



# TASMANIAN | Land | CONSERVANCY



Photo: Glenn Moss



Photo: Bob Brown

## Recherche Bay Reserve – protected forever

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We are delighted to announce another major step towards permanent protection of our Recherche Bay Reserve. Dick and Pip Smith have made an additional gift of \$1.37 million towards the acquisition of the land at Recherche Bay. This gift concludes the fund raising campaign for the purchase of the reserve, by reducing the balance of their interest-free loan to zero.

The north-east peninsula of Recherche Bay is one of 70 sites in Australia listed for their significance to the nation's heritage. The area played host to French scientific expeditions in 1792 and 1793 and was the site of Tasmania's first European garden, significant botanical work, and extraordinarily friendly meetings between French explorers and local aboriginal people. It also has important natural values, providing an extension to the adjacent conservation area, a wilderness context for Recherche Bay, old growth forests, and an active nest site for white-bellied sea eagles.

Dick and Pip's outstanding generosity began in early 2006 following a long running community debate about plans to log the private land. When the owners agreed to sell the property to the community Dick and Pip offered to underwrite the project, making an initial gift and an interest-free

loan. "Pip and I are very pleased to have been part of such a wonderful outcome to secure and protect this very important part of Australia's cultural and ecological history for future generations" said Dick. "We would specifically like to thank the generosity of Bob Brown and all other donors. It's a heartening outcome to the fund raising appeal and testimony to what passionate people can do to leave a positive impact on our unique Tasmanian environment and the lives of all Australians."

Senator Bob Brown was instrumental throughout by bringing the history of the area to the attention of the public, and playing a key role in negotiating the purchase of the property and the campaign to raise funds. Senator Brown's generous personal gift and leadership provided inspiration to many of those who donated. To date over 1000 people have contributed towards the acquisition of Recherche Bay. The Tasmanian state government also provided assistance with the acquisition by providing funds towards the purchase, to offset stamp duty, and to assist the TLC with administration.

The TLC will continue to accept donations for the ongoing management of the reserve.

**- Nathan Males**

'acquiring and managing Tasmanian land for biodiversity'



Recherche Bay (insert - White-bellied sea eagle)



The Honourable Edward Butler

## Management of Recherche Bay Board profile

*To identify, conserve, protect, assist people to appreciate and, where necessary, rehabilitate the land's natural and cultural heritage values, and to ensure these values are passed on to future generations in as good or better condition than at present.*

This statement is the overarching objective for the management of the Recherche Bay Reserve. The completed management plan represents nearly a year of work by a dedicated community reference group established to advise and assist the TLC.

This group included the Recherche Bay Protection Society, Friends of Recherche Bay, South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, Huon Valley Council, representatives of the Vernon family (the previous landowners), Heritage Tasmania, Australian Garden History Society, and Department of Primary Industries and Water. The group was convened by Max Kitchell, who volunteered his time and considerable expertise in facilitating the group's discussions and shaping these into a draft management plan.

The management plan provides guidance for the TLC in the management of the property, including a framework for management networks and funding opportunities for management activities, which will ensure the viability and sustainability of the reserve well into the future.

It addresses a range of issues including nature conservation, European and Aboriginal cultural heritage, fire protection, recreation and tourism, education and interpretation, geological and biological diversity, preservation of the land's remote character and landscape, community involvement and scientific research.

Limited recreational access will be considered while ensuring that the values of the reserve are not compromised.

The plan specifies that the land be managed similarly to a national park. It sets out 12 management objectives and 44 separate actions designed to enhance the protection and understanding of the land.

Progress towards meeting the plan's objectives will be reviewed at regular intervals, approximately every two years. A full review, involving public input and publication of a new management plan, will be held after approximately five years.

The TLC board is expected to approve the final draft of the management plan shortly. We will continue to work alongside the local community to develop interpretative signage celebrating the varied history of the area, and recognising the generous contributions from those who assisted in protecting this treasured place.

- Denna Kingdom

The Honourable Edward Butler has been a highly valued member of the TLC's board since 2005. He shares his motivations for donating his time to the TLC's work:

"My forebears have lived in Tasmania for 200 years, since 1807; so this island is my essence, and its bush is my breath. So often have I wept for my beloved Tasmania.

My first tears were sparse and cool, and caused by the slow encroachment of 'civilisation' into the quietness and the secrecy of those places that form the special beauty and lovely grandeur of this island.

When this encroachment quickened I shed hot tears of anger and despair for there seemed to be no end to it. Individually I had no power to change this human interference with the environment.

Then I found that the TLC empowers concerned individuals, by combining their skills, and the raising of money, to help preserve the things of the earth and the sky and the water and some of the places which might otherwise be destroyed, and to save them for the benefit of all life, and all those lives who follow.

Being 75, for 20 years a lawyer, 20 years a Judge of the Family Court of Australia, and 10 years retired, I now have the privilege and honour to serve on the TLC board, and to add what I can to assist this notably efficient, focussed, and highly motivated organisation."



Swamp harrier



Midlands paperdaisy

Photo: Bill Waitfield and Els Hayward

Photo: Daniel Sprod

## Funding secured for midlands biodiversity hotspot

Australia is one of 17 countries described as megadiverse. These countries make up less than 10 per cent of the planet's surface, but support more than 70 per cent of the biological diversity on earth. Within Australia, Tasmania's midlands is one of 15 recognised biodiversity hotspots and is particularly renowned for its endemic grassland plants.

The Tasmanian midlands is a biologically rich area and contains some highly threatened habitats such as grasslands and grassy woodlands. These habitats and the many species they support are becoming increasingly rare. Grassy habitats that once covered nearly 100,000 hectares in the region now cover less than 10,000 hectares, and few remaining areas still retain their original species diversity.

- Endemic orchids, such as the black tipped and Lindley's spider orchids, are now confined to only a few known locations.
- Distinctive grassland species such as the grassland paperdaisy and grassland candles have disjunct and limited populations.
- Gold and red bushpeas, such as the dwarf, the sandstone and the silky bushpea, are now restricted to only a few sites where they once formed vibrant carpets in areas of suitable habitat.
- Various lilies, tiny legumes, greenhood orchids and sedges now occur only

sporadically and are in need of effective conservation management.

There is a range of unusual animals specific to the midlands which are dependent on threatened vegetation communities, including a carabid beetle that lives in soil cracks in black, cracking clays; a slater that lives in saline wetlands; and a skink that likes hiding in silver tussocks.

More recognisable animals that occur in the midlands include:

- the Tasmanian bettong – a forest dweller that enjoys nothing more than a feast of fungus;
- the cute eastern barred bandicoot (or stripy bandicoot);
- the swamp harrier, a bird of prey that prefers to nest and have its chicks in sedgy wetlands;
- the painted button quail that can be surprised when walking through grasslands;
- the Tasmanian devil – currently battling a cancer that has spread in populations across Tasmania; and
- the wedge-tailed eagle, a top predator of the region, which frequents the highways of the midlands.

The Tasmanian midlands currently has very few protected areas, with the majority of

the important conservation values existing on working farms. As a result it is critically important to work in partnership with private landowners to protect areas with conservation values.

Supported by Bush Heritage Australia, the Tasmanian Dept. of Primary Industries and Water, and the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage's National Reserve System Programme, the TLC has begun discussions with a range of landowners to work out how best to protect the region's outstanding natural values.

The TLC recently sought funding to work with landowners to deliver a range of conservation outcomes in the region, including conservation covenants placed on title, agreements to set aside land for a fixed term, and assistance with on-ground conservation work including weed control.

The project will provide a total of \$1.2m in financial support, through an expression of interest and a proposal process, for landowners who want to conserve land. An independent conservation committee will select the proposals from landowners that provide the best conservation outcomes for the money available.

Through the project we aim to assist landowners with the conservation of some of the most significant sites in the Tasmanian midlands region, and to help protect the area's biodiversity.

- Daniel Sprod and Nathan Males

'acquiring and managing Tasmanian land for biodiversity'



Australasian bittern

Photo: Peter Fuller



Rubicon Sanctuary formerly known as the Dorothy Reeves Reserve

Photo: Jim Mucichy

## Future reserves

Our unique Tasmanian landscapes and ecosystems are greatly valued and treasured by all Australians. Our growing support has so far allowed the TLC to protect six permanent reserves, all selected for their outstanding ecological importance and contribution to the protection of biodiversity and threatened species.

With growing support we hope to protect many more 'jewels' for conservation. Because of their diversity and vulnerability, we have a particular interest in wetlands and grasslands. Australian wetlands are some of our richest habitats for plant and animal life but unfortunately they are under stress and threat from landclearing and changing rainfall patterns.

The TLC has so far protected two Tasmanian wetland ecosystems. Now, with the completion of the Recherche Bay acquisition appeal, we will shortly be launching our next, very exciting TLC fund raising campaign to preserve important wetlands in the estuary of the Huon River. This is an outstanding area of natural habitat for species such as the globally endangered Australasian bittern.

We will be writing to you in October with details of this wonderful Tasmanian ecosystem and how you can join us in its permanent protection.

- Jo Naylor

## Revolving fund set to expand

Since our inception in 2001 the TLC has aimed to use a variety of tools to protect important lands for conservation. Alongside our programme for purchasing land to be preserved and managed in perpetuity we have worked hard to establish and build a revolving fund. The principles of revolving funds are that:

- funds are spent to acquire properties;
- the conservation values of properties are protected by conservation covenants; and
- properties are then re-sold to owners who are committed to the protection and careful management of the land.

To date our revolving fund activities have been reasonably successful. Two properties on King Island have been revolved through our work with the King Island NRM group and another two have been revolved on the Tasmanian mainland. Of particular note is the Dorothy Reeves Reserve near Port Sorell, which was purchased by the TLC with the assistance of two generous supporters of the revolving fund. The reserve contains an endangered type of woodland and protects the habitat of no less than 33 orchid species, one of which is only known to exist on that site. By selling this property to keen orchid enthusiasts the TLC's revolving fund has saved a species from likely extinction and given it a solid chance of survival.

However, despite this and other outstanding successes the revolving fund has been limited by availability of capital. Happily, this is about to change with two new partnerships set to expand the capacity of our revolving fund. The first is a grant from the Tasmanian Government's Department of Primary Industries and Water that will allow one property to be revolved at a time. The first property, 80 ha of wonderful silver peppermint forest near Colebrook, has recently been acquired with these funds.

Additionally, several months ago the TLC expressed interest in operating a revolving fund as part of the Commonwealth Government's Forest Conservation Fund (FCF) – an initiative to protect a further 45,000 ha of old growth and priority forest on private land.

Following a formal call for expressions of interest, our application to manage the FCF's revolving fund has been successful and we are now progressing discussions about its operation. We anticipate that this funding will allow an additional 15 Tasmanian properties to be processed through the revolving fund simultaneously.

We hope to be able to make official announcements shortly and are very excited about the increased conservation possibilities for expanding the revolving fund aspect of the TLC's operations.

- Nathan Males

We are grateful to the following organisations for their support in recent months



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