unconvincing, consisting of a single example of 'possible fire induced scarring on trunk' and a single example of 'Coppice growth form suggestive of fire' (NorthBaker report 14 June pg. 12). Viewed in conjunction with the extensive presence of extremely fire-intolerant relic biota on Halls Island, the balance of evidence strongly suggests that fires on Halls Island are indeed '...far less frequent across the Island than elsewhere...', as the NorthBaker report concedes (NorthBaker Report 14 June pg. 12)

This information appears to be included by the proponent in an attempt to reduce concerns around the consequences of any accidental fires on Halls Island by implying that such fires have occurred naturally with no significant damage to the extraordinary vegetation found on Halls Island. It is more likely that Halls Island has not had significant fires within the lifespan of the extensive rainforest and large coniferous species present. As a result, the risk of fire caused by the proposed greatly increased visitation and activity is even more significant.

## 2. Implication that no new tracks will be formed.

"...When using the route between the western plain edge and the lake edge, customers and guides shall use fan-out walking techniques to avoid trampling and track formation..." (Self-referral pg. 7).

Elsewhere, the proponent has argued that '…various cairned and formed walking routes braid the valley and surrounds from Lake Malbena, all the way east to Lake Olive…' (Self-referral pg. 56). The proponent has stated than a maximum of 271 people have visited the area in the past 26 years, an average of approximately 10 per year. The proponent is proposing to increase this visitation to a maximum of 240 per year.

If access to the area by an average of 10 people per year have resulted in an extensive network of formed tracks being created, it is not reasonable to claim that 240 people per year will be able to traverse the same area without creating any new formed tracks. This is particularly relevant given the proponent's stated intention to offer walks to locations nearby, including the summit of Mount Oana and to the aboriginal cultural site at Mary Tarn.

Despite the proponent's claims, no formed tracks exist in to either location at present. This is supported by the proponent's inclusion of the Parks and Wildlife map showing known walking tracks in the area (self-referral pg. 78) No tracks in the vicinity of Halls Island are shown. The formation of new tracks would greatly decrease the apparent naturalness of the area.

## 3. Exaggeration of existing disturbance to 'apparent naturalness'.

The proponent relies heavily on existing disturbances to 'apparent naturalness' to justify the construction of substantial new infrastructure including three buildings, tracks, and boardwalks. To justify this new activity and downplay the very significant impact it will have on the wilderness characteristics of Halls Island, the proponent makes a number of claims that are exaggerated:

- a. Claim that Halls Island has been occupied for eight weeks per year since 1956. Reg Hall last visited the island in 1979 according to an article in Tas Weekend Magazine (23-24 June 2018 pg. 14). The proponent also claims that an average of 10 people per year have visited the area since 1992 (self-referral pg. 76). Based on this evidence, the proponent's claim that Halls Island has been extensively occupied by humans is not credible.
- b. Claim that Halls Island has a history of seaplane access. The proponent claims that Halls Island has a history of amphibious-plane and sea plane access (self-referral pg. 58). This claim is presumably made to support the case that aerial access is an established or historical use in this area.

However according to an article in Tas Weekend Magazine (23-24 June 2018 pg. 16), Reg Hall visited the area only twice by sea plane. This was done on a private, and not commercial, basis, and prior to the TWWHA or National Park being established.

- c. Exaggeration of degree of alteration of apparent naturalness on Halls Island. The proponent claims that the apparent naturalness of Halls Island has been significantly altered. (self-referral pg. 56) This claim is apparently made to imply that building further infrastructure would not result in a significant further impact on apparent naturalness.
  - i. '...Presence of hut...': The hut measures 4 x 4 m and is built primarily from local materials. This is in fact the only significant modification to apparent naturalness on the entire island.
  - **ii.** *'...Historic garden beds...'* I have visited Halls Island at least eight times since 1995 and have not seen any evidence of these. If historical garden beds are present then they are almost imperceptible and cannot be considered to significantly detract from the apparent naturalness of the site.
  - **iii.** *'…Pronounced access track…*' This access track is between the natural rock landing and the hut site, and has been revegetating steadily since 1979. At present it resembles a natural animal foot pad. Refer NorthBaker 'FLORA AND FAUNA ASSESSMENT ' page 23.

As such, the residual presence of this track cannot be considered to detract from the apparent naturalness of the site.

iv. '...Remnants of toilet building...' The toilet building was comprised of four bush poles with a small roof. I have been visiting Halls Island since 1995 and in that time, have observed this structure deteriorate to the point where it is almost imperceptible. The remains of the structure could be very easily removed with no trace remaining on the site. As such, it cannot be considered to detract from the apparent naturalness of the site to any serious extent.

v. '...Numerous wood-harvesting sites... and additional building materials are dotted throughout the island...' All of the 'wood harvesting sites' I have observed actually consist of cutting fallen limb-wood, rather than felling trees as implied by the proponent.

Given that fewer than 10 people a year currently use the site, and that the site is located within a fuel-stove only area where fires are prohibited, any firewood gathering must be taking place on a tiny and decreasing scale. I have explored the 10 ha island extensively and have never observed any of the 'additional building materials' referenced by the proponent.

vi. '... Various cairned and formed walking routes and tracks braid the valley and surrounds...' Intriguingly, the map provided by the proponent (self-referral pg. 78) shows no walking tracks to the west of Lake Olive, located 4km to the East of Halls Island.

In my personal experience, the 'formed walking routes' are almost certainly existing animal trails that may also be used by occasional walkers. The proponent points out that an average of 10 people per year have used this access route over the last 26 years. It would seem extremely unlikely that such a small number of people could create such a large network of formed tracks.

vii. '...Other features include remnants (chimney) of a shepherds hut, horse paddock, and remains of early four wheel drive route...' The proponent implies that these features are located near, or on, Halls Island. The shepherds hut chimney is located approximately 2.0 km from the island. The nearest evidence of four wheel drive access is 4.0 km to the east of the island, at Lake Olive.

## 4. Implication that aerial access is a pre-existing use of the area.

The proponent implies that aerial access of the type proposed for the development (landing paying clients by helicopter) is a pre-existing use of the area. The proponent conflates aerial sightseeing from light aircraft with aerial access by helicopter, including landing, for the purpose of transporting commercial tourists to the proposed Halls Island development (self-referral pg. 57).

This is significant for the following reasons:

- i. Helicopters are more intrusive than light aircraft due to the increased noise signature.
- ii. The landing of helicopters requires infrastructure to be constructed within the TWWHA.
- iii. The proposal requires 48 hours of helicopter flight time per year, where presently scenic light aircraft flights are occasional at most.

The proponent refers to previous proposals for helicopter and float plane access at Lake Olive and Pillans Lake (self-referral pg. 58), dating from 1991. It is important to note that none of these previous proposals were ultimately carried out, either in 1991 or at any time since.

If approved and implemented, the Halls Island proposal would be the first use of helicopters or light aircraft to transport paying customers into the Central Plateau TWWHA.

## 4. Indication of possible bias in the Tasmanian State Government Parks and Wildlife Reserve Activity Assessment.

The RAA gives the impression of being written to favour the proponent and facilitate the development, which in my opinion calls into question the objectivity of the entire RAA process.

Examples of this apparent bias include:

*i.* RAA 4.1 Natural Values Assessment, pg. 25: *'…Wilderness qualities may be improved by eliminating season tree (firewood) harvesting by unauthorised users of the existing Halls Hut.* 

No evidence is provided that actual firewood harvesting is even taking place on Halls Island, or the scale of such harvesting. It would seem unlikely given that, according to the proponent, fewer than 10 people per year currently visit the site.

To claim that the best way to eliminate such firewood harvesting would be to build a luxury standing camp and fly clients via helicopter seems extraordinary.

To further claim that if such firewood harvesting was eliminated by the construction of new tracks, new boardwalks, four new accommodation buildings, and the provision of 240 new helicopter flights per year, then the wilderness qualities of Halls Island would actually be improved is nothing short of astonishing.

ii. RAA 4.2 Cultural Values Assessment, pg. 28. '... An improved, more formalised process for those wanting to use the private Halls Hut...'

The RAA process makes the extraordinary claim that public access to Halls Island would actually be improved. At present, Halls Island is part of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, and so any member of the public may visit the island at any time without restriction. The proposed situation is that non-commercial visits would be capped at a maximum 12 people in any one year, and approval only granted given at the complete discretion of the proponent (self-assessment, pg. 76).

To argue that this represents an improved process for access to Halls Island over the current arrangement is absurd and false. It is important to note that the proponent does not appear to have a lease over the entire island, but only the hut site.

In the information provided to the ECBC, the proponent refers to himself as the 'lessee of Halls Island' (self-referral pg. 76) as distinct from the lessee of the Halls Island Hut / Hut site. As the hut site and lease is 36 m2, and the island is 100,000 m2 (10 ha), this is an important distinction.

## 5. Conclusion

The site of Hall's Island contains superlative examples of all four of the Universal Outstanding Values that led to the area being declared as part of the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness Area in the first place, as described in Section 1 of my original submission. All of these values will either be directly threatened or put at severe risk through the proposed extensive infrastructure to be built on Hall's Island and around Lake Malbena generally, particularly those values relating to the undisturbed or natural character of the location.

Furthermore, the proponent relies extensively on additional information which is either incorrect or misleading, particularly in terms of:

- i. Exaggerated claim of existing disturbances to apparent naturalness in the area
- ii. Claim of improved outcomes to matters protected by the EPBC Act
- iii. Claim of no significant impact to matters protected by the EPBC Act

I urge the Minister to consider rejecting the proposed action. At the very least, the proposal should be substantially modified to specify that:

- i. No infrastructure is be built on Hall's Island, including camps, landings, tracks, or boardwalks.
- ii. Any standing camp on the shore of Lake Malbena to be comprised of tents and tent platforms, not huts or permanent buildings constructed from steel and timber.
- iii. Access to be by foot, ideally from proponent's site at Skull bone Plains or the adjacent trawtha makuminya property, not helicopter.

Referrals Gateway Environmental Assessment Branch Department of the Environment and Energy Canberra Re 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

Per: epbc.referrals@environment.gov.aus



19 July 2018

My name i **S22** I hold Masters degrees in Law (Northumbria) and Public Administration (Tasmania). I am now retired. I am a fly-fisherman familiar with these areas and now an ex-user of the more remote. Age hasn't wearied, just incapacitated. In these terms, I meet the proponents' espoused diversity criteria. I am entirely opposed to this proposal and the additional possibilities fore-shadowed.

## THIS REVIEW – THE WIDER BACKGROUND

There is widespread community opposition in the submissions you are receiving. This is also obvious in any google search of commentary, analysis and relevant forums. There are deep concerns as to due process, accountability, ambiguity and lack of clarity, lack of transparency and the withholding of information at various levels. There are concerns as to the lack of capacities required to perform certain instrumental functions. There are concerns as to existing capacities and the will to identify, monitor, assess, remedy and rectify environmental impacts immediately and over time. There are concerns that these proposals directly contradict prior principles espoused by the proponents, thereby putting their credibility in doubt. There are concerns the proposals are fantastical in various respects – the purest marketing gloss - and inaccurate in various detail. If not deliberately misleading, they are perhaps simple puffery. But unequivocally, the proposals have the capacity to deliver a substantial economic return to the proponents, at the expense of major OUV's and at the considerable expense (dys-benefit) of a great many others.

WILDERNESS - ISOLATION, SOLITUDE, FREEDOM FROM AURAL AND VISUAL IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT, SPACE FOR HUMAN CHALLENGE AND REFLECTION For most, above all, concerns centre on the area's wilderness qualities. Existing users fear that the proposal will fundamentally impact the core values (OUV's) which draw them to the region. These are it's fundamental intrinsic wildness: it's remoteness, isolation, absence of others and the visual and aural impacts of development. Culturally, traditional users include those wishing simply to fish in such pristine conditions, uncrowded and unpressured. Other important values are the challenges inherent in accessing and surviving in this fragile environment, often hostile and dangerous. Removal of these challenges, or diminishing the rewards associated with such initiative and endeavour, risks trivialising the experience to the point it becomes economically and spiritually devalued – not worth the sweat and tears. And it is incontrovertibly these values, longer term, which will become the more sought after in a world market, as they disappear elsewhere.

# DIRECT USAGE IMPACTS – BUMS ON CAMP STOOLS, FEET ON THE GROUND, FLIES IN THE WATER

Other major concern are the increased pressures on the fragile environment – the landforms, vegetation, fauna, aquatic environment, threatened and endangered species, weed and disease risks. There is extensive evidence of indigenous habitation up to some 40,000 years, but less in more recent times. It is not abundantly clear what level of European use **the island and hut** have had over time. The area is isolated and difficult to access. Post the 60's and 70's there are suggestions of single-figure usage of the hut annually. The great majority of users of the general area are there to recreate in a pristine environment, to walk and to fish and experience a singular, untouched environment. No McDonalds, no Hungry Jacks, no martinis, bird-noise only. Bush-walking and fishing forums indicate a continual trickle of use of the lake and surrounding areas, and the adjacent Walls are a major WH environmental icon for walkers, internationally.

This proposal projects a massive annual increase of activity in the specific (Hall's Island) area -6 customers +2 guides +? supplementary consultant experts per 4 days per trip @ projected 30 trips pa = approximately 960 person days, not allowing for possible specialists and for maintenance staff. Climate will compress this into a 5 or 6 month operational window, or approximately some 5 to 7 persons every day over that period. This is equivalent to a small settlement, and would no doubt create the boundary and other tensions associated with settlement. Such pressures must also spread out across surrounding areas, including into the iconic Walls. Solitude, remoteness, spiritual isolation evaporate.

However well-managed, this exponential increase in habitation pressure must have serious impacts on the fragile environment - vegetation and land forms – plus greatly increase the risks of pests and weeds, terrestrial and aquatic. There are also the visual blights of settlement and aural impacts. All of these pose significant risks to the wilderness OUV's and the longer-term values of the area. They are not adequately accounted in the proposal and there is inadequate evidence they can be mitigated, adequately monitored, and issues redressed where necessary. More and better detail as to these matters and their proper understanding is required. The use of helicopters and possible impacts on threatened bird life are discussed below.

The EPBC clearly requires the Minister assess and evaluate the effects of such development, including on adjacent areas. Simply considering this major usage increase aspect alone, it is not at all clear that s/he has, at this point, either the knowledge (evidence base) or the tools to evaluate what may be very significant impacts, indeed. Nothing in the referral clearly addresses the increase in scale of visitation and associated risk – indeed the proposal may distort historic usage, which is uncertain. The Minister is not provided with any basis whatsoever on which to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the spill-over impacts across the area generally and the Walls, in particular. These deficiencies must be remedied before any approval is lawful. Other impacts, below, reinforce this determination.

#### HELICOPTERS

The use of aircraft in wilderness areas is highly contentious. Helicopters are profoundly intrusive – recognised under the EPBC and the State 2016 Plan as potentially having significant adverse impacts. The proponents' suggest 48 hours of helicopter airtime per year associated with flying tourists and staff in and out of the camp, with an estimated 3 hours extra for maintenance and service. However, the lease conditions permit unlimited construction and servicing flights and the service terms require many such routine flights. From a customer perspective, due to aircraft conformations they estimate 4 \* 12 minute flights in, 4 out, per 8 person / 4 day trip = 240 flights in all, not allowing for maintenance, logistics and emergencies. At full capacity and operating to schedule this means 4 flights per day approximately every fourth day over a 5 to 6 month period, not allowing for contingencies. These figures are conservative - contingencies inevitably arise, especially given highland weather variability and health issues in remote areas. The proposal indicates we're not talking about people necessarily fit to walk out. Mitigation proposals are unconvincing. They include a purely voluntary and variable flight path code and height restrictions, albeit apparently marginally compliant with respect to both. This proposal adds to the airtime already associated with the nearby Cradle Mountain huts – it's getting busy in the pristine wilderness air up there.

Especially with respect to aircraft, there are inherent tensions between the EPBC requirements re

regard to impacts across adjacent areas and the cynical paper excision of Malbena from the wilderness zone under the TWWHA 2016. The reality is that the Walls are just over the back fence, visually and aurally. The 2016 Plan recognises management objectives on one side of the (non-existent) fence – the Wilderness Zone - as relating **'principally [to] the opportunity ... for people to experience large remote areas that have little or no facilities, management presence or evidence of modern society and are largely free from disturbance and mechanical access'.<sup>1</sup> (emphasis added). It abandons them a couple of kilometres away – the Self-Reliant, with Helicopter, Lights, Refrigeration, Heating and Cooked Breakfast Zone. In terms of pristine wilderness OUV's, this is a travesty and a nonsense. The Minister cannot permit it.** 

The EPBC requires these impacts be evaluated as they apply to the WHA **directly and adjacently**. There is no clear evidence that these impacts have been adequately assessed nor as to the adequacy of the mitigation strategies proposed. Indeed, the flight path and height proposals cut corners relative to their guidelines – literally. More information and better assessment mechanisms are required. It will be clear from the submissions you are receiving that these particular impacts are of visceral concern to most users.

## THREATENED FLORA, FAUNA AND IMPACTS ON LANDFORMS

Various commentators have identified potential serious impacts in these respects given the vast increase in usage. There are also concerns re potential diseases and invasive species, aquatic and terrestrial. North Barker has provided assessments with respects to some of these matters. There are particular concerns that the report re threatened eagles may be inadequate. These are all matters which the Minister must assess on firm and secure evidence. If there is significant doubt, approval must be withheld in the interests of the OUV's and with respect to the threatened and endangered species / ecological communities requirements. Where serious, perhaps irreversible impacts may occur, approvals should not be granted unless it is convincingly demonstrable that they will not, or can be mitigated. The scale of this operation presents very significant potential impacts, and they are not adequately addressed by the information provided.

## TWO OR MORE CULTURES – THE WHA CULTURAL CRITERIA

There is an extensive indigenous history and some 200 years of European engagement, variously hunters, trappers, prospectors, wood harvesters, fishers and some limited pastoral activity. Over the past several decades and more these latter activities have decreased, bar recreational fishing and

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TWWHA Management Plan 2016, p174.

remote area trekking. These latter have steadily increased since the late nineteenth century and the great majority of recent and present users are in these categories. The reasons they are attracted to this remote wilderness are predominantly the wilderness qualities and not the alternative histories and cultures. Many consider this proposal nothing less than a discriminatory alienation of public property and the rights of most users in favour of the well-heeled, where the process of so doing will destroy the integral OUV's, perhaps irremediably. Further questions relate to the degree to which proprietary arrangements will preclude access to public areas. FOI requests as to the Hall's Hut lease have been refused and are presently with the State Ombudsman. There are also anecdotal concerns that such discriminatory rights have evolved into attempted unlawful exclusions, in practice – proprietorial over-reach, difficult to prove and manage.

# THE LEGAL BACKGROUND - GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES WRT WORLD HERITAGE AREAS

The Tasmanian WHA is listed under all 4 of the international criteria wrt natural qualities and 3 of the 6 relating to cultural considerations. It is also considered 'a location where wilderness quality is a critical consideration.'<sup>2</sup> The WH natural criteria include areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance, areas representing major stages of Earth's history and significant on-going geological processes, significant on-going ecological and biological processes and major habitats wrt threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation. Those wrt cultural qualities include major significance wrt existing or past cultural traditions, outstanding examples of cultural / human interactions with vulnerable environments and 'direct or tangible association with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance'.

In 2015 the WHC advised the State government to 'ensure that it provides adequate protection for [the WHA] OUV' including through '...the establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property, which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, including its wilderness character....' (emphasis added). The EPBC Act requires the Commonwealth 'use its best endeavours' to ensure that a management plan for a World Heritage Property within a State is consistent with the World Heritage Management Principles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>. Allan, J.R. *et al* Gaps and opportunities for the World Heritage Convention to contribute to global wilderness conservation https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12976 The Tasmanian PWS is required to encourage use and enjoyment of parks and reserves 'consistent with the conservation of the national park's natural and cultural values' while 'preserving the natural, primitive and remote character of wilderness areas' under the (State) NPRMA 2002 (emphasis added).

Where possible significant impacts are identified, they must be assessed prior to approval of the action (development, project). Significant impact on World Heritage values does not require impact upon the whole of an area or all of the OUV's. It is sufficient if an action is likely to have a significant impact on an important part, element or feature of the area and surrounds in question. Approval cannot be granted unless the Minister is satisfied any identified risk is not sufficiently significant or cannot be managed / mitigated. The adequacy of mitigation requires 'a high degree of certainty about the avoidance of impacts or the extent to which impacts will be reduced'. The assessment requirements are outlined below.

## PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT UNDER THE EPBC ACT

The Matters of National Environment Significance (MNES) guidelines specify that potential serious impacts require referral **prior** to any consideration of cost-benefit. Whether or not the impact is likely hinges on whether it **is a real or not remote chance or possibility.** Cost-benefit forms part of the subsequent assessment/approval process. An identified 'significant impact' then requires the Minister to assess the impact and approve, modify or prohibit the action / undertaking concerned having regard to the considerations below (and others not relevant in this case, where applicable). There are separate provisions relating to threatened and endangered species and vulnerable ecological communities.

With respect to World Heritage Areas the process must consider:

- the action at its **broadest possible scope**, including all stages and components, all related activities, and all related infrastructure
- such questions as the sensitivity, value, and quality of the environment which is impacted
- the timing, duration, magnitude and geographic extent of the impacts and the frequency of the action and its impacts
- all on-site and off-site impacts, including spill-overs to adjacent areas and such things as flight paths, noise and visual intrusions ie the total impact which can be attributed to the action over the entire geographic area affected, and over time
- **all direct and indirect impacts.** These might include such matters as disenfranchisement and alienation of traditional users and long-term economic devaluation of OUV's / national assets
- existing levels of impact from other sources, and
- **O** the degree of confidence with which the impacts of the action are known and

#### understood.

## **COST-BENEFIT**

The MNES guidelines indicate cost-benefit forms part of the assessment / approval process. This is clearly difficult in a situation such as this, where qualitative values form the major considerations. It is a truism, but not less important for that, that 'not everything that counts, can be counted'. This is clearly the case wrt most of the OUV's considered here, and the more so given we are talking projections of economic value and devaluation over decades, wrt significant international markets. It is relatively easy to guesstimate development and operational costs relative to direct economic returns to an entrepreneur, but it is a whole lot more difficult to place economic values on such considerations as the loss of enjoyment and access for large cohorts of people, where the values cherished and at risk will compound over time, as their international availability diminishes. It is already the core of the Tasmanian WHA listing that the values we have are of Outstanding Universal Value. And in real estate jargon, they ain't making any more of them.

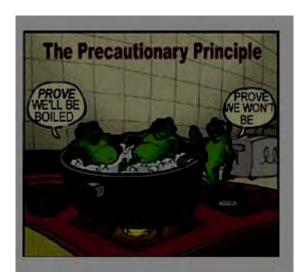
This proposal reflect a Tourism Strategy of high value / high return / niche market activities. This is no doubt a reasonable strategy where the activities involved are low impact, replicable and do not displace ordinary citizens / traditional users. Where this is not the case, as in this instance, and where the actions will instead alienate user rights and degrade the attractions concerned, it is clearly not good economic (or social, or political) sense. Indeed, from a macro perspective, it is disputed as to the extent this and like proposals generate the economic returns they claim, other than to the proprietors and direct suppliers. Earlier this year the Tourism Industry Council pointed out cruise ship passengers now account for about 20 per cent of the state's tourists, but only 2 per cent of the visitor spend.<sup>3</sup> Cruise ship patrons live in encapsulated expenditure bubbles. There is very limited spin-off to locals. There is not overwhelming evidence that high-end eco-tourists, especially those who are time-poor, will do otherwise.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

It is difficult not to be scathing about this proposal by many dimensions, but these sentiments abound *ad infinitum* in various forums. However, the principal concern is well-expressed by the redoubtable Madeleine Albright in a Mussolini quote about 'plucking a chicken feather by feather' so that people will not notice the loss of their freedoms until it is too late. The wilderness here looks a lot like a chicken, in terms of the process dimensions and the major impacts entailed, directly and over time. Mussolini's chicken is ultimately a dead one, of expired economic value, a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Record number of cruise ships visit Tasmania, but backpackers worth more to the state Fiona Blackwood, ABC News 30 Mar 2018

plucked chook and certainly no show piece. So will it be if States Parties (of all levels) permit this form of development. Or in like terms, ultimately a cooked goose, a boiled frog, an ex-parrot. Not a nice little earner, but a smelly relic. It is the Minister's responsibility to prevent these outcomes. S/he must demand evidence from the proponents *per* the frog on the right side (that of the angels), below – a wonderful symbolic coincidence.



## NATURE / CHARACTER OF ADVERSE IMPACTS AT A GLANCE

| <ul><li>Values associated with geology or landscape</li><li>modify, alter or inhibit landscape processes eg by accelerating or increasing susceptibility to erosion</li></ul>  | Discussed above. Trampling and erosion. The information provided does not extend beyond the immediate impact zone. Massive usage increases / feet on ground pressures suggest these are significant risks which must be properly assessed and addressed. More information and more secure management tools are required.  |
|--|---|
| <ul> <li>Biological and ecological values</li> <li>reduce or modify diversity / composition of plant and animal species</li> <li>fragment, isolate or substantially damage relevant habitat</li> <li>cause long-term reduction in rare, endemic or unique plant or animal populations or species</li> <li>substantially damage habitat for rare, endemic or unique animal populations</li> </ul>   | Discussion /analysis by North Barker. The Minister must be convinced as to the technical risk assessment and mitigation proposals. These have the same limitations wrt the wider areas which will be impacted and more information and more secure management tools are required.   |
| <ul> <li>Wilderness, natural beauty or rare or unique environment values</li> <li>involve construction of buildings, paths or other structures, vegetation clearance, substantial long-term or permanent impacts on relevant values, and</li> <li>introduce noise, odours, pollutants or other intrusive elements with substantial, long-term or permanent impacts on relevant values.</li> </ul>  | Discussed above. There must be significant visual impacts from buildings, pads and<br>pathways. The 'Standing Camp' euphemism is an absolute joke – 'impermanent'<br>buildings in a pristine wilderness permanently for a projected 20 years, and probably<br>more. Noise from helicopters has been discussed. There must be considerable risk<br>of pollution – potential spills – and fire risks. There is no mention of a fire strategy.<br>Significant and determinant consultation with indigenous groups must be clearly  |
| <ul> <li>Other cultural heritage values including Indigenous heritage values</li> <li>restrict or inhibit the existing use of a World Heritage property as a cultural or ceremonial site causing its values to notably diminish over time;</li> <li>permanently diminish the cultural value of a World Heritage property for a community or group to which its values relate</li> <li>alter the setting of a World Heritage property in a manner which is inconsistent with relevant values</li> </ul> | demonstrated with respect to their culture(s). Traditional uses by Europeans are difficult to shoe-horn into a 'cultural ceremonial' description, though some try. There are clearly major impacts with respect to the majority of present users, as discussed at length above. These - degradation of the wilderness experience including buildings and infrastructure, population pressures, potential exclusion from core areas, visual and aural intrusions, possible landform impacts around the immediate site and in adjacent areas, wildlife, vegetation and aquatic risks – are the core OUV's at highly significant risk. The proposal degrades not only the immediate setting but places adjacent areas, including the iconic Walls, at significant risk. As above, there is inadequate information in many of these respects and it is not at all clear that impacts are adequately understood – quantitatively and qualitatively. It is also not at all clear that proposed mitigations, especially re helicopters, meet the required 'high degree of certainty' test. |

#### EPBC Reference No. 2018/8177

Response to additional information as provided by EPBC re Proposed Development on Halls Island WHA Tasmania

The implication that the development proposal will not negatively impact the acknowledged existing very high natural values of Halls Island is ridiculous. There is the further implication that somehow the construction of four additional buildings, walkways and off-island helipad will actually enhance the natural values of the island. This is equally ridiculous and irritating.

Elaboration on some details of the proposal is warranted.

#### **Fire Risk**

The proponent and the RAA suggest a low risk of fire on the island.

I would suggest that the fire risk is hugely increased, infact exponentially increased, with vastly increased level of human activity associated with the proposal: gas cookers, gas water heaters, gas heaters, fuel powered generators, electrical circuitry in buildings, electrically operated water pumps, fuel supplies for fire pumps and generators, gas cylinders, combustion stoves, overflight of helicopters for slinging out waste and resupply of huts, smoking by visitors.

Vegetation assessment of the island suggests a "complex" fire history. The fact that there appear to be no fire-killed or fire-damaged native pines on the island, and the many mature pine trees would be hundreds of years old, means that the last fire occurred at least the age of the pines ago.

Considering the very wide evidence of fire ravaging across the Central Plateau, the importance of fire protection of Halls Island cannot be overstated. The proponent suggests that the statutory requirement for fire protection appropriate to the site would be met. Presumably this would be the provision of fire extinguishers in the buildings and a 5-horse power fire pump with 30 metres of fire hose. This would in NO WAY cope with a fire outbreak in severe weather.

Given the sad history of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service being able to control remote area fire outbreaks, off-island response to a fire outbreak on the island would inevitably be too little too late.

The risk of an aircraft crash causing a fire and possible fuel spillage on the island cannot be underestimated. Multiple slinging operations will be required both during building and ongoing servicing of the development.

It should be noted that there have been three past aircraft crashes in the Central Plateau. (Lees Paddocks, Lake Naomi and Lady Lake)

#### Heating

The proponent suggests that heating of the buildings would be done by gas or electricity. Elevated parts of the Central Plateau can experience cold weather conditions throughout the year. The 'luxury' camp would be expected to provide warm conditions for the clients, therefore the heating and energy requirements will be substantial. Gas cylinders would have to be replaced regularly and slung in and out by helicopter resulting in additional helicopter operation directly over the island.

Electrical heating, if used, will require at least 5 KW capacity. This CANNOT be provided by domestic sized solar array and battery storage system, particularly when sunlight exposure is not consistent. Therefore, electric heating could only be provided by using a fuel powered generator of at least

EPBC Reference No. 2018/8177

Response to additional information as provided by EPBC re Proposed Development on Halls Island WHA Tasmania

5 KW output. This means significant fuel supply and storage plus engine running noise for prolonged periods, plus exhaust emissions into an otherwise clean environment.

The proponent suggests the use of briquette stoves and a woodstove in the Reg Hall hut. The Walls of Jerusalem National Park is fuel-stove only, no fires are allowed in the fireplaces in the four existing historical huts in the park. Allowing combustion stoves to be used on Halls Island appears to be a stark contradiction to the fuel stove only regulation.

The risk of a flue fire cannot be ignored.

## Water Supply

There is no mention of water supply by the proponent. Water will need to be supplied to the buildings for domestic use ie hygiene, cooking, and washing up. There will have to be water storage on the buildings, water tanks and means of pumping water around the buildings and from the lake. Pumping would have to be carried out by electric pumps or fuel powered pumps to fill the storage tanks. Electric pumps cannot be directly driven by solar panels but require storage batteries. This means more infrastructure and fire risk.

#### **Helicopter Operation**

The suggestion that helicopters do not have a sound impact beyond four kilometres is not borne out by experience. Sound intensity of aircraft operation varies according to several factors: operating altitude, terrain eg valleys can channel sound, atmospheric conditions ie wind direction and cloud cover, also direction in which engine exhaust is pointing relative to the recipient of the sound.

The proponent suggests a limited number of helicopter-borne visitations per year (about 30 visits per year.) This sounds quite innocuous at first glance. However the arithmetic indicates that for a full party of six clients plus two guides, there will be two flights in, two flights out at both ends of the trip. This means eight flights per visit if the trips are not book-ended. This amounts to 240 flights per year for client delivery alone, not counting servicing and unexpected required flights.

## Helicopter Operational Impact on Ground-based Users in Wilderness and Remote Areas

You cannot discuss helicopter impact in terms of noise pollution alone. The negative impact on the wilderness experience concept is equally important. Finding aircraft operating in areas where you do not expect to encounter mechanised human activity, is very negative to the wilderness or remote area experience.

#### **Disposal of Grey Water**

The proponent suggests that all grey water produced on the island will be contained and will be removed for disposal elsewhere. This would have to be achieved by helicopter slinging large, heavy containers directly off the island. This involves yet more risky helicopter operations.

The simple arithmetic of water volumes associated with: showering, hygiene after toilet use, cooking and washing up, indicates very large volumes of grey water being generated. I do not believe that in practice all grey water will be removed from the island due to cost and logistical reasons. I believe some sort of official exemption will be sought to dispose of grey water on the island.

#### EPBC Reference No. 2018/8177

Response to additional information as provided by EPBC re Proposed Development on Halls Island WHA Tasmania

#### **Public Access**

The proponent suggests that members of the public (previous log book entrants) might occasionally be able to visit Halls Island with written permission of Wild Drake Pty Ltd. This suggests that the proponent has leasehold over the whole island. This is doubtful since Reg Hall only had leasehold over the original hut site.

I find a notion of arrogant exclusivity most vexatious in the context of a development within a Tasmanian National Park and World Heritage Area.

s22

s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: **EPBC** Referrals Thursday, 19 July 2018 3:50 PM s22 **EPBC** Referrals FW: reference 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 19 July 2018 3:32 PM To: EPBC Referrals ; epbc.referrals@environment.gov.aus Subject: reference 2018/8177

## Re: Wild Drake Pty Ltd/ Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

My details: s22

"Our time in the Western Lakes highlighted a lot about what Tassie has to offer. Solitude, wilderness, and wild fish, coupled with free and easy access to a unique protected environment, were essential to these memorable and cherished experiences." (page 52, In Season Tasmania. A year of fly fishing highlights. Daniel Hackett and Brad Harris. Published 2007)

The above paragraph written by the proponent captures the value of the area for which the development is proposed and goes some way to quickly describing what traditional visitors to this area treasure so much but what be put at risk by this proposal. The turbine-whine of a helicopter, the sight and smell of the exhaust gases and the unknown damage to the endemic flora and fauna from these gases in a small concentrated area.

#### Helicopter usage.

The submissions show that the flight path of the helicopter flights will be directly over Travellers Rest, Ina, Nive Lakes and the Upper Nive River. These areas are frequented traditionally by visitors seeking, solitude and wilderness. The sight, sound and smell of a turbine-engine helicopter will be ruined by the flights to access the proposed camp. To some extent whether there are to be one or two hundred and one flights is immaterial, to have an expectation or perception that your solitude in a wilderness area is to be impacted by the whine of a turbine detracts from the experience.

The number of flights remains unclear with the documents showing 25 booked return flights or 50 flight movements and slightly less but an uncertain number for management and construction purposes. Hypothetically let's say that there are 10 more return flights or 20 flight movements, giving a total of approximately 70 flight movements in this pristine environment. This cannot be considered to be low impact.

The flight profile cited in the documents show it is proposed to quickly ascend and subsequently descend to and from a flight level of 1,000m. A helicopter requires considerable power to achieve this flight profile resulting in increased noise and generation of exhaust gases which are hardly reflective of the pristine environment in this area. Whilst not detailed in the documents, I envisage a turbine engine helicopter is proposed to be used for these activities. Helicopters of this type use 'Jet - A' fuel, a type of diesel with a strong kerosene smell. We have all experienced the odour associated with flight activities using Jet – A at various airports, the smell of kerosene, the grimy slightly oily residue that accumulates in the vicinity and the black exhaust gases whilst the turbine 'spools up'. Once again, this does seem at odds with a pristine environment. One wonders what impact 50 plus flight movements annually will have in this area. In New Zealand the fishing related flights are 'fanned out' to various locations not to one small specific area and how the oily Jet – A residue accumulating on the small location will affect the flora and fauna.

The proponent cites examples where tourism guides set flight paths and destinations in NZ etc. This has seen threats and violence. Refer https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/100076914/fish-fights-kiwi-anglers-compete-with-tourists-forprime-spots-on-our-waterways . The proponent's argument is demonstrably not a recipe for harmonious relations between commercial operators and traditional visitors.

Anecdotes abound in New Zealand of helicopters having relatively minor 'heavy' landings due to bird strikes, mechanical issues and weather resulting in uncontained Jet – A fuel spills. There is a clear and identifiable risk of this happening with flight operations in this proposal. A flight forced to land due to the well-known variable weather conditions in this area and subsequently being slightly damaged by a skid sliding off a tussock. The effect of a fuel spill in this area where interrelated small waterways abound would be potentially catastrophic. I do not see any notes on suggestions on how this damaged would be mitigated. I am aware of two previous fuel spills in this broader area, a tragic helicopter crash and an incident involving a float-plane many years ago. This is an obvious danger with no apparent planned mitigation.

If the flight operations are approved an absolute basic requirement is that the aircraft and pilot to be fully IFR compliant and equipped. The weather in this area is subject to frequent and sudden change, relying on VFR is simply unwise.

#### **Flora and Fauna**

It is pleasing to note the work done on identifying the flora and fauna in the area surrounding Lake Malbena. It is seriously troubling that it appears that no similar work has been on the flora and fauna in Lake Malbena. With the camp being surrounded by water it is apparent that the increased visitation to the lake may have some effect on the lake itself but no base line research has been conducted. Investigations into Lake Malbena and associated waterways should be conducted to identify what flora and fauna is present prior to any more work any site. Of interest to any fly fishermen visiting the area is the *Anaspides* or Mountain Shrimp. This shrimp endemic to Tasmania and is the most ancient representatives of the Crustaceans. Of particular relevance to the proposal is *Anaspides Spinulae*. This species is endemic to the incredibly small area bordered by Lake St Clair east to Clarence Lagoon which is within the area of the proposed venture. Very little is known about this species and work is currently being done on better identifying this species and related taxonomy. http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=11244

**Bushfire** 

The proponent is to be congratulated for his efforts in identifying prevention of bushfire from within the proposed camp however I question plans for a fast-moving bushfire approaching from outside the camp from the north or west. Is there a proposal to protect the occupants by digging a 'bunker' or some other fireproof structure in a situation where the fire speed prevents evacuation in addition to what already occurs on the island?

#### Financial

The viability (short and long term) of the proposal is questionable due to the very small number of potential clients. Should the venture fail financially, funds would need to be available to remove the facilities from the site and rehabilitate the site. The obvious means of addressing this valid concern is for the proposer to submit a sizeable bond to cover the potential cost of the venture failing and the proponent not having the financial reserves to recover the camp, paths, other infrastructure and also rehabilitate the site. Referrals Gateway Environmental Assessment Branch Department of the Environment and Energy Canberra

Re 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

s22

epbc.referrals@environment.gov.aus

My name iss22 I am an architect, bush walker and fly-fisherman and have completed a number of conservation plans under the Burra Charter for huts on either the Central Plateaux or in the Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park. I have been engaged in a number of projects that are part of the World Heritage areas in Tasmania. I am familiar with the areas that are subject of this proposal. I have had experience with designing and implementing standing camps on the East Coast.

I wish to voice my strong opposition to this proposal. I share the concerns of others about due process, accountability, ambiguity and lack of clarity, lack of transparency and the withholding of information at various levels.

I would submit that the essential values of the place as proposed will be denied and destroyed by a very narrow purposed proposal. The impact on the many - not to mention the values of WORLD HERITAGE are negated by this proposal.

What has changed since the original plan for the world heritage areas that would now allow a proposal that is completely counter to all the values of the site. NOTHING - the importance of the values and the need to protect them are even greater now then when the areas were first nominated and then placed on the register.

The narrow scope of interest that is portrayed in this proposal must be rejected as a blatant exploration of a rich community asset for the scant hope of a few small riches for a small group of individuals who are prepared to exploit the area for their own ends to the denial of the greater good.

The architectural intent imbedded in the proposal does nothing to value the quality of the existing hut which is described as significant BUT there is no conservation plan that would satisfy the processes of the Burra Charter let alone any intent to conform with any of the significances that may be identified.

The proposed standing camp facilities are at best pastiche and at worst a trite rationalisation of some sort of fashion for deconstruction. There is no endeavour shown that expresses any of the important qualities of place making nor the values of the history of the place.

The value of solitude and an intact authentic connection to both the history - not to mention non european - is swept aside for a narrow band 'experience' facilitated only for profit. Certainly an example of knowing the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

The use of helicopters in wilderness areas is offensive. This proposal would be bad enough but to spread the impact far and wide by the use of aircraft simply furthers the remarkably inept and self interested approach of the proponents that deny many other users of the area who walk into there for the very values that would be compromised.

In summary, I wish to lodge my strongest objection to this proposal and I would further submit that no amount of minor amendments would make this proposal acceptable. We need to value our places. They are very important to us and are of World Heritage value.

S22



# tasmanian conservation trust inc

Assessments Victoria and Tasmania Section Assessments and Governance Branch Department of the Environment and Energy GPO Box 787 CANBERRA, ACT, 2601

Email: <a href="mailto:epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au">epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au</a>

19 July 2018

# Re: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas (Ref: 2018/8177)

## General comments and recommendations

The 1989 nomination of the Tasmanian Wilderness for World Heritage Listing contains the following statement:

It is the wilderness quality which underpins the success of the area in meeting all four criteria as a natural property and which is the foundation for the maintenance of the integrity of both the natural and cultural values which are displayed.

It can therefore be inferred that any impact on wilderness has the potential to impact world heritage values which are a Matter of National Environmental Significance.

In the absence of any information to the contrary the TCT's asserts that the proposed development has the potential to diminish the wilderness value of Halls Island, surrounding areas and along the helicopter flight path and landing area to such an extent that it would constitute a significant impact on world heritage values (an MNES) and be contrary to the EPBC Act.

The proposed mitigation measures will not reduce the impacts to a level that they would cease having a significant impact on wilderness values and therefore the proposal must be refused.

The proponent claims that the impacts on wilderness are not significant but has not provided adequate information that supports this claim.

The TWWHA Management Plan 2016 contains a management action to 'ensure that impacts on wilderness values are considered in any assessment of activities in

the TWWHA'. By failing to provide an adequate assessment of impacts on wilderness the proponent has not complied with this requirement of the TWWHA Management Plan.

We recommend that the proposal not be approved but that further information is requested in regard to impacts on wilderness and avoidance/mitigation actions. The wilderness impacts assessment must be in the form of quantitative modeling and mapping.

# Likely impacts on wilderness quality

The wilderness quality of Halls Island and surrounding area will be impacted primarily by construction of numerous new buildings and associated infrastructure and use of helicopters to provide access to the site. Impacts on wilderness quality include:

- Reducing the 'Remoteness from Access' component of the areas wilderness by providing access for the proponents customers via helicopter rather than by foot.
- The proposed development includes numerous new buildings and associated infrastructure that will have far greater impact than the existing historic hut.
- The noise and visual impact from helicopters that are proposed to provide access for paying customers, for resupply and during construction will have significant impact on wilderness quality including impacting other visitors and the proposed mitigation measures are inadequate.

# Response to proponent claims that the impacts on wilderness are not significant

The proponent's initial EPBC Act referral (April 2018, final point in 2.1.1) acknowledges 'potential impact on wilderness character' (2.1.1) but states that these are not considered significant (2.1.2). No information was provided to support this conclusion.

Further information was provided by the proponent dated 6 July 2018, 'Halls Island EPBC Self-referral – Response to request for further information', which makes some additional claims regarding the potential impacts of the development on wilderness (the relevant sections are on pages 56-57, pages 72-75 and Appendix 2, pages 79-81).

The additional information provided is totally inadequate and cannot be claimed to demonstrate that there will be no significant impact on wilderness values.

The section titled 'General statement on wilderness characteristics of Halls island' (pages 56-57) includes a description of the history of use of Halls Island and a qualitative assessment of the impact of this on wilderness. Given the proponent provides the NWI rating, which would have taken these matters into account we cannot see the relevance of this information.

This section also includes an account of the NWI rating for Halls Island and notes regarding aerial sightseeing being a pre-existing use before world heritage listing. The relevance of the latter information is not explained. There is no reference to the wilderness rating for Halls Island identified in the TWWHA Management Plan, level 14-16, but regardless of this discrepancy, this section contains no assessment of the impacts of the development on the NWI wilderness rating.

Section '8. Wilderness Characteristics – protected Matters Environmental Management Plan' (pages 72-75) refers to assessments and plans that are yet to be done and where an assessment of impacts on wilderness is attempted it is subjective and inadequate.

- On page 57, the proponent lists the NWI scores for Halls Island against all relevant wilderness criteria but Section 8 provides no assessment of the impact of the development on them.
- In Section 8.1 a Wilderness Characteristics Subplan is referred to (which we can only infer has not yet been produced because it has not been provided), to 'ensure that all mitigation and avoidance measures relating to impacts on MNES are identifies and implemented' (page 72).
- In Section '8.5 Wilderness and wild rivers, NWI 14+' the proponent simply refers to the apparently small size and number of groups of customers, that building design will in their view be sympathetic and the flight plan and prescriptions of the Fly Neighbourly Advice subplan will be adhered to. While we admit that these measures have potential to reduce the potential impact, the proponent's assertion that this is sufficient is entirely subjective.
- Section 8 includes comments on a range of values and actions taken to reduce impacts – e.g. geoconservation, Blanket Bogs, landscape and view field, water quality, recreational values and design – but there is no attempt to relate how these relate to wilderness characteristics or how effective the mitigation measures might be.
- In the last part of Section 8 headed 'Additional proponent proposed measures', it is claimed that helicopters when landing and taking off will have 'noise impact equivalent to the ambient' and that the 'HLA siting ensures no noise impact on the TWWHA Wilderness Zone to the west during start-up and set-down'. These are incredible statements that are hard to believe and are not supported by any assessment by a sound engineer.

The proposed mitigation measures for helicopters (Appendix 2) describes the amount of helicopter use, likely impact on other users and measures proposed to reduce this impact. However, the assessment admits that, even with application of mitigation measures, other users will hear the helicopters. We assert that a helicopter flying at 1000 metres will still be clearly audible and visible (not assessed) to other users of the area and the FNA is only advisory and can be contravened in certain circumstances e.g. low clouds. There will be impact on other users from landing and take-off and the proposed mitigation measures will be far less effective than claimed (as stated above).

The assessment concludes 'there will be no anticipated impacts to any Wilderness Zone in the TWWHA'. But, even if true, this does not means there will be no unacceptable impacts on wilderness as the Wilderness Zone does not generally relate to the location of areas of high wilderness value (as demonstrated by comparing the zone map and Wilderness Value from the (TWWHA Management Plan, pages 71-73 and page 176). Yours sincerely,

s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Thursday, 19 July 2018 4:37 PM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Reference number and title: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania. [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

#### From: s22

Sent: Thursday, 19 July 2018 4:29 PM
To: EPBC Referrals
Subject: Reference number and title: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

# Reference number and title: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania.

The purpose of this letter is to formally register my strong objection to above identified proposal.

I am a 71 year-old who has over the past thirty or more years have regularly trekked into the Tasmanian highland lakes area to camp, walk and fly-fish in one of the most beautiful and pristine areas remaining in the world. As a person who is well travelled to many parts of the world including South East Asia, Central Asia, Europe and the UK, I can without any hesitation state that the Tasmanian World Heritage area in the central highlands is unique, magical and unsurpassed in its prehistoric landscape.

Bush walking, camping and fly fishing in the Central Plateau and Great Pine Tier, and Walls of Jerusalem areas provide an experience that is rare in the day and age – an experience which would be completely adulterated by the introduction of helicopters, landing pads and semi-permanent camps. When visiting the areas identified, me and my colleagues adhere to the code of minimal impact activities and taking out all camping equipment and associated goods used for the trip.

This submission is written in the firm belief that the proposal to fly helicopters, and to construct camps in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is contrary and incompatible to the intended management of the area identified as Hall's Island



19 July 2018

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 23 July 2018 9:52 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Lake Malbena proposed wild drake development [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 19 July 2018 11:41 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Lake Malbena proposed wild drake development

Dear Minister

I write regarding the lake Malbena development as below

# Reference number and title: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I am someone who enjoys greatly the walking and fishing on the central plateau of Tasmania. I have walked to these isolated places sometimes alone and sometimes with friends over the years. The ability to travel by my own efforts to isolated and pristine environments is of immense value to me and many others.

I believe the current proposed development threatens the specialness of this area and risks others following with additional developments which risk ruining the very features that give the area it's unique status.

I strongly oppose this development.

Sincerely,

s22

s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

**Attachments:** 

EPBC Referrals Monday, 23 July 2018 9:52 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Halls Island, Lake Malbena—Tasmanian Wilderness—submission on referral 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED] RiverFly.JPG

From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 19 July 2018 9:47 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Halls Island, Lake Malbena—Tasmanian Wilderness—submission on referral 2018/8177

I strongly object to the EPBC 2018/8177 proposal by Wild Drake PTY LTD.

Private, commercial tourism accommodation is not currently an "existing use" of Halls Island and Lake Malbena and it is not, and has never been, the destination of private commercial helicopter flights with the sole purpose of transporting paying customers.

Simply put, there is no existing tourist demand or requirement for this proposal. Everything put forward is already available at the nearby Lake St Clair accommodation. This is a marginal business proposal exploiting a lease agreement from a bygone 1950s era. It has been pushed through in secrecy with little regard for the TWWHA Management Plan. It appears to have the full backing of the state government looking to benefit one small company, at the expense of the majority and Australia's environmental reputation.

The proposed helicopter flight path is directly over prime Western Lakes' fishing areas in Lake Ina, Nive, Lenone and Ingrid. There are currently no tracks to these lakes and they are visited by anglers looking for a true wilderness experience. That experience will obviously cease to exist with ongoing overhead helicopter flights. The TWWHA Management Plan states that any "new tracks or reroutes" should only be for "environmental/management purposes only" (p79). The proposal details new tracks that are for tourism/recreation in the self-reliant recreation zone and wilderness zone.

The file submitted for the proposed helicopter route states that Wedge-tailed Eagles are "often seen in the general area". There are numerous publications and internet articles highlighting the plight of Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagles. The wilderness areas inhabited by the eagles shouldn't be subject to unnecessary helicopter flights.

Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles a step closer to extinction after electrocutions: <u>http://www.abc net.au/news/2016-10-</u>29/tasmanian-wedge-tailed-eagles-electrocution-powerlines/7977360

The proposal is inconsistent with the Tasmania's Wilderness Word Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan, which allows only standing camps in the self-reliant recreation zone. The referral describes the project as far more than a standing camp, with a helicopter landing pad, huts and multiple other buildings proposed to be constructed from timber and steel.

Hopefully the attached file can be added to this reply. These are the words of Daniel and Simone Hackett and were posted on their RiverFly 1864 website for years. It obviously calls into question the integrity of the proponents; their claims that the Wild Drake proposal will have minimal impact on a WHA, and raises doubts that any proposed management actions can mitigate impacts on wilderness, making the project clearly unacceptable.

Regards, s22 From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 23 July 2018 9:53 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Halls Island Lake Malbena proposal, 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 19 July 2018 8:29 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Halls Island Lake Malbena proposal, 2018/8177

2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake

I would like to make a submission regarding the proposed developments on Lake Malbena and Halls Island in the TWWHA.

I have walked over that country and viewed Lake Malbena and appreciate this part of the World Heritage Area as being remote mostly untracked country.

The current proposal is wanting to undertake activities that are prohibited in the self reliant zone of the World Heritage Area in that it is building huts on the island and requiring aircraft, helicopters, to run commercial trips to service this fixed camp.

These are activities strictly prohibited in the management plan (page 78) for the TWWHA. If these activities are allowed no matter how much the proposed actual construction says it is minimal impact and supporting the existing hut then many others are likely to use this as precedence to do more of this. It is the thin edge of the wedge in allowing otherwise prohibited activities. What is the use of a management plan if it is not followed!

I hope and trust the referrals process will uphold the existing management plan is protect this wilderness for future generations and not eat away at it little by little.



EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177 EPBC Case Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas. Comments following additional information requested by EPBC from the proponent

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the additional information requested of the proponent, Mr Daniel Hackett, by EPBC regarding the proposal by the proponent to erect a Standing Camp on Halls Island in Lake Malbena, which is part of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park within the

Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

These comments are in addition to earlier comments I made in April 2018 following invitation by EPBC for public comment to the original proposal EPBC Reference No. 2018/8177.

The proponent has a tendency to make spurious and exaggerated claims to support his arguments. He oscillates between statements designed to lower the natural wilderness values of Halls Island to enable his proposal to proceed; and highlighting the island's natural wilderness values to promote it as a desirable destination for those seeking a special experience in a unique natural landscape on an island in the TWWHA.



# Photo 1 Halls Island, Lake Malbena viewed from Mount Oana

Photo by s22

Halls Island is approximately 10 hectares in area.

EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177 EPBC Case Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

Comments following additional information requested by EPBC from the proponent

I would also question the reference to Fire History on Halls Island on page 11 of the report by North Barker Ecosystem Services titled:

'Halls Island Standing Camp Lake Malbena Walls of Jerusalem Proposed Helicopter Landing Site and Access to Halls Island Vegetation Survey For Wild Drake Pty Ltd 14 June 2018'

#### Fire History Halls Island

"The distribution of vegetation communities and form of several tree species indicates a complex fire history on the island. The vegetation of Halls Island clearly differs from the surrounding vegetation. The present of a range of fire sensitive coniferous species (notably Athrotaxis selaginoides and A. cupressoides), the persistence of a patch of rainforest (on the leeward side of the island south of a 4m drop off) and the prominence of Eucalyptus subcrenulata yellow gum (absent elsewhere in the vicinity) suggest fires tar far less frequent across the island than elsewhere in this part of the Central Plateau. However, fire has still shaped the structure of the vegetation on Halls island. Many of the trees show trunk damage most easily attributable to fire scarring (plate 12). The multit-stemmed form of the *E*. subcrenulata suggest fire coppice (Plate 13). Most regenerating small trees of celery-top pine Phyllocladus aspleniifolius suggest a single regrowth cohort post the last fire which is likely to have been 30-50 years ago

This is a rather desperate attempt to indicate recent past history of fire damage to vegetation on Halls Island.

One of the most striking aspects of the vegetation on Halls Island is that there is no visible evidence of fire, unlike the devastating results of fire to extensive areas of the Central Plateau including within the TWWHA.

And it is in stark contrast to the vegetation on nearby Mount Oana, where fire damage can clearly be seen in Photo number 1.

I certainly dispute the likelihood of fire having occurred on Halls Island within the past 30 years. I visited Halls Island in 1995, camping for two nights, and saw no signs of fire damage. Had there been fire in the seven years prior, I would have expected to see clear evidence of it in the form of burnt stumps or logs.

The very presence on Halls Island of mature pencil pines and King Billy Pines, hundreds of years old, both of which would be destroyed by fire, is living proof that it is highly unlikely that the island has been burnt for a very long time.

In the Flora and Fauna Assessment by North Barker Ecosystem Services for RiverFly in November 2016 on page 10, point *2.2. Plant Species of Conservation Significance:* 

Pherosphaera hookeriana Mt Mawson pine Vulnerable/

A coniferous shrub or small tree that is highly sensitive to fire. Can form extensive clonal thickets by suckering, which can make the estimation of population size difficult.

*Our field survey recorded a dense but narrow band of plants around most of the southern edge of the island (Figure 4, Plates 8 and 9). Estimated percentage cover within this area of 3,500 m2 is 30 %.* 

s22

EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177 EPBC Case Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

Comments following additional information requested by EPBC from the proponent The previous record of this species attributed to Hall's Island estimated  $150 \pm 50$  plants are present, but this is likely to be an underestimate based on our mapping.

## Also in point 3.1 on page 16 of the report:

The island contains patches of fire sensitive vegetation in the form of MSP, RKP and to a lesser extent RSH. The pencils pines within MSP\_AC and the king billy pines within the RKP are very fire sensitive.

The Walls of Jerusalem is a Fuel Stove Only Area and large areas of the parks fire sensitive vegetation have been lost to past fires. Any intention to equip the huts with fireplaces would need to be done with strict specifications to prevent a bushfire.

Despite the proponent's claim that the risk of fire on the island is low and he states that should any fire occur, it would be extinguished immediately, the risk of fire on Halls Island is greatly increased by the proposal to establish and maintain a luxury standing camp on the island.

Presently, Halls Island is in an area which sees very little aviation activity. Helicopter landing and take-off on the area opposite Halls Island and hovering of a helicopter over the island during the building stage of the proposed development as well as during slinging of waste grey water on a regular basis (initially stated to occur at the end of each group visit, later stated to occur 'regularly'), means that the risk of fire resulting from a helicopter crash cannot be discounted.

The introduction to the island of a generator to support electric charging of hand tools during the building stage of the proposal and as a backup power supply for lighting and heating, will also necessitate fuel storage and the risk of fuel spillage.

Sparks from 12-volt lighting system are also sufficient to cause ignition of any nearby fuel source.

A luxury standing camp suggests that guests would expect to be warm and have access to hot water for showering, and hand-washing prior to eating and after toileting. Should gas heating be used, gas cylinders will need to be stored on the island. Another fuel source and potential fire risk.

Any pumping of water would require a fuel or electric pump. In the case of Halls Island being a remote site, this effectively necessitates use of a fuel generator.

The proponent does not mention which water source he intends to use for water requirements at the standing camp for drinking, washing and cooking purposes. If water were to be pumped from Lake Malbena, a pump and hose would be required. Placement of any hose or pump would need to be considered carefully so as not to damage vegetation and to avoid those areas of excluded access to sensitive vegetation as outlined by North Barker Ecosystems.

Bathrooms and toilets are mentioned, however with only a concept design by Cumulus Studios, it is not clear whether each accommodation unit of the proposed camp will include an ensuite, also necessitating grey water as well as waste collection for each unit.

I am unclear as to whether grey water from each bathroom and the kitchen will be collected at a central grey water tank to enable helicopter slinging for removal.

EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177 EPBC Case Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas. Comments following additional information requested by EPBC from the proponent

With six guests plus two guides per trip, all spending four days on the island, the volume of grey water would be considerable. Ten litres per person per day would be a conservative estimate, resulting in 10x8x4 =320 litres per 8 person stay on the island for four days, all of which would need to be removed from Halls Island by helicopter slinging under the terms of the agreement with TPAWS

Presumably, guides will either be accommodated in the historic hut or camp in tents, since there is no provision for their accommodation in the standing camp. Bathroom and toilet facilities for guides are not mentioned in the proposal. There is no indication of the plan of the proposed development for water storage tanks.



Photo 2 Historic Hut built circa 1956 by Reg Hall on Halls Island, Lake Malbena

Photo by s22

I am concerned about the blurring between 'Halls Island' and the historic hut on Halls Island. I feel that the proponent uses the terms interchangeably at times.

In point 3.10 of his original referral, the proponent states:

'Halls Island is leasehold (under lease to the proponent)'

'A privately owned hut (circa 1956) on a separate leasehold is present on Halls Island (owned by the proponent)'

EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177 EPBC Case Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas. Comments following additional information requested by EPBC from the proponent

On reading the Reserve Activity Assessment Level 2 to 4, by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, I think it is more likely that a new lease to cover the area of the proposed standing camp and associated infrastructure has been negotiated by TPAWS staff with the proponent, rather than a lease for Halls Island.

This leads to the question of public access to Halls Island. I understand that the proponent has leasehold of the historic hut and most likely, should the proposal to develop three additional accommodation huts and a communal hut on the island be approved by EPBC and local council, he would be granted leasehold over the area of the island on which the 'standing camp' is sited. (Originally, this area was estimated to be 20 metres by 40 metres, however I notice in the additional information provided by the proponent that the area of the standing camp is 10 metres by 30 metres with the final design of the camp to be determined in consultation with the Minister.)

The Standing Camp Relative Scale Comparison prepared by Cumulus Studio is not a valid comparison for a number of reasons. Please refer to 2018-8177-additional-info-preliminarydesignplan\_Part3

According to this preliminary design, the proposed standing camp on Halls Island is 64 square metres. Halls Island is approximately 10 hectares in area.

Maria Island standing camp is shown as being 80 square metres. However, Maria Island covers an area of approximately 9,670 hectares.

Maria Island is almost one thousand times the area of Halls Island!

Quite apart from the relative scale of development to total size of island ratio, Maria Island has a well-documented history of convict occupation, industry, farming with numerous sizeable historic buildings resulting in alteration to its natural state, not to mention introduced animal and bird species.

Compare this to Halls Island where apart from a very small historic hut (4x4 metres maximum) and a single-person width track leading from the bay where Reg Hall launched his canoe, there is little sign of disturbance to or degregation of the natural values of the island.

It is also unfair to compare the proposed camp on Halls Island to RiverFly Wilderness Fly Fishing Standing Camp which has four huts placed close together in an environment that does not have significant natural values and can be reached easily by an estimated two kilometre walk from a WD vehicle which the proponent can drive through private property, with permission.

Wukalina standing camp provides accommodation for a coastal walk in the Mount William National Park and is owned and operated by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community. It is sited in a vegetation common in coastal communities, simply not comparable to the remoteness and natural values of Halls Island.

Stage two of the proponents proposal is stated to be the construction of a walking track to nearby Mount Oana from where Photo 1 in my comments was taken. The redacted area of the TPAWS Reserve Activity Assessment most likely refers to a proposal to also build a track to a site of EPBC Reference No. 2018 8177 EPBC Case Title: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

Comments following additional information requested by EPBC from the proponent

Aboriginal Significance. Neither track is part of this proposal, however it does highlight the proponent's future plans to further (negatively) impact the natural values of the area around Halls Island.

Aboriginal presence in the area of Halls Island according to the proponent is either unlikely for the purposes of constructing a standing camp on the island or present and with consultation and involvement of Aboriginal people, be seen as an opportunity for significant cultural experience for guests as well as employment opportunities for Aboriginal people within PAWS.

Anglers, bushwalkers and pack rafting enthusiasts who have enjoyed experiencing the natural and remote areas of the Central Plateau, are understandably concerned about the potential for the proposed development on Halls Island, particularly helicopter access to the TWWHA.

Where will future generations be able to develop the self-reliant skills needed to safely enjoy adventuring in this area if they are effectively excluded from visiting Halls Island?

s22

(Address supplied via email, not for publication.)



Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment GPO Box 787 - Canberra ACT 2601 epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au

19 July 2018

Public Comment on Referral:

# Ref: 2018/8177 WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

The Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) is a not-for-profit, a-political, registered environmental organisation that owns and manages land of high conservation significance (<u>tasland.org.au</u>). The TLC makes comment on this submission because it owns land that may potentially be impacted by some of the proposed activities.

The TLC's Five Rivers Reserve is located in Tasmania's Central Highlands, approximately 10 km east of Lake St Clair National Park and within 8 km of Lake Malbena. The Reserve is 11,113 hectares in size and protected by a statutory conservation covenant under the *Nature Conservation Act 2000*. It shares boundaries with the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, the Central Plateau Conservation Area, Top Marshes Conservation Area, and the Tasmanian Aboriginal owned *trawtha makuminya*. Part of this Reserve 'Skullbone Plains' also has World Heritage status and is included within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

More information on the Five Rivers Reserve including its management plan and other associated documents are available at **tasland.org.au/reserves/five-rivers-reserve/**.

#### **Frequency of Helicopter Use**

The TLC's concern relates to the proposed frequency of helicopter usage as part of Wild Drake Pty Ltd's commercial operations. The usage proposed is:

"Total flight time from a capacity 30 trip-bookings per year is estimated at a maximum of 48 hours per year. For perspective, a single Halls Island booking would require a maximum of 24 minutes flight time during the arrival process, and 24 minutes maximum flight time some four days later for departure. -Approximately 3 hours of further helicopter use will be required annually for maintenance and servicing of the Standing Camp."

Submission #3133 http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/\_entity/annotation/6fdfc222-f732-e811-886f-005056ba00a8/a71d58ad-4cba-48b6-8dab-f3091fc31cd5?t=1531799064613)

Our concern relates to the frequency of helicopter use within the proposed flight path and the potential cumulative risk it poses to the Nationally Endangered Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle *Aquila audax fleayi* on the TLC's adjacent reserve.

Tasmanian Land Conservancy PO Box 2112 Lower Sandy Bay TAS 7005 **Ph** 03 6225 1399 **E** info@tasland.org.au www.tasland.org.au In the "Assessment for Minimum Impact on Nesting Eagles of the Proposed Helicopter Flight Route from Derwent Bridge to Halls Island, Lake Malbena – N. Mooney" the helicopter flight path directly crosses Lake Ina on-route to Halls Island. This route is within 300 m of our Skullbone Plains boundary and within 3 km of other parts of our Five Rivers Reserve. Individual wedge-tailed eagles and pairs of birds are regularly seen foraging over the grasslands of Skullbone Plains with 2 nests located within 12 km of the Lake Ina boundary and several other nests located between 5 and 10 km from Lake Ina on Parks and Wildlife Service and Sustainable Timbers Tasmania land.

Helicopters are known to cause disturbance and can be lethal to eagles due to collision. While the measures proposed by Mooney are to mitigate disturbance, the frequency of helicopter usage (potentially 60 to 70 trips per year) significantly escalates the risk of collision and likelihood of disturbance to this nationally endangered species. This escalation in risk would define 'frequency of helicopter usage' as a key threat according to the National recovery plan: *Threatened Species Section (2006)*. *Threatened Tasmanian Eagles Recovery Plan 2006-2010. Department of Primary Industries and Water, Hobart.* 

Since taking ownership of the Five Rivers Reserve in 2011, the TLC has utilised helicopters for access from time to time. However, in recognition of the risk aircraft pose to raptors, our current policy is to no longer authorise this mode of access unless for fire or emergency purposes.

#### Consultation

As a point of clarification, the TLC believes it has not been formally consulted on the Wild Drake Pty Ltd proposed development. While a number of informal disclosures have been made to individual staff, and told about the project including progress of the RAA, the organisation doesn't not believe this constitutes a formal consultation process. Also, TLC has not been involved in the ongoing planning of the project.

#### Proponent

The TLC has no arrangement with Wild Drake Pty Ltd. A formal licence agreement with 'River Fly 1864' to operate a standing camp on our Five Rivers Reserve is in place. This licence has been in place for six years, and allows for foot access but does not include helicopter use. The execution of this licence is predicated on a range of terms and conditions and reviewed by both parties on an ongoing basis. This commercial agreement with River Fly 1864 has been beneficial to the TLC in mitigating high volumes illegal access which were common at the time of purchased, resulting in significant impacts on the conservation values of the area.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this referral.

Sincerely



Tasmanian Land Conservancy PO Box 2112 Lower Sandy Bay TAS 7005 **Ph** 03 6225 1399 **E** info@tasland.org.au www.tasland.org.au s22

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: EPBC Referrals Monday, 23 July 2018 9:56 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Submission on Reference No. 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Thursday, 19 July 2018 4:46 PM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Submission on Reference No. 2018/8177

**Title of Referral: Wild Drake Pty Ltd**/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I am making this submission because of my concerns, as described below.

# Commercialisation

Introducing commercialism into part of the Tasmanian landscape recognised and cherished by thousands for its wilderness values will destroy these very values.

Halls Island and Lake Malbena have never been the destination of private commercial helicopter flights with the sole purpose of transporting paying guests to private tourist accommodation. Flying helicopters into such a remote area will affect the reasons why people go to this area: for the experience of remoteness and serenity.

This proposal is at odds with the "self-reliant recreation" zoning.

# Lack of Transparency

The clandestine way in which Lake Malbena was re-zoned to make provision for this proposal, and what appears to have been attempts to limit public engagement by withholding assessment information when proposal first published.

## Conclusion

The values of "Wilderness" in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area are the reasons why so many are attracted to Tasmania. It is important that these values are maintained, and we can continue to feel proud of the "specialness" of the Tasmanian Wilderness.

With sincerity



From: Sent: To: Cc:

Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 23 July 2018 10:14 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: Submission against malbena proposal ref# 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

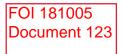
From: s22 Sent: Wednesday, 18 July 2018 10:08 AM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: Fwd: Submission against malbena proposal ref# 2018/8177

----- Forwarded message -----From: **s22** Date: Wed, 18 Jul 2018 at 10:02 am Subject: Submission against malbena proposal ref# 2018/8177 To: <u>epbc.referrals@environment.gov.aus</u> <<u>epbc.referrals@environment.gov.aus</u>>

I am **\$22**, I am emailing you today in regards to a development planned for malbenna reference number 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

I currently live in Melbourne but that does not take away my feeling towards Tasmania and it's beauty I personally would hate for a world heritage area to be developed upon and all sense of wilderness and isolation to be lost for monetary gain. No amount of money can make us happy, havent we done enough as a species? Exploiting the environment for our gain, exploiting the lives of the creatures we share earth with, destroying the earth that we exist on.

At the end of the day, what ever is decided upon. You and the greedy companies that see to exploit the environment will have to live with your choices.



Submission In Regard To: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena,

2018/8177



Further to my first submission in April this year I reiterate my original concerns. I again wish to strongly express:

- The Tasmanian community strongly responded to the proposed amendments to the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan* in 2015 with over 7,000 submissions forwarded; the majority not supportive of the changes. Sadly many of those changes came to fruition in the current Management Plan (2016) which has seen significant watering down of the laws and regulations protecting our world heritage areas. Under the original plan this development **would not** have been allowed. The reclassification of this area from a wilderness zone to a self reliant recreation zone allowing for structures and commercial air craft landings is appalling (I can think of no other word). This renaming to suit Government policy, enable tourism developments and the privatisation of public assets to the highest bidder or a perceived 'mate' etc only serves to further devalue and erode the value of wilderness. Devaluing brings with it the real risk of exploitation and with it the slippery slope of more and more exploitation and commercial developments. In the end Tasmania will destroy the very things that makes our national parks and world heritage areas special. Protection should be strengthened not weakened. At the very least built tourism infrastructure and developments must remain outside the world heritage boundaries.
- I remain strongly concerned that the expressions of interest process for development in Tasmania's national parks and world heritage areas are being conducted in secret and information deliberately with-held from the public. These proposals, their assessment criteria, their assessment methodology and risk assessments are not being made transparent to Tasmanian's. A responsible, open and accountable government would deem this a democratic essential.
- This is the first time that helicopters will be permitted to land in Tasmania's remote world heritage area for routine access by tourists. The environmental impact needs to be rigorously assessed, the Tasmanian community consulted and the results made accessible to the Tasmanian public.
- The proponent indicates he has a lease over the entirety of Halls Island in contradiction to the Tasmanian Governments own LIST data which indicates a lease area of approximately 36 m2. The status of the leasehold needs immediate clarification.
- I am opposed to the proponent's proposal to construct a luxury camp on Halls island in Lake Malbena, with helicopter access, within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. My opposition also extends to the proponent's stage 2. Such developments do not hold with the values of protecting our cherished and unique world heritage areas.
- Upon review of the additional information I am now also concerned about the impact on wedge tailed eagles especially helicopter flights. Currently recognised as endangered only around 130 pairs breed successfully each year . No activity should be permitted that has even the slightest risk of disturbance on their nesting, breeding and range etc.

# submitted by:

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

s22

EPBC Referrals Monday, 23 July 2018 11:11 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: The Wild Drake Proposal - EPBC Number 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Friday, 20 July 2018 10:59 AM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: The Wild Drake Proposal - EPBC Number 2018/8177

Submission

Please reject the above application on the following basis;

1) The proposal is likely to have a significant impact on World Heritage Values—considered 'Matters of National Environmental Significance' under the law. The Management Plan for World Heritage is being delayed. It should be released and agreed by The UN before any proposals impacting the prescribed area are even considered. This is a defiant middle finger up by the Tasmanian Government at the World Authority on such matters and an attempt to start eroding the integrity of the WH area. You as The Feds need to step in yet again like a stern parent by pointing out all the laws that are being breached and stop this shameful attempt by the childish Tasmanian State Government at making a fast buck from a very select bunch of "High End" tourists.

2) The extra info about nesting eagles fails to address the fact that eagle territory will be impacted by helicopter activity and hence there is a very real risk that the bird could be damaged, Why not consider sending the proponents back to the drawing board, that they should consider using a different form of transport such as hot air balloons?

Thanks



FOI 181005 Document 125

Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601 s22

July 17<sup>th</sup> 2018

Dear Minister,

# Re: 2018/8177, Wild Drake Pty Ltd/Tourism and Recreation/Hall's Island Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas

I am writing this letter to express my concerns with the development proposed for Hall's Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas.

I spend on average a week annually hiking into the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area to fish the pristine unpressured waters therein. I value the remoteness, isolation and beauty of the area and the opportunity it provides to escape any reminders of the outside world.

My concerns are particularly that helicopters in the area, however infrequent, will shatter the sense of isolation that is so very rare today. This is one of the primary reasons I value the area and return year after year.

I have two young boys that I hope to take with me when they are of age and would very much like them to have the same experiences that I have had. Having this cultural connection is part of the fabric of what it is to be Tasmanian, and I hope that it can continue unfettered for generations.

I urge you to consider my reservations with the development, and hope that they inform you of a widely felt sentiment held by other Tasmanians.

Yours Sincerely,

SZZ

Assessments Victoria and Tasmania Section, Assessments and Governance Branch, Department of the Environment and Energy, CANBERRA, ACT, 2601,

By email: <a href="mailto:epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au">epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au</a>

19 July 2018

# Re: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD/Tourism and Recreation/Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tasmania (2018/8177)

I have a long interest in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA), having visited much of it during the last 40 years as a bushwalker and wild place enthusiast.

I do not support the approval of the proposed commercial tourism development at Halls Island, Lake Malbena (the proposal) and believe it will have an unacceptable impact on World Heritage Wilderness Values and Australia's commitments to the World Heritage Convention.

The development is inconsistent with the protection of Outstanding Universal Value, including wilderness character; contradicts World Heritage Committee requests and Reactive Monitoring Mission (RMM) recommendations; violates provisions of the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan; and is inconsistent with the legislated management objectives of national parks under Tasmanian legislation.

The 2018 World Heritage Committee decision has welcomed the '*development of additional assessment criteria for commercial tourism proposals and requirements to consider impacts on the wilderness values of the property*<sup>'i</sup> in the 2016 TWWHA management plan. However, any objective analysis of the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) confirms that consideration of the proposal's impact on wilderness value is superficial and limited to the built accommodation. No detailed wilderness assessment has been undertaken.

Additionally, informing the Committee decision, the Advisory Bodies' State of Conservation report specifically 'raises concerns' over the rezoning of parts of the wilderness zone to allow tourism development. Lake Malbena is an example of where this zoning change has manifest in the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan. This undermines the credibility of the state-based assessment.

Given the available information it can be determined that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the high-value wilderness character of the area. Wilderness is a core value of the TWWHA, was a critical component of nomination documents, is acknowledged as a component of Outstanding Universal Value and is 'fundamental to the integrity' of the property.

As such, the Minister should be satisfied that the proposed action is clearly unacceptable.

Failing this, the proposal should be considered a controlled action and subject to rigorous assessment following the proponent's publication of a Public Environment Report. This should include an Environmental Impact Assessment that specifically looks at the impact of the proposal on the wilderness character of the property.





Lake Malbena

# Context

Since 2015 the World Heritage Committee has urged the Australian Government protect wilderness from new tourism development, explicitly identifying it as a component of the Outstanding Universal value of the TWWHA.

For example, decision 39 COM 7B.35 in 2015 urged Australia to review the then draft Management Plan for the property to:

*'ensure that it provides adequate protection for its OUV'* including through the *'...establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV<u>, including its wilderness character</u> and cultural attribute.' (emphasis added)* 

This was reinforced by the recommendations of the 2015 UNESCO Reactive Monitoring Mission. All 20 RMM recommendations were unconditionally accepted by both the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, including via media statements and State of Conservation Reports (SOC) to the World Heritage Centre in 2016 and 2017.

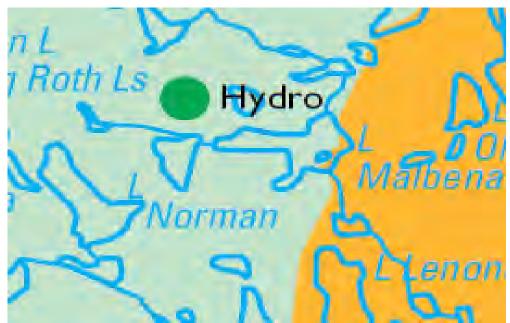
As per the SOC Reports, the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan is the vehicle by which these commitments were to be enshrined.

The 2016 TWWHA Management Plan identifies Lake Malbena as of high wilderness value (14-18). It describes wilderness as the '*quality which underpins the success in* 

# meeting all four criteria for a natural property and the basis for the maintenance of its integrity.' (pg 43)

The same plan uses a threshold of 12 (together with an understanding of existing use and future rehabilitation outcomes) in the determination of the location of the 'wilderness zone'. (p 177).

The 1999 TWWHA Management Plans zoned Halls Island on Lake Malbena as 'wilderness', a zonation that explicitly prohibits built commercial tourism developments, including 'standing camps'. The 2014 TWWHA Draft Management Plan proposed renaming and weakening the provisions of the entire wilderness zone, however, in line with a recommendation of the RMM, the wilderness zone was reinstated in the final 2016 TWWHA Management Plan. But close inspection of this final Management Plan shows Lake Malbena was excised from the wilderness zone and rezoned self-reliant recreation, to allow commercial tourism development by way of 'standing camps'.



Zonantion in the 2014 Draft Managemnt Plan – green being what was wilderness zone in the 1999 Plan, yellow being self-reliant recreation zone.



Zonation in the final 2016 management Plan – demonstrating the excision of Lake Malbena from the wilderness zone to allow the proposal to be compliant.

In a report that accompanied a decision that again stressed the need for assessment criteria to assess impacts on wilderness, expert advisers to the World Heritage Committee recently expressed concern over this and other excisions from the wilderness zone.

State-based assessments have not assessed the proposal's impact on wilderness value.

Private, commercial tourism accommodation is not currently an 'existing use' of Halls Island, Lake Malbena and it is not, and has <u>never been the destination of private</u> commercial helicopter flights with the sole purpose of transporting paying customers.

Putting aside the underhand rezoning of Lake Malbena to 'self-reliant recreation', it has to be said that a 'niche operation' aimed at paying customers at the 'very top-end of the market' and delivering a 'high-level of visitor comfort', with personal transport via helicopter, is about as far from 'self-reliant recreation' as one can get.

# 1.2 Proposed Action

The referral's description of the proposed action is inconsistent. At point 1 it is described as a 'small scale Standing Camp', a significant description as this is the only type of development permitted in the self-reliant recreation zone under the 2016 TWWHA Management Plan (pg 79).

However, the referral goes on to describe a far more accurate representation of the proposal, including a hut and buildings. Significantly, these type of developments are prohibited in the self-reliant recreation zone.

The referral describes the proposal as:

- Three accommodation 'buildings'
- One central 'hut'
- Construction to be 'a mixture of timber and steel'
- Occupying '800 m2'

I do not accept that the proposed action is a standing camp.

As the 2016 Management Plan prohibits new visitor accommodation in the self-reliant recreation zone (excepting standing camps) this development is inconsistent with the Plan.

The construction of a private, commercial helipad and use of helicopters for construction, servicing and guest transfer will have a serious and negative impact on the wilderness character of the area.

As a component of OUV, a critical value of the TWWHA and something seriously diminished by built developments and mechanised access, the referral fails to adequately address the proposal's impact on wilderness and what, if anything can be done to mitigate it.

The proposal also details the construction of significant associated infrastructure, namely boardwalks. I think that the construction of new tracks, let alone boardwalks, is inconsistent with the self-reliant recreation zone in the TWWHA Management Plan, which states that 'new tracks or reroutes for environmental/management purposes only' (p 79). It is self-evident that a route from a new helipad, to the lake shoreline and from the island shoreline to the project development site are neither existing tracks, nor for environmental or management purposes.

# 1.11 Estimated start and end date of the action

The referral references an end date of the action as 02/2038, a span of almost 20 years. This acknowledges the action is not just the construction of the proposal, but its operation, something the proposals ongoing need for significant helicopter use and the anticipated impacts of this.

However, given the acknowledgement that 'this EPBC self-referral <u>only pertains to Stage</u> <u>One activities</u>' (emphasis as in the referral), and that stage 2 involves further track construction, including into the wilderness zone, the cumulative impacts of the proposal should be assessed as part of this referral.

Stage 2 involves the development of 'routes' to local sites of interest including Mt Oana, within the wilderness zone. I question the credibility of the claim these are 'routes' as opposed to tracks, something that breaches the TWWHA Management Plan and increased negative impacts on wilderness values.

# 1.12 Planning

I reject the assertion that proposal has been adequately assessed against applicable acts.

Specifically, Tasmania's *Nature Conservation Act* has an explicit management objective 'to *preserve the natural, primitive and remote character of wilderness areas.*'

Given the fundamental negative impacts this proposal would have on wilderness values, it is inconsistent with the management objectives for national parks.

# 1.13 Consultation

I totally reject the proponent's assertion in the referral that it has consulted with stakeholders over this project, especially organisations like the Tasmanian Wilderness Society.

# 1.14 Environmental impact assessments

Of significant interest to many, including the World Heritage Committee, is the project's assessment against '*key criteria for commercial tourism in the TWWHA*' (as per page 150 of the TWWHA Management Plan 2016), and assessment to '*identify how any impacts in World Heritage values will be managed or mitigated*,'.

I reject the assertion that impacts on wilderness values can be mitigated. Constructing a new, built commercial tourism development and establishing a new commercial mechanised access point will have impacts that simply cannot be mitigated.

The RAA appears deficient with regard formal advice on the proposal. While the referral outlines several entities who have offered advice on the proposal, it omits advice from the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council (NPWAC). As per recommendation 1 of the 2015 RMM, governments should 'take full advantage of NPWAC'. I support full transparency with regards advice from statutory bodies and would support the release of all advice, including that of NPWAC.

# 1.15 Staged Development

As discussed, this referral pertains to Stage one only of a two stage proposal.

While at face value, both stage one and two independently breach the TWWHA Management Plan and obligations to protect OUV, including wilderness character, this referral should cover both stages and the EPBC assessment consider the cumulative impacts.

## 1.16 Other Proposals

While this proposal is not linked via the proponent to other proposals in the region, there exists a significant number of new, commercial tourism development proposals in the TWWHA, including another suite of huts within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

These proposals are linked via the Tasmanian Governments Expressions of Interest process, soliciting new tourism developments in Tasmania's parks and reserves.

The cumulative impacts of these projects should be assessed collectively.

This proposal also pre-empts the Tourism Master Plan, a plan explicitly recommended by the RMM to *'refine the balance between legitimate tourism development and the management and conservation of the cultural and natural values of the TWWHA.'* (rec 7)

The recent (July 2018) decision of the World Heritage Committee expressed concern the promised Tourism Master Plan had not been developed and expressly urged the Australian Government to 'expedite the development of the Tourism Master Plan in order to ensure a strategic approach to tourism development'.

Given this Tourism Master Plan is a mechanism to manage and protect values from commercial tourism development, approval under EPBC in advance of the finalisation of this plan would appear unwise and disrespectful and undermine the commitments made by the Australian Government to implement the RMM's recommendations.

# 2.1 World Heritage Values

I agree with the referral that the proposed action is likely to have impacts on the values of the TWWHA.

# 2.1.1 Impact table

The referral acknowledges that the project will have '*potential impacts on wilderness character, including remoteness from settlement and apparent naturalness'*, though ignores the component of wilderness assessment relating to 'time remoteness'. Given the establishment of a helipad and new commercial availability of helicopter access, time remoteness is demonstrably affected.

The referral provides no reference to assessment or justification as to why 'impacts relating to general values of wilderness' are not considered a 'significant impact'.

Indeed, additional information released on 5 July 2018 seeks to detail wilderness issues via a 'general statement on wilderness characteristics of Halls Island'.

This analysis is contradictory, utilises old data and ignores the recent extension to the TWWHA, the reservation of neighbouring properties and the positive impact on wilderness values these activities have had.

While this 'statement' acknowledges the impact on wilderness values of a small,1956 built, rustic hut, it undertakes no analysis of the additional impacts of multiple new 'timber and steel' buildings, a commercial helipad and associated flights, boardwalks and associated infrastructure.

The statement gives an analysis of the 2006 wilderness mapping project, ignoring that a subsequent mapping project was undertaken as part of the TWWHA Management Planning process.

Analysis of the National Wilderness Inventory ratings ignores the fact that wilderness values <u>have been improved via the closure of access tracks and protection of significant</u> <u>adjacent privately owned land</u>. The statement details each criteria of NWI however:

 Remoteness from Access (4+) - would NOW likely to be assessed as a 5 given the closure of access tracks on neighbouring properties and, as acknowledged in the statement that:

'Since ~2013 the traditional access point to this part of the TWWHA, the private property now known as trawtha makuminya, has come under new ownership, and through-access to the eastern periphery of the TWWHA at Olive Lagoon now requires formal permission (which is not guaranteed), and travel beyond two permanently locked gates. The historical walk-in regime to Halls Island is now problematic, and up to 17km in length (each way), an increase from ~9.7km.'

Irrespective the introduction of a new, commercial helipad with regular flights will significantly diminish the rating attributed to Remoteness from Access and thus, negatively impact in overall wilderness value.

 Apparent naturalness (1+) – this component is rated the lowest of the four criteria due to the presence of a rustic, private hut on Halls Island. Whilst acknowledging this impact, I would expect this value to decrease to 0 with the construction of a 8x4 m hut, 3 accommodation buildings, toilets, boardwalks, a helipad and other infrastructure. <u>This will negatively impact on the overall wilderness value.</u>



Halls Hut is small, rusting and while affecting wilderness value, is small when considered against the hut and helicopter developments proposed as part of the referral.

#### 2.1.2 Significant impact on World Heritage values

I believe the proposal will have a significant impact on MNES relating to the values of a World Heritage property and should be rejected.

#### 3.3 Soils and vegetation

The referral addresses 'proposed off-island walking tracks and routes', however, elsewhere is constrained to 'Stage 1' only, which is the helipad, on-island accommodation and linking boardwalks. This is entirely inconsistent.

Additionally, anywhere off-island to the north, south and west is zoned wilderness under the TWWHA Management plan, prohibiting the construction of new walking tracks. The term 'routes' appears more concerning again, and signalling the organic development of unplanned, unauthorised and unassessed tracks for guest use.

Clarity needs to be sought from the proponent for the full extent of the action and the cumulative impacts of all activities full assessed.

### 3.4 Outstanding natural features and other important or unique values relevant to the area

The referral fails to reference wilderness as an outstanding feature of this region, despite being mapped as a high wilderness character area and previously being zoned wilderness under the 1999 TWWHA management plan.

The 2016 Management Plan describes the TWWHA as containing '...*most of the temperate wilderness remaining in Australia and one of the last remaining such areas in the world. It is a quality which underpins the success in meeting all four criteria for a natural property and is the basis for the maintenance of its integrity. (p 43)* 

The referral should identify wilderness as a significant value of the area and any credible assessment must consider the project's impact on wilderness value, guaranteed to be significant.

#### 3.7 Current condition of the environment

Any consideration of this action in the context of the existence of a 'hut' and historic grazing, must consider the passage of time.

The construction of the hut predates listing (1989 extension) of the property by over 30 years and the hut is small and discreet by comparison to the proposed developments. Both vehicular access and sheep grazing has been prohibited for decades and the impacts from each are likely negligible.

Despite this, and a marketing pitch around 'citizen science' of the 'Outstanding Universal Values' (sic), including 'off-island', the referral describes the current condition of the environment of Halls Island as modified and/or disturbed. <u>This claim lacks credibility</u>.

#### 3.10 Tenure

Tenure arrangements for Halls Island have not previously been declared and the relevant Tasmanian Government website<sup>ii</sup> still lists the lease arrangements for this proposal as 'under negotiation'. If indeed a lease for the entire island has been signed, its finalisation is relatively recent, pre-empts proper assessment of this proposal and should not be considered relevant to deliberations.

#### 3.11 Existing or proposed uses relevant to the project area

This section fails to identify recreational use as an existing use for the area. This includes independent bushwalking and fishing.

#### 4.1 Measures to avoid or reduce impacts

Without release of the RAA and associated conditions, it is impossible to comment on the adequacy or otherwise of proposed mitigation measures.

Irrespective, given the build nature of the development and use of helicopter for access and servicing, it is impossible to mitigate impacts of the proposal on wilderness.

### The comment period for such an invasive proposal is totally inadequate and smacks of bureaucracy designed to deny adequate public consultation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>i</sup> http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3684

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>ii</sup> <u>https://www.cg.tas.gov.au/home/investment attraction/expressions of interest in tourism/eoi tourism projects</u>

FOI 181005 Document 127



An independent Voice for Tasmania's Parks

17 July 2018

Referrals Gateway Environment Assessment Branch Department of the Environment GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601

### EPBC 2018/8177

#### Halls Island – Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

#### Comment on additional information provided 5 July 2018

The Tasmanian National Park Association's (TNPA) submission (dated 17 April 2018) on the original referral noted that the wilderness quality of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area underpins its World Heritage values and that it was therefore imperative that consideration of the impact of this proposal includes a detailed consideration of the impacts of both the proposed on-ground infrastructure/operations and the helicopter operations on "wilderness value" and "wild character".

The Halls Island EPBC Self-referral – Response to request for further Information makes some additional claims (pages 56-57 & 72-75) regarding the potential impacts of the development proposal on wilderness (or the claimed lack thereof) but it falls far short of quantitative modelling and mapping, which is the clearest and most direct method to 'ensure that impacts on wilderness values are considered in any assessment of activities in the TWWHA' (TWWHA management plan, page 177). Furthermore, the additional information fails to acknowledge that:

- the helipad (whether a constructed platform<sup>1</sup> or natural rock) provides easy access for guests of the commercial operation in an area which is otherwise a full day's walk from the nearest vehicle access (in fact, this is the whole point of helicopter access). It will therefore have a major impact on the Remoteness from Access<sup>2</sup> component which will therefore substantially reduce the Total NWI Wilderness Value.
- the proposed cluster of accommodation structures will clearly have considerably greater impact than the existing tiny rustic hut on the area's naturalness as will the 'complete-capture sewage and greywater pods'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> It is highly likely that a constructed platform will be required for safety reasons, regardless of environmental concerns.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Note that helipads are explicitly included in the calculation of Remoteness from Access described in Hawes 2006 'Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Wilderness Mapping' (page 6).

(mentioned on page 15) which do not appear to be shown on the preliminary design plans.

- the vegetation on Halls Island is substantially different to that of the surrounding country because of its different fire history due to the protection provided by the surrounding water. It is the most sensitive and least appropriate development site in the vicinity. The site appears to have been selected largely because the island was subject to an existing lease which originated as a Crown Lands lease in the 1950s when circumstances were very different. The existence of a lease which should have been terminated decades ago should not be allowed to undermine the protection of the TWWHA in 2018.
- helicopter operations to construct/resupply the hut and transport guests will inevitably impact the wild character of the area (including the experience of any other users in the vicinity), regardless of the flight path and altitude of flights.
- the proposed minimum altitude of 1000 metres will not be sufficient to minimise impact on wild character:
  - a helicopter flying at 1000 metres will be clearly visible and audible to on-ground users over a wide area.
  - the helicopter will be landing at both ends of a short flight how much of the flight will actually be at 1000 metres?
  - it is very common in this area for the cloud base to be below 1000 metres. This will require the helicopter to fly below 1000 metres. The impact of such flights will be substantially greater than those at higher altitude.
- no Aboriginal heritage survey has been conducted the assessment of impacts on Aboriginal heritage appears to be seriously deficient.

The additional information provided by the proponent has not addressed the fundamental concerns expressed in our 17 April 2018 submission. Hence TNPA restates its original position, namely that this proposal is unacceptable because its impact on wilderness quality and, hence, on World Heritage values is significant.



Submission: s22

#### This submission relates to the following EPBC Number

#### Referral Number: 2018/8177

#### Proponent: Wild Drake Pty Ltd

The proposal aims to construct infrastructure on Halls Island including accommodation, toilets and a network of boardwalks for fishing and sightseeing that will be utilized by 30 groups of up to 6 customers each year. This is a significant increase in visitation. We believe that it is a wholly unsuitable development for the World Heritage Area. The reasons we consider the proposal completely unsuitable are summarized below:

- High potential for damage of a unique island flora
- Increased risk of damage to an EPBC listed vegetation community.
- Risk of irreparable fire damage to a crucial refugia for fire-sensitive palaeoendemic plants.
- Deleterious impact on a stronghold of the threatened palaeoendemic conifer *Pherosphaera hookeriana*.
- The proposal will not benefit the wide community and will decrease access to recreational users to Halls Island.

Details of are reasoning are provided below:

#### (1) Damage of a unique island flora

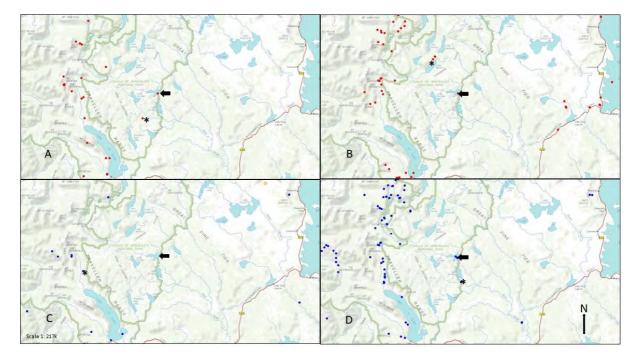
The vegetation of Halls Island as indicated by the North Barker report pertaining to this proposal, personal observations and also by utilizing all records available on the Natural Values Atlas (NVA), clearly indicates that Halls Island is an extremely important fire refugia with an assemblage of species that is quite possibly unique<sup>1</sup> (Gregory J. Jordan Pers. Comm.) and certainly unsurpassed on the Tasmanian Central Plateau. There are, for example, numerous species with disjunct ranges on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Jordan GJ, et al. (2016) "Palaeoendemic plants provide evidence for persistence of open, well-watered vegetation since the Cretaceous". *Global Ecology and Biogeography* **25**, 127–140.

Halls Island with nearest known populations 5-20 kilometres away. For example, the Tasmanian endemics *Athrotaxis selaginoides*, *Persoonia gunnii*,

*Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* and *Eucalyptus subcrenulata* all have nearest neighbours ranging between 5 and 20kms away (Figure 1). The vegetation of the Halls Island has clearly remained undisturbed for many hundreds of years and possibly much longer while the surrounding onshore vegetation is starkly different being dominated by fire tolerant species. The unique flora of Halls Island is also highlighted by the comparatively large number of palaeoendemic species that can be found growing there. Palaeoendemic species are defined as being ancient, with geographically restricted distributions<sup>2</sup>. Tasmania is a worldwide hotspot of palaeoendemic conifers and angiosperms which are confined to the wettest and most fire protected locations in the western half of the island. Palaeoendemic species persisting on Halls Island include: Pherosphaera hookeriana, Athrotaxis cupressoides, Athrotaxis selaginoides, Diselma archeri, Bellendena montana, Tasmannia lanceolata, Diplarrena sp., Orites sp. and *Planocarpa* sp. Many of the palaeoendemic species listed above exhibit poor recovery post fire, and their persistence on Halls Island indicates the importance of this island as a long-term fire refugia. In addition, it is highly likely that Halls Island will contain unique genetic diversity that has been extirpated from much of the Tasmanian Central Plateau. Any development on the island should be avoided as the risks associated with increased visitation and fire are far too great to be ignored.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Mokany, K., et al (2017) "Past, present and future refugia for Tasmania's palaeoendemic flora". *Journal of Biogeography*, 44, 1537-1546.



**Figure 2**. NVA records for four species A. *Athrotaxis selaginoides*, B. *Eucalyptus subcrenulata*, C. *Persoonia gunnii* and D. *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* (Access date 16/04/2018). Halls Island is denoted by the solid black arrow and the nearest known record of each species by a bold asterix. The nearest known NVA record for each of these species is approximately: (A) 7kms for A. *selaginoides*-although the nearest significant population is likely to be at Lake Ball approx. 30kms away (B). *E. subcrenulata* approximately 9.3kms away near Lake Charles; (C) *Persoonia gunnii* 16.8kms away, near the Pine Valley- Overland Track junction and (D) *P. aspleniifolius* approx. 5.4kms away, with a record from an Island in Lake Nive, which is also a likely to be an important fire refugia.

#### (2) EPBC listed Sphagnum bog communities

The Flora and Fauna Assessment acknowledges the presence and high quality of the EPBCA listed *Sphagnum peatland* (endangered) on Halls Island. The report discusses the communities' significance in terms of the extent and condition. Section 2.1.1 of the Flora and Fauna habitat Assessment states:

"...The NCA and meets the definition for the 'alpine sphagnum bog and associated fens' community listed as endangered under the EPBCA. All the bogs on Hall's Island have thus been mapped as MSP because of the percentage cover of Sphagnum species, with most patches having well over the required 30% cover (up to 80% ground cover in some cases) and over 50cm depth of Sphagnum being evident in places (Plate 2)" *Fire* and the *construction of structures* are both listed as threatening processes<sup>3</sup> under the EPBC policy statement for this community. Page 16 of the Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens policy statement 3.16 clearly states under threats and impacts:

# "The biggest threats currently facing this community are fire and ongoing effects of climate change."

Furthermore;

#### The EPBC Act states that a person must not take action if:

- 1. The proposed actions will have a significant impact on the world heritage values of a declared World Heritage property
- 2. A person must not take an action that:

(a) has or will have a significant impact on a listed threatened ecological community included in the endangered category; or

(b) is likely to have a significant impact on a listed threatened ecological community included in the endangered category.

#### We argue that:

- (a) increased visitation to Halls Island coupled with the construction of infrastructure; has or will have a significant impact on the Sphagnum Peatland communities, a listed threatened ecological community, and
- (b) is likely to have a significant impact on a listed threatened ecological community (Sphagnum peatland) by increasing the risk of catastrophic fire events for example those associated with construction of infrastructure, and increased visitation numbers by for example cooking, smoking or the utilization of the dilapidated open fire that currently exists in the old hut currently on Halls Island.

Therefore, based on the likely impacts in the sphagnum peatland community, the proposal to build infrastructure and increase visitation to Halls Island must be abandoned or reconsidered at alternative sites outside of the WHA.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/b08acec6-6a27-4e71-8636-498719b253b4/files/alpine-sphagnum-bogs.pdf

#### (3) The proposal will increase the risk of fire in a crucial fire refugia for firesensitive palaeoendemic plants

Halls Island is a crucial fire refugia for the World Heritage Area. Its importance as a fire refugia is enhanced by: (1) its relatively large size, being one of the biggest islands in the central plateau and larger than any other known to harbour palaeoendemic species rich vegetation; (2) the island has maintained a palaeoendemic rich vegetation that in other parts of the central highlands has been particularly severely impacted by past fires<sup>4</sup>, for example, leading to the loss of extensive areas of Athrotaxis cupressoides rainforests<sup>5</sup>; and (3) its isolation from the 'mainland' which is likely to protect it from fires starting from other parts of the central plateau, a threat that will only increase into the future<sup>6</sup>. The rainforest vegetation of Halls Island is likely to be particularly vulnerable to fire because it is already at the margins of rainforest distribution in terms of rainfall (around 1000mm per year according to the North Barker report). Given this marginal rainfall for rainforest persistence, it is likely that the Halls island rainforest will be subject to years where summer months have less than 50mm of rainfall, which is a major risk factor for fires infiltrating into rainforest fires in Tasmania<sup>7</sup>. Any change in management of Halls Island that could increase the risk of fire must be reconsidered.

# (4) The Vulnerable Tasmanian palaeoendemic conifer species Pherosphaera hookeriana

The endemic conifer species *Pherosphaera hookeriana* is listed as Vulnerable under the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (Tasmania). The species is uncommon with a fragmented distribution in southern Tasmania and the central plateau near waterbodies and boggy areas that afford protection from fire. On Halls Island, the species has a continuous distribution around the southern shore as noted by the

<sup>5</sup> Holz, Andrés, et al. "Effects of high-severity fire drove the population collapse of the subalpine Tasmanian endemic conifer Athrotaxis cupressoides." *Global change biology* 21.1 (2015): 445-458
 <sup>6</sup> Grose M, Fox-Hughes P, Harris RB, Bindoff N (2014) Changes to the drivers of fireweather with a warming climate – a case study of southeast Tasmania. ClimaticChange, 124, 1–15.

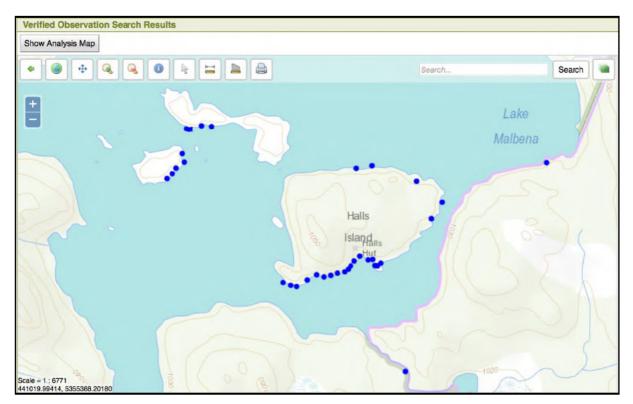
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Marris, E. (2016) Blazes threaten iconic trees: as Tasmanian climate warms, bushfires are encroaching on forest ecosystems that date back more than 180 million years. *Nature*, **530**, 137–139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Styger, J. K., and Jamie B. Kirkpatrick. "Less than 50 millimetres of rainfall in the previous month predicts fire in Tasmanian rainforest." *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*. Vol. 149. 2015.

North Barker Flora and Fauna Assessment. Regrettably, this survey fails to acknowledge the presence of *Pherosphaera hookeriana* around other lakeside margins where it is present, albeit at lower numbers. This is particularly evident when examining distribution data from the NVA (Figure 2). Given the relatively large population size, Halls Island and nearby smaller Islands are undoubtably a stronghold for *P. hookeriana* and important for its conservation. There are three major concerns of the impact of this proposal on the species:

- (1) Increased visitation inexorably increases the risk for catastrophic fire events which would have disastrous consequences for this species. *P. hookeriana* is known to be extremely sensitive to fire with little to no recovery post fire. The Tasmanian threatened species listing statement for this species states that fire events may cause "irreversible declines and fragmentation of subpopulations"<sup>8</sup>. Compounding this fact is that little to no sexual recruitment has been ever been observed for this species in the wild, and as such any threat to this species must be avoided.
- (2) Fishing by its nature requires access to the lakeside margins of Halls Island and there is a very real risk of *P. hookeriana* being trampled and irrevocably damaged by over enthusiastic fishers. It is not feasible for all visitors to the island to be monitored at all times to ensure that they keep to constructed boardwalks. There is ample evidence of well trampled paths around many of the nearby lakes that are less difficult to access, although fortunately do not have *P. hookeriana* growing on their margins. Thus, we believe that damage by trampling represents a very tangible risk to the population of *P. hookeriana* on Halls Island.
- (3) It is also worth considering the risk associated with an increase in foot traffic, such as the introduction of pathogens such as *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and the establishment of weeds on Halls Island. The introduction of *Phytophthora* to Halls Island would have an extremely detrimental effect on the flora.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Threatened Species Section (2009) Listing Statement for Pherosphaera hookeriana (drooping pine), Department of Primary Industries & Water, Tasmania.



**Figure 2**. Natural Values Atlas records for the Vulnerable Tasmanian palaeoendemic species *Pherosphaera hookeriana* at Lake Malbena and Halls Island. Access date 14/04/2018.

# (5) The proposal will not benefit the wide community and will decrease access to recreational users to Halls Island.

The re-zoning of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (WHA) is extraordinary and contrary to the requests of the World Heritage Committee. It is unprecedented in Tasmania that a part of the WHA has been re-zoned for a private business to gain a commercial benefit. In fact the proponent suggests that they will regulate access to Halls Island, effectively privatizing Halls Island:

(9.3) "Contact Wild Drake P/L by Email to book in a suitable time to visit. This date must be approved by Wild Drake P/L"

The privatisation of an island within the WHA is an outrageous proposition, and one that is without precedent and unacceptable based on the World Heritage Convention Criteria. In order for this project to proceed the Commonwealth must be satisfied that the area rezoned for commercial exploitation no longer encompasses the values for which it was originally managed and deemed World Heritage. As far as we can see

this is not the case, the values currently remain the same, therefore the rezoning should be rejected and the proposal abandoned or re-sited outside of the WHA.

#### Summary

There is no doubt that the unprecedented re-zoning and construction of infrastructure in this infrequently visited and remote part of the Tasmanian WHA will have a detrimental effect on the unique flora of Halls Island. Of greatest concern is the impact of fire linked to increased visitation and the construction of infrastructure on Halls Island including a network of boardwalks. Regardless of mitigation strategies proposed, the proposed development will increase the risk of Halls Island experiencing a catastrophic fire event and will also increase the risk of weed species establishing or pathogens such as root rot *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Taken together, these risks are too great to allow the commercial development of Halls Island and alternative sites for this development outside of the WHA should be strongly considered or the proposal abandoned altogether.

#### Expertise

SZZ

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject:

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EPBC Referrals Monday, 23 July 2018 10:29 AM s22 EPBC Referrals FW: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas EPBC Number 2018/8177 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: s22 Sent: Saturday, 14 July 2018 10:43 AM To: EPBC Referrals Subject: WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas EPBC Number 2018/8177

To whom it may concern regarding the WILD DRAKE PTY LTD / Tourism and Recreation / Halls Island/Tasmania/Halls Island Standing Camp, Lake Malbena, Tas proposal EPBC Number 2018/8177,

The mere fact that someone has proposed use helicopters within the Western Lakes fishery and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, along with the application been considered and permission possibly granted for that proposal, is horrifying. In a sense I do not really have great opposition for a properly established, low impact standing wilderness camp being setup in a private leasehold area. But like the majority of people who frequent the area regularly on foot in pursuit of peace and quiet and trout on fly, I do strongly oppose the use of helicopters within the Western Lakes fishery and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

My main problem with the current proposal is that it flies in the face of the community-endorsed management plan. The fact that two central tenants of that plan – the ones dealing with helicopter access and wilderness zoning – have been overridden by the State Government in order to hasten processing threatens to further undermine the public's faith in democratic processes, and potentially places the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area at existential risk. The 'additional information' provided by the developer at the <a href="http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/invitations/website">http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/invitations/</a> website merely exacerbates my concerns.

The additional information shows the helicopter route tracking directly over the best and most popular fishing waters in the untracked parts of the Western Lakes' core wilderness, namely Lakes Ina, Nive, Lenone and Ingrid. I cannot think of a route which would be worse for the amenity of current users, or of likely future users.

I am also alarmed that the helipad is not on the leasehold, but some distance away on public land, further exacerbating the impact of helicopters on existing users and on wilderness values. (I should point out that the additional pdf files provided by the developer contradict each other in respect to the site of the helipad. Part1.pdf (1.85 MB) locates the site on the mainland while proposedhelicopterroute.pdf (1.08 MB) – under the heading 'Searches of endpoints' – locates the site on the leased island. Undoubtedly, this will have caused confusion for some respondents.)

This proposal should be rejected in the interests of all users of and for the protection of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Cheers and kind regards,

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