



Three Capes Track:

Social Impacts and Values

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Parks and Wildlife Service
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study purpose and approach

This report to the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) summarises stakeholder and community views on social impacts and values related to the Three Capes Track (3CT) proposal on the Tasman Peninsula. The 3CT is a proposed iconic multi-day bush walk with a boat connection, situated mainly in the Tasman National Park. It is proposed as a catalyst to stimulate the local tourism economy by offering additional tourism opportunities that take advantage of the natural environment on the Tasman Peninsula while also contributing to tourism in Tasmania.

A range of views have been expressed by stakeholders, Park user groups, the local community and the wider Tasmanian community about the proposal, accompanied by controversy about various aspects of the proposal.

The brief for this report was to summarise stakeholder and community views utilising existing documentation provided by the PWS and to conduct interviews with representatives of key stakeholder groups. The existing documentation provided for the study consisted of:

- ≈ 247 representations made to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife in relation to proposed amendments to the Tasman National Park and Reserves Management Plan in 2008 and summarised by the Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC) inquiry into the amendments (RPDC, 2009);
- ≈ 60 letters sent to the Tasmanian Government (mainly the relevant Minister) and the PWS since the proposal was mooted in 2006 until May 2011;
- ≈ the report and hearings conducted by the Legislative Council Select Committee on Tourism in Tasmania (Parliament of Tasmania, 2010);
- ≈ a recent survey of Tasman Municipality residents and landholders on the social impacts of tourism in the area (AMR, 2011).

The interview segment of the study was conducted by telephone and email using a questionnaire on views and values related to the area of the 3CT and its potential impacts. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was emailed to stakeholder representatives (nominated by PWS) to consider in advance, and representatives were given the choice of providing responses by email or in a telephone interview. The stakeholder groups and organisations which were canvassed and which provided responses were:

- ≈ Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania;

- ≈ Tasman Council – the local government council for the Tasman Municipality, which includes the Tasman Peninsula;
- ≈ Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHSMA) – the management authority for the major tourism attraction on the Tasman Peninsula, also a significant employer for the area;
- ≈ Port Arthur and Tasman Tourism Association (PATTA) – body representing tourism operators and interests in the Tasman region;
- ≈ Tasman Residents and Rate Payers Association Inc – a local residents’ association, which provided responses from 4 members;
- ≈ Bushwalking Tasmania – a peak body representing 9 bushwalking clubs in Tasmania - Hobart Walking Club (about 800 members¹), Pandani Bushwalking Club (about 350 members), Launceston Ramblers Club (about 140 members), Launceston Walking Club (about 200 members), North-West Walking Club (about 200 members), Blandfordia Alpine Club, Circular Head Walking Club, Deloraine Walking Club (about 65 members) and Eastern Shore Ramblers;
- ≈ Tasmanian National Parks Association (TNPA) – a not-for-profit, non-government association which aims to conserve and protect Tasmania’s national parks and reserves;
- ≈ Environment Tasmania – a peak body representing over 20 Tasmanian environment groups and over 5000 people.

A response to the questionnaire was not received from the Tasman Chamber of Commerce nor were they available to talk to.

The study was not intended to ascertain the views and values of all stakeholder groups and the local community.

The representations on the Management Plan amendments and letters to the Government and PWS on the proposal are predominantly from groups and individuals who express concerns about the 3CT concept or elements of the proposal. These letters and submissions often describe the concerns held about the 3CT and the writers’ and groups’ attachments to the area (through which the track would pass) articulately and in detail.

There is less descriptive material associated with documentation from organisations and individuals expressing support for the 3CT concept. This documentation tends to emphasise the economic development aspects of the proposal and provide little information on social impacts, values and attachment to the area. A similar result was obtained in the interviews.

¹ Approximate member numbers are taken from club and organisation websites (where provided).

Bearing in mind the nature of the source material, this study is organised as follows.

- ≈ *Part 2* describes the views expressed on the social impacts of the 3CT proposal to the local community, stakeholders and the State. This includes perceptions on the economic and social benefits potentially flowing from the 3CT and its potential impacts on stakeholders, Park users and the local community.
- ≈ *Part 3*, to the extent possible, describes the social values expressed in relation to the area of the 3CT and the Tasman Peninsula generally. 'Social values' are defined broadly as the contemporary meanings or importance which members of the community or particular groups collectively attach to an area.

1.2 Background Context

1.2.1 The Three Capes Track Proposal

The 3CT concept has undergone some changes and development from when it was first mooted. At the time of writing, the 3CT proposal is for a 6 day/5 night combined walking and boat journey for independent walkers and a 5 day/4 night combined walking and boat journey for commercial walkers along the coast of the Tasman Peninsula featuring Capes Raoul, Pillar and Hauy. The walk is proposed to commence near White Beach (south of Nubeena) for independent walkers and at the existing Cape Raoul car park for commercial walkers and to finish at Fortescue Bay. A boat connection would occur from Safety Cove to Denmans Cove. The walk would take place predominantly within the Tasman National Park.

The walk would follow a mixture of upgraded existing tracks and new tracks. It is proposed that overnight accommodation would be provided in huts for both independent and commercial walkers and that no camping would be permitted at the hut sites. PWS intend to provide dedicated camping on Cape Pillar and potentially around Mt Fortescue for tent-based walkers. Public huts would be provided for independent walkers and private huts for commercially guided parties, similar to the arrangements for the Overland Track in Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park. Similar walker management to the Overland Track is proposed, with booking fees and a daily walker number limit of up to 60 walkers departing per day (PWS, 2011). An annual total of 10,000 overnight walkers is envisaged for the walk when it is fully operational. It is proposed that day walking and the multi-day trips currently undertaken in the area (without additional fees other than the normal Parks entry fee) would still occur on the 3CT.

The objective of the 3CT is to attract additional visitors to Tasmania and the Tasman Peninsula. The walk is envisaged as a catalyst that would stimulate

investment in tourism on the Tasman Peninsula, transform the area from a predominantly day-visitor destination, and create flow-on benefits to the local community and local tourism operators.

Funding for track development and infrastructure construction is proposed to be provided by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments (\$12.8 million and \$12.5 million respectively) and up to \$8 million of private investment (PWS, 2011) for provision of land-based transport, water-based transport and the huts required for the commercial sector.

The planning and approvals processes for the 3CT has included:

- ≈ a 2007 feasibility study (DTAE, 2007);
- ≈ economic impact analyses of the track (Syneca Consulting, 2008) and of additional day walkers (KPMG, 2010) – see section 1.2.2;
- ≈ amendments to the Tasman National Park and Reserves Management Plan to enable the 3CT to be built and an associated review by the Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC) of representations made on the 2008 Management Plan amendment proposals draft (RPDC, 2009).

At the time of writing, various studies on ecological values, cultural heritage values, geoheritage values, land capability, emergency evacuation and response, and fire management planning are being conducted. A Development Plan and Environmental Management Plan is being prepared for the new track and facilities in advance of PWS submitting a Reserve Activity Assessment seeking State approval for the proposal. Assessment of the project under the national *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* is also envisaged with a referral likely to be submitted in late 2011 (PWS, 2011).

1.2.2 The Tasman Municipality

The Tasman Municipality, which covers the Tasman and Forestier Peninsulas, has a small population of about 2,300 residents. It also has a relatively high number of holiday shacks and experiences population increases during holiday periods, especially in summer.

The largest employers are the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector; the accommodation and food sector; and the arts and recreation services sector (reflecting employment at the Port Arthur Historic Site). There is a relatively high unemployment rate in the region, compared to other Tasmanian regional areas.

According to the *Tasman Tourism Development Strategy 2011–2016*, the region receives about 440,500 holiday visitors a year. These are concentrated at the Port Arthur Historic Site and only about 37% of visitors stay overnight (Sarah Lebski & Associates et al, 2011). The Tasman region operates primarily as a day

visit destination and currently has a limited range of accommodation and opportunities for visitor expenditure beyond Port Arthur Historic Site and its environs (Syneca Consulting, 2008).

Encouraging higher tourism yield, through greater visitor expenditure and overnight stays, has been adopted by the Tasman Council and other local stakeholders as a key goal for boosting the local economy.

1.2.3 Projected economic benefits of the Three Capes Track

An analysis of the economic impact of 3CT overnight walking (but not including day walking on the track) was conducted by Syneca Consulting for the PWS (Syneca Consulting, 2008). Assuming 10,000 overnight walkers a year on the 3CT (8,200 independent walkers and 1,800 walkers in commercial groups), that analysis estimated the impact of 3CT overnight walking as:

- ≈ at the State level, the 3CT would make an annual contribution of \$17,122,175 to gross state product and 334.2 jobs;
- ≈ at the regional level (the area of the Tasman Municipality), the 3CT would contribute \$2,459,573 to regional gross product and 70.4 jobs. The study notes that slightly more than half of the gains in both regional gross product and employment would occur as a result of PWS spending on operation of the track (Syneca Consulting, 2008, p. 30).

A further economic impact study of potential additional visitors attracted to the region to experience parts of the 3CT as day or part-day walks was conducted by KPMG for the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania (KPMG, 2010). The KPMG study modelled two scenarios – a conservative scenario, assuming 17.11% growth in visitation to 2017 and a 30:70 split between new and substitute² visits; and an optimistic scenario, assuming 26.47% growth in visitation to 2017 and a 40:60 split between new and substitute visits. The additional economic impact of day visitors for the years 2010 to 2017 (in total) was estimated to be:

- ≈ at the State level, a gross state product contribution of \$44.07 million and 741 jobs (conservative scenario) or \$92.73 million and 1,563 jobs (optimistic scenario);
- ≈ at the regional level, a gross state product contribution of \$9.93 million and 203 jobs (conservative scenario) or \$15.86 million and 323 jobs (optimistic scenario).

² Substitute visits are where visitors visit the Tasman Peninsula instead of another Tasmanian destination, thus reducing their impact on the economy of other regions.

2. VIEWS ON THREE CAPES TRACK SOCIAL IMPACTS

This part of the report summarises the views that have been expressed by stakeholders, Park users and the community about the potential impacts the 3CT may have on social and economic wellbeing and way of life (whether for themselves, their group, the local community or the wider Tasmanian community). The aim is to summarise the main themes and ideas put forward in letters, submissions and the stakeholder questionnaire.

2.1 Tourism and the local economy

Among the letters, submissions and responses considered in this study, there is widespread support for tourism developments based on the Tasman region's natural and cultural features as ways to improve the sustainability of the local economy and economic wellbeing of residents. There is also support for tourism as a contribution to the Tasmanian economy.

This view is either stated or implied by a large number of stakeholders and groups, regardless of their views about the 3CT. What they differ on is whether the 3CT proposal (or the proposal at the time submissions were made or letters written) will have a significant impact on the local economy or is the best way to bring tourism benefits to Tasmania. For example, the TNPA indicated recently:

The TNPA supports appropriate tourism based projects in Tasmania and supports the regional benefits that will flow from such projects. However, the TNPA argues strongly that these same benefits can be achieved by placement of such projects outside the boundaries of Tasmania's National Parks. The development of very successful tourist nodes outside National Parks at Strahan, Cradle Valley and Coles Bay, to name only three, validates this argument. (Letter to Tasman Council, 5 July 2010 – provided to this study by the TNPA as part of that organisation's response to the 3CT questionnaire)

2.1.1 Support for the 3CT concept

The Tasman Council and the main tourism-related organisations associated with the area (the PATTA, the PAHSMA, the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania) support the 3CT. They are confident that it will act as a stimulus to local tourism and service operators and additional investment in the area, and that overnight walkers and additional day walkers attracted to an iconic trail will stay and spend in the region.

This view was also stated by several local tourism and business operators in the August 2010 hearings of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Tourism in Tasmania. PATTA also noted in its submission on the Management Plan

amendments that its members (tourism and small business operators) supported the 3CT proposal.

Supporters of the proposal have made suggestions as to how the 3CT may better benefit the local community, including:

- ≈ opportunities for employment of local young people - mentioned by Tasman Council in correspondence to the Minister in 2008 in support of a PWS proposal for a traineeship program related to 3CT employment;
- ≈ opportunities for the local tourism industry and community to provide support to 3CT experiences - PATTA, submission to Management Plan amendment process (RPDC, 2009);
- ≈ road upgrades to cope with additional visitation to the areas;
- ≈ a locals' discount or free ticket to the track.

Some people have commented that an effort will need to be made to ensure that benefits flow to Tasmania and the local community from the 3CT – eg. through use of local operators, guides and provisioning.

2.1.2 Alternatives to the 3CT concept

Other groups and individuals express doubt that the 3CT as proposed would benefit local tourism operators and the local community. These include some local residents, some local accommodation operators, people with a bushwalking interest, environmentalists, and the TNPA.

A major reason for these doubts is the proposed on-track hut accommodation, particularly its large capacity. The on-track huts are perceived as limiting the potential of the walk to stimulate use of local off-park accommodation and services by additional walkers coming to the area. It is variously argued that:

- ≈ walkers will spend most of their time on the track and leave at the end of the walk with little expenditure on local services;
- ≈ the length of the proposed walk is a disincentive for additional overnight stays (eg. for people taking a week's holiday);
- ≈ proximity to Hobart means that commercial 3CT walking tours and other out-of-State visitors are likely to leave from and return to Hobart.

In submissions on the Management Plan amendments and in letters, support has been expressed by some local residents and local tourism and accommodation operators for a 3CT model that is directly based on use of local off-track accommodation and services. Rather than primarily utilising on-track accommodation, it is envisaged that the 3CT (or an alternative walk) could be conducted as a series of day walks, with walkers staying in off-park accommodation and being transported to trailheads each day. This approach is

also supported (in some form, either on the 3CT route or on an alternative walk route) by some other groups, including the TNPA. Several letters and submissions refer to the successful operation of this model in other walking locations throughout the world. This includes mention of the Great Ocean Walk in Victoria, where well-organised off-track walker accommodation and transport arrangements have been developed.

The TNPA and some other groups and correspondents propose an alternative route for an overnight walk in the region. This would be a hut-free 3 or 4 day walk utilising existing tracks and camping infrastructure on the existing Tasman Coastal Track route (a Two Capes Walk from Waterfall Bay to Capes Hauy and Pillar). It is also suggested that a variety of tourism experiences and improved local economic benefits could flow from:

- ≈ promotion of the area as a day walking destination, accompanied by maintenance and upgrading of the existing track network (a cheaper option than the 3CT);
- ≈ development and promotion of integrated tourism opportunities (eg. packages incorporating accommodation, boat cruises, sea-kayaking, fishing, bird watching, Port Arthur).

The TNPA argues that the benefits to the local area from additional day walking may have been misrepresented through quoting of the 7-year additional expenditure figures in the 2010 KPMG report as annual figures (see section 1.2.2 above). In addition, the TNPA disputes the validity of the analysis of additional day walking in that report, arguing that the assumptions of increases in day walking of 3 to 5% due to the 3CT have not been substantiated (TNPA, letter to Tasman Council, 5 July 2010, provided to this study by the TNPA).

2.2 Views of the Tasman community

From the information available to this study, the current views within the local Tasman community about the 3CT concept and its potential social impacts are unclear.

2.2.1 Submissions to 2008 Management Plan amendments

Representations on the 2008 Management Plan amendments indicate that, at that time, there was concern within the Tasman Municipality about the social and economic impacts of the 3CT.

Of the representations made on the Management Plan amendments, 60 of the 247 representations have been identified as coming from people with an address in the Tasman Municipality³. Some of these local respondents identified

³ This exercise was based on the summary in the RPDC report. The total number of locally based respondents may be more, as not all the summaries of representations included a location.

themselves variously as local residents, operators of tourism businesses, representatives of local community groups, as well as the Tasman Council and the PAHSMA.

Of these 60 local respondents, the majority either expressed opposition to the 3CT concept as a whole or to aspects of the concept. Some local respondents (including the Council and the PAHSMA) expressed outright support for the 3CT. Another 6 local respondents did not express a view on the 3CT, raising other issues related to the proposed Management Plan amendments. It is not known how representative these views were of opinions held within the local community in general.

The major concerns about the 3CT concept raised by local community respondents related to:

- ≈ the perceived inappropriateness of the development proposal (its commercial nature, large scale, inclusion of commercial aspects) in a national park managed for the benefit of the public;
- ≈ concern at negative impacts on the Park's natural values and conservation (eg. flora, fauna, potential *Phytophthora* spread);
- ≈ a preference for upgrading and promotion of the existing tracks in the area as a way to provide improved tourism opportunities and benefits to the local economy. Some suggested development of the existing and shorter Tasman Coastal Track as a less expensive and more viable long walk option;
- ≈ concern that the on-track hut accommodation model would not benefit local accommodation and service providers, and support for a walk utilising off-track local accommodation.

Other issues raised by local respondents included:

- ≈ potential for access for local and Tasmanian walkers to be limited by the cost and operational arrangements for the 3CT;
- ≈ the high cost of the 3CT proposal and concern at use of public (taxpayers') funds for its development;
- ≈ intrusiveness and environmental impacts of helicopter use (by a small number);
- ≈ potential traffic and parking impacts (by a small number).

2.2.2 Current local views on 3CT concept

Following the 2010 KPMG study of the economic impacts of additional day walkers on the 3CT and meetings between PWS and local residents, it has been suggested by some stakeholders, based on their knowledge of the community

(Tasman Council, PAHSMA, PATTA), that local concerns about the project are abating and that most local people support the 3CT on economic grounds. In their responses to the questionnaire for this study, these organisations expressed satisfaction with the consultation process on the 3CT.

In contrast, in responses to the questionnaire for this study, the TNPA and Peninsula Environment Network (a local environment group) consider that local concerns still exist. The TNPA suggests that the large amount of the funds allocated for track development (\$33 million) may be persuading some local people of the long term benefit of the 3CT proposal.

Four members of the Tasman Residents and Rate Payers Association who provided responses to the questionnaire consider that there is still divisiveness and scepticism within the local community about the local benefits that might accrue from the 3CT, as well as concern about impacts on local use of the Park and road and traffic impacts.

Tourism groups, on the other hand, are confident that there is strong support for the project in the community and that only a small number of environmental groups are opposed to the track.

The TNPA suggests that a community based reference group (as in the case of the Tarkine) should be in place to provide advice and input to the government on any large tourism proposal for the Tasman National Park. The PWS sent out invitations in July 2001 to key stakeholders to nominate members for such a group.

2.2.3 Community attitudes to tourism

A survey of Tasman Municipality residents and landholders was conducted in 2011 as part of a series of surveys on the perceived social impacts of tourism in a number of Tasmanian communities (Richmond, Dorset, Bruny Island, Flinders Island, King Island, Break O' Day and Kentish) (AMR, 2011).

The Tasman survey attracted 271 responses (or a 24% response rate) to a questionnaire mailed to approximately 1925 households. Respondents were equally divided among male and female and covered a range of ages, education and periods of residence. The majority of respondents were aged over 35 and over half had education beyond the secondary level. Nearly half (48%) owned their homes in the Tasman, 3% rented and 38% were holiday house owners. Some respondents resided outside of Tasmania (38%).

The majority of Tasman Municipality respondents considered that tourism will have a slight to moderately positive impact on their way of life (eg. economic stimulus, more facilities, things to do, shopping, dining and recreation), although a minority (less than 30% on most issues) had concerns about potential negative impacts such as environmental damage, overcrowding, traffic problems and delinquent behaviour.

The majority of respondents to the survey (56%) supported further tourism developments in the Tasman, while 30% supported tourism growth, but in a different (unspecified) direction.

The study report commented that, compared with other regions surveyed (especially the similar communities of Bruny Island and Flinders Island), Tasman community respondents demonstrate a much higher polarisation of views towards the social impacts of tourism. Tasman respondents were far more positive about the beneficial aspects of tourism, but a minority of respondents also demonstrated a much stronger negative outlook than in other regions.

Within the Tasman community, the survey found some differences between respondents who were permanent Tasman residents and shack owners. The shack owners tended to have more negative views on the impact of tourism on their personal quality of life than permanent residents. This is possibly related to their focus on the area as a holiday escape and concerns about its ongoing tranquillity. Nevertheless, there was greater agreement among permanent residents and shack owners on positive economic and social impacts of tourism on the Tasman community in general (eg. employment, facilities and services, entertainment, economic stimulus).

A limited number of interviews with local people conducted by the survey consultants supported the project but indicated a need to ensure that tourism be managed properly. Some issues mentioned were:

- ≈ little of no dispersal of tourists throughout the region and a spread of benefits (eg. in relation to Nubeena);
- ≈ inadequate and congested roads;
- ≈ lack of infrastructure and services for tourists.

2.3 Views of bushwalking groups

Based on anecdotal evidence, it is understood the majority of bushwalking club members support the general concept of an extended walk in the Tasman National Park, subject to continuation of their traditional access and day and overnight bushwalking (Interview with Bushwalking Tasmania, 28 June 2011). Some individual members may also be concerned at potential environmental impacts and the impacts of increased walker numbers on walking experiences, while a variety of views are held on hut accommodation.

There is a strong attachment to the Tasman Peninsula and nearby areas among Tasmanian bushwalkers, for whom the area is a significant bushwalking destination. Some bushwalkers have also been involved in track construction and maintenance in the area (described in sections 3.2 and 3.3 in more detail).

Currently, the main concern of the bushwalking clubs and the peak group, Bushwalking Tasmania, centres around the impact of the 3CT on their traditional

bushwalking access and use of the area. They wish to retain the freedom to walk and camp in the area as they currently do without restrictions. There is particular concern at the payment of fees; the proposed restriction of camping on walks to Cape Pillar to one campsite; and suggestions that Tasmanian bushwalkers could avoid track fees by walking the 3CT in winter.

The formal policy of Tasmanian bushwalking clubs in relation to the 3CT and the Tasman National Park, unanimously passed by members is:

- ≈ 'maintain all year around access to all currently used areas (walks, lunch spots, campsites);
- ≈ no added costs([after the generic Park Entry Fee; some do not want any fees);
- ≈ day to three day walking and camping to continue where it currently occurs;
- ≈ starts of walks maintained where they are or only mutually agreed changes;
- ≈ current (all) directions of walks maintained for locals (on traditional walks);
- ≈ no number limits or bookings for Tasmanians;
- ≈ formal recognition of input (eg an obvious plaque stating Hobart Walking Club established and maintained the walking tracks and thanking it).' (Source: Bushwalking Tasmania)

The Hobart Walking Club and Bushwalking Tasmania consider that there has been insufficient inclusion of bushwalking clubs and recognition of their connection to the Tasman area in the 3CT consultation and planning process.

2.4 Environmental perspectives

This section describes attitudes to the 3CT concept which generally align with the environmental movement's views of the purpose and use of national parks and protected areas. In summary, this is the view that national parks are to be managed in the public interest for protection of their natural and cultural values, maintenance of ecological integrity and biodiversity, and sustainable public uses which have a minimum impact on values. Allied to this are a range of ethical viewpoints related to public rights of access to public land, concerns about commercial use of public assets, and the use of planning, assessment and legislative processes for accountable decision making on environmental protection.

A large number of submissions on the 2008 Management Plan amendments and letters to the Tasmanian Government include concerns about the 3CT concept

that come under the 'environmental' umbrella. These concerns are raised by environmental groups (both State-wide groups such as the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Environment Tasmania and the TNPA, and those from the local area and other regions), persons explicitly identifying themselves as 'environmentalists' and other individuals. The majority of those with environmental concerns about the 3CT either oppose the development of the track or have concerns about aspects of the proposed development. An idea of the scope of social issues raised can be seen from the RPDC's summary of submissions, which included (as quoted in RPDC, 2009):

- ≈ about 190 representations raising issues about the appropriateness of the large scale of the development, particularly in a national park;
- ≈ over 140 representations concerned that commercial development is inappropriate in a national park, including perceived conflicts with conservation values and experience of natural areas;
- ≈ the perception in many submissions that government funds should not be used in support of private enterprise, but should be directed towards general reserve management;
- ≈ 47 respondents who considered that the environmental impact assessment of the 3CT should have occurred before amendment of the reserve Management Plan;
- ≈ many representations raising concerns about impacts on the natural values of the area, including over 70 representations expressing concern at a loss of wildness, natural aesthetic and experience of solitude and a sense of isolation;
- ≈ about 90 respondents who believed public funds would be better directed towards general reserve management and facility improvement.

In response to the questionnaire for this study, TNPA and Environment Tasmania indicated continuing concerns about the 3CT concept, which they consider will degrade the social, environmental and economic values of the current area of the track. Responses were received from the following Environment Tasmania member groups – TNPA, Peninsula Environment Network, Nature Photographers Tasmania, Spirit of Bruny, North East Bioregional Network, Ocean Planet and one individual. The key social concerns raised (most comprehensively expressed by the TNPA) are:

- ≈ national parks are created and managed to allow visitors to enjoy the values incorporated within them, but protection of values is the primary objective of management;
- ≈ the 3CT as currently proposed, including the large scale of the associated infrastructure, would diminish the natural values of the Tasman National

Park and also the social values derived from this – ie. quiet enjoyment of wild landscape, solitude;

- ≈ private huts infrastructure is effectively alienation of part of a public national park for exclusive private use – ‘... the whole park should be managed for its incorporated values and be equally accessible to all’;
- ≈ the 3CT is likely to provide little benefit to the local community. Alternatives are proposed for improvement of existing tracks, facilities and experiences within the Tasman National Park and use of local off-park accommodation (as described in section 2.1.2).

The TNPA has ongoing concerns about the inclusion of environmental interests and the local community in development of the 3CT concept. As indicated in section 2.2.2 above, the TNPA considers that a community based reference group (as in the case of the Tarkine) should have been created to provide advice and input to the government on any large tourism proposal for the Tasman National Park but as stated earlier PWS are in the process of forming such a group now.

3. SOCIAL VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE THREE CAPES TRACK PROPOSAL

In this section, the social values related to the area of the 3CT proposal are explored.

'Social values' are defined broadly as the contemporary meanings or importance which members of the community or particular groups attach to a place. As defined by one of the original Australian researchers in this field, social values are '... about collective attachment to places that embody meanings important to a community. These places are usually community owned or publicly accessible or in some other way 'appropriated' into people's daily lives' (Johnston, 1992). Social values may include:

- ≈ community, group or family attachments to place and associated traditions (eg. in the way they use the place);
- ≈ contribution to a community or group sense of place or identity;
- ≈ appreciation and inspiration (eg. aesthetic qualities, natural qualities);
- ≈ associations with events;
- ≈ beliefs about how such places should be accessed, managed and protected.

From the sources provided for this study, several social values themes have been identified:

- ≈ appreciation of natural qualities and experiences;
- ≈ valuing of the track system;
- ≈ bushwalking attachment and traditions; and
- ≈ equitable use of the public estate.

These values are described below.

On the other hand, information on the social values held within the local Tasman community is incomplete. Local people who made representations on the 2008 Management Plan amendments or wrote letters to the government on the issues describe some of their connections to the Tasman National Park. However, information is lacking on the range of other values and connections (eg. family connections, traditional use, contribution to quality of life) held by other groups in the community about the area of the proposed track, including those who support the 3CT concept.

3.1 Appreciation of natural qualities and experiences

The beauty and spectacular scenery of Tasman National Park and the Tasman Peninsula appears to an important aspect of living in the Tasman region and to be regarded as an asset.

The Tasman Council, for instance, stated that:

We are proud of our unique and spectacular coastal scenery and believe the Three Capes Track will be a major drawcard for visitors in the future.
(Tasman Council, letter to Tasmanian Premier, 16 October 2008)

People interviewed as part of the recent AMR survey referred to the Tasman as 'the most beautiful place on earth' and referred to 'the wild natural beauty and rural atmosphere' as tourism drawcards (AMR, 2011). A member of the Tasman Residents and Ratepayers Association indicated that 'we value the tranquillity and natural beauty of the area' (response to study questionnaire).

The information available for the study does not indicate the extent to which these natural values of the area are perceived within the Tasman community as contributing to quality of life and well-being.

Many representations on the 2008 Management Plan and letters to the government on the 3CT refer to their valuing of the natural qualities of the area, including the 'wilderness' or wild qualities of the landscape (referring to its relatively unmodified state) and its exceptional scenery. Many people demonstrate a technical knowledge and appreciation of the area's natural attributes and landscape (eg. threatened species, vegetation and geo-heritage) and its land use history.

The experience of these natural qualities is also valued. For many people, this is a low key experience that provides opportunities for people to enjoy the area, experience a sense of inspiration and well-being, peace and solitude without the intrusions of modern life (eg intrusive structures, noise).

The accessibility of the area is well appreciated, as it is perceived as providing visitors with wild and spectacular experiences on relatively short walks. Some people are also concerned at the vulnerability of the Park's natural qualities (and the associated visitor experiences) due to its configuration as a narrow area between the sea and forestry and rural lands. This concern is mainly for the western side of the Park.

Nature Photographers Tasmania (NPT) sum up the meaning of the area to them as follows.

Tasman National Park is one of the gems in the Australian national park system; it represents a largely unmodified coastal wildland. NPT members are frequent visitors to the area, which is a unique and accessible landscape of considerable photographic interest. The presence

of 'villages' of modern buildings serviced by helicopters would run counter to the experience that can otherwise be had in this intact coastal wildland. NPT values the park for its wildness – few areas of such spectacular coastline remain unaltered in temperate Australia; we should be safeguarding those special attributes, not promoting developments that are inimical to the values we have come to expect from our national park system. (NPT, response to questionnaire)

Attachment to the Tasman National Park itself among some members of the local community and others also derives from the campaign to protect the natural values of the area through establishment of a national park. This campaign is still in recent memory, as the Tasman National Park was gazetted recently, in 1999. Concern that the 3CT concept may erode the values that were so recently protected is expressed by some local residents:

The Tasman National Park exists because of dedicated effort from people who care passionately about the loss & exploitation of remaining wilderness areas. It took hard work & lobbying over ten years to achieve. (Submission on 2008 Management Plan amendments);

The Tasman National Park was declared in 1999 after a lengthy campaign by Peter and Shirley Storey and others. The establishment of the Park was greeted with a sense of relief by those involved. It was assumed that the land inside the Park boundary would now be protected from 'development'. Fourteen years later, those of us who care about such things retain this opinion; that the reason why National Parks exist is to protect and safeguard the natural environment and allow self reliant recreation. (Letter, November 2010)

3.2 Valuing of the track system

The tracks within the Tasman National Park are themselves valued as a way to gain access to an area where access would otherwise be difficult due to thick vegetation and rocky and rugged terrain. This value is apparent in the numerous representations to the 2008 Management Plan amendments calling for maintenance and upgrading of the existing track system.

Many bushwalkers (both local and from elsewhere in the State) have a strong personal attachment to the track network linked to the voluntary involvement of members of the Hobart Walking Club and some local residents in track construction and (until recently) track maintenance. Bushwalking club members, especially those previously involved in the track work, consider they have a stake in the protection of the national park and that they (or their club) have contributed to management of the Park and public use.

As well as providing access, the tracks are widely regarded as assets for appropriate tourism development in the local area. This is seen in the numerous

representations calling for alternatives to the 3CT based on upgrading and promotion of the existing track network.

3.3 Bushwalking attachment and traditions

The Tasman National Park (and the Tasman Peninsula) is a highly valued and well-established bushwalking destination for Tasmanian bushwalkers, considered to be one of the State's traditional bushwalking destinations. It is valued particularly as an accessible day walking destination that provides experiences of a unique landscape, but also for overnight walking opportunities, such as to Cape Pillar and the Tasman Coastal Trail.

Walks on the Tasman Peninsula have long been on the agenda of the Hobart Walking Club (which was formed in 1929 and has about 800 members) and other Tasmanian clubs regularly visit the area. It is considered an attractive summer bushwalking destination (due to its mild conditions) and is also valued as a winter bushwalking area when weather conditions prevent walking at high altitudes (Interview with Bushwalking Tasmania).

As well as recreational bushwalking, the area is used by schools for outdoor education and by the Hobart Walking Club to train new members in bushwalking skills (Interview with Bushwalking Tasmania).

Many Tasmanian bushwalkers not only value access to the Tasman bushwalks, but also the traditional style of bushwalking which is a self-reliant, low key experience where walkers have the freedom to access and walk within areas without the need to pay or book. They are concerned that this traditional free access will be affected by the 3CT proposals – ie. the proposed prohibition of unrestricted camping on the 3CT, the proposed fee and booking system, the one way walking system, and restrictions on camping on the Cape Pillar walk to one group campsite. For example, the Deloraine Walking Club stated in a letter to the Minister in 2007:

Developments of this type continue to erode the rights of the Tasmanian bushwalker. Once again an area we have traditionally walked in will be overdeveloped and overregulated.

Other Australian walkers also value this aspect of bushwalking in Tasmania. For instance, one interstate bushwalker, in a submission on the 2008 Management Plan amendments, wrote:

Remember that this is TASMANIA – not New Zealand or the Swiss Alps – unique because of its undeveloped nature. It is one of last places in the world to have walks without too much man made intervention along them – we should fight hard to keep this charm.

As indicated in section 3.2 above, bushwalking clubs also feel a connection to the Tasman National Park derived from the involvement of bushwalkers in track construction and maintenance. Bushwalkers, particularly those involved in

voluntary track works, are opposed to restrictions on use of facilities they helped to develop. As stated by one bushwalker in 2007:

This is a sensitive point to me personally, having been part of those track development teams of times past. I would resent being restricted on things I had helped build and had lost the right to use.

3.4 Equitable use of the public estate

The valuing of national parks as part of the public estate protected for current and future generations is expressed in numerous submissions and letters on the 3CT - including by local residents and local tourists operators, environmentalists and environmental organisations, bushwalkers (local, Tasmanian and interstate) and others. Examples of this concept expressed in submissions to the 2008 Management Plan amendments include:

We are custodians of National Parks in our lifetime for future generations.;

... National Parks - they are to protect and preserve areas of special significance for all generations to enjoy;

National Parks are for nature and for the people for all time.

This concept of national parks has the corollary, also widely expressed in letters and submissions on the 3CT, that national parks should be managed in the public interest in a way which is equitable for all. This includes views that:

- there should be equitable access for the public to national parks;
- exclusive developments and policies (eg. favouring a perceived elite) are inappropriate;
- commercial developments for private profit should not occur within national parks – they are more appropriate outside;
- public money should be used accountably and responsibly to manage a national park for the benefit of all users and the protection of the area – its use for infrastructure or other actions which benefit private enterprise or exclusive interests is questioned.

The above concepts about appropriate public interest uses and management of national parks underlie many of the concerns expressed about the appropriateness of, and potential impacts of, the 3CT.

4. CONCLUSIONS

There is wide support within the local Tasman community and other stakeholder groups for tourism developments on the Tasman Peninsula which benefit the local community and economy. However, views on whether this will be achieved by the 3CT, as currently proposed, are polarised.

Support for the 3CT (which is strong in local and State tourism organisations and the Tasman Council and the local community) appears to be based on acceptance that it will stimulate investment in the local economy and lead to greater length of stay by visitors and expenditure in the local economy. This is challenged by a range of stakeholders (including some local people and tourism operators, environmental groups), who consider that alternative walking products (based on use of local off-track overnight accommodation) and enhanced promotion of other local experiences and packages will provide greater local benefits. Concerns are also expressed about the scale of the 3CT development and its potential for impacts on the natural values of the Tasman National Park and experiences currently enjoyed by stakeholder groups and visitors, including traditional bushwalking.

A high level of appreciation for the natural attributes of the Tasman National Park and concern for its protection are evident among stakeholder groups and local residents who provided responses to the 2008 Management Plan amendments and who wrote to the government on the 3CT proposal. The natural beauty of the area also appears to be highly valued by local people, organisations and stakeholder groups.

Due to the limitations in the information available to this study, the range of values held within the local Tasman community could not be described. Values related to the area of the proposed 3CT and Tasman National Park that could be described from the material available to this study tend to be values held by individuals and groups who hold concerns about the 3CT proposal and who expressed those values in submissions and letters on the proposal.

Values identified in the material used in this study include appreciation of the unique natural beauty of the area, its special natural features and, among many, opportunities to experience 'wild' or undisturbed landscapes and peace and solitude in a relatively accessible area. Bushwalkers and local people have a sense of ownership in relation to the Tasman National Park track system (which some helped to construct and maintain) and many local people have a strong connection to the national park itself, which they campaigned to establish. Bushwalking on the Tasman Peninsula is also a long established activity (considered to be 'traditional' among bushwalking groups on the Peninsula, in Hobart and throughout Tasmania). Finally, the Tasman National Park is valued by many stakeholders as a public asset which they perceived should be managed so that it is equally accessible to all.

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APPENDIX A

Stakeholder group questionnaire on Three Capes Track, June/July 2011

1. Do you generally feel the Three Capes Track is a good thing for the Tasman Peninsula and Tasmania?
2. What is your opinion of the benefits it will have for the local community?
3. What is your opinion of the benefits it will have for the State?
4. Do you have any concerns about how it may impact on the local community on the Tasman Peninsula?
5. If so, can you please explain these concerns?
6. Do you believe there are any actions the Parks and Wildlife Service could take that would mitigate any of the concerns people have?
7. Can you tell me what the area the trail is in means to you - What do you value it for? Or what do you think local people value it for?
8. Have you been involved in any meetings or workshops in regard to the track?
9. If so, how did you feel about the level of community support for the project at those meetings?