



# Tourism & Forestry Protocol Agreement

A code of mutual understanding



# Tourism-Forestry Protocol Agreement 2009

## **Background**

The initial Tourism-Forestry Protocol Agreement was implemented from September 2003. The Agreement was made between the following parties:

- Forestry Tasmania
- Tourism Industry Council Tasmania
- Forest Industries Association of Tasmania
- Private Forests Tasmania.

The Agreement has facilitated communication, consultation and liaison between the parties at both a strategic and operational level. The Agreement has also established a regular forum where the parties can meet to discuss issues and find mutually beneficial outcomes.

While the parties acknowledge the achievements of the Agreement, they are also committed to ensuring its ongoing relevance and refining it to respond to the current and future challenges.

The development of this Agreement takes the relationship to a higher level, committing both industries to a shared responsibility to protect the Tasmanian brand. Shared responsibility requires the parties to put substance above perception issues and to work cooperatively to resolve emerging issues of either substance or perception.

The parties recognise that together their respective industries are crucial to the delivery of sustainable growth of the Tasmanian economy and related employment and investment and that the tourism industry and the forestry industry will coexist in a manner that optimises the growth prospects of each.

Therefore it has been agreed that a new document reflecting the previous achievements, and tailored towards meeting these new challenges, is necessary. In particular, the parties consider it important for the Agreement to incorporate:

- a less formal structure that makes it more approachable for members of the tourism and forestry industries
- increased opportunity for education of members from each industry about the other
- a clear description of the existing rules (either through legislation or codes) that govern practices in each industry
- a clear description of the additional commitments being made by either party that are over and above mandated rules
- encouragement and recognition of operators in both industries to achieve the highest possible standards through relevant accreditation schemes and other industry recognition
- issues where there is joint interest and actual or potential externalities from practices in one industry on the other.

## **Parties to the Agreement**

The parties to this Agreement are:

FORESTRY TASMANIA – being a government business enterprise that manages 1.5 million hectares of state forests for multiple uses and that operates several major tourist attractions

TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL TASMANIA – being a body that represents the whole of the private sector of the Tasmanian tourism industry

FOREST INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA – being a body that represents most of the major private sector companies in the Tasmanian forest and wood products industry

PRIVATE FORESTS TASMANIA – being the State Government agency that facilitates and encourages the sustainable management of private forests for the full range of production and conservation uses.

## Principles

The parties to this Agreement will be guided in their actions by some key principles including that:

- this Agreement will replace the 2003 Protocol Agreement
- this Agreement will provide a framework and process for the tourism and forestry industries to work together as major contributors to the Tasmanian economy.

### **Other key guiding principles are that the parties:**

- recognise that both industries are equally important for the sustainable growth of the Tasmanian economy
- agree to jointly promote Tasmania's wilderness and forests, including its world class conservation reserve system on private land, and in state forests and national parks
- recognise that Tasmania's forests are well protected by a very extensive reserve system and that remaining forests are managed for multiple uses on a sustainable basis
- commit to close and ongoing communication
- share the responsibility for making the Agreement work
- recognise and respect that both industries can successfully coexist into the future
- undertake to correct public perceptions concerning their own respective industries, where that perception is not consistent with scientific and factual information
- acknowledge that this Agreement is a key tool for building on Tasmania's natural tourism and forest industry advantages, where cooperation and coexistence is required between the two.

## **Communication and Consultation**

### **Meetings**

The parties agree to hold at least three meetings per year where general and specific issues related to the Agreement can be discussed.

### **Review**

The parties agree to review and decide once a year (by 31 December) on a list of priorities for the coming year that will be attached to the Agreement as a schedule.

### **Communication with industry stakeholders**

The parties agree to provide access to their information distribution channels for relevant and appropriate information to be dispersed through the industry.

The parties agree to consult widely with their stakeholders and industry members to raise issues, propose actions and raise the profile of the Agreement.

The parties agree to provide appropriate and agreed content for a specific Agreement website.

### **Issue Resolution**

The parties agree to provide an up to date list of key contact people within their organisation/industry as specific issues arise. In general in respect of issues:

- for planning and operational issues in respect of state forests, Forestry Tasmania Community Liaison Officers are the first point of contact
- in private forests, Private Forests Tasmania staff are the first point of contact
- related to any specific forestry company or contractor, Forest Industries Association of Tasmania staff are the first point of contact
- involving tourism businesses or visitors, Tourism Industry Council Tasmania staff are the first point of contact
- involving compliance with legislation or the Forest Practices Code, Forest Practices Authority staff are the first point of contact.

Where an issue cannot be resolved at the local level, it will be elevated to the relevant CEO/MD within the respective organisation in the next instance. This may also involve the board of that organisation.

Where there are unresolved issues that any party has major concerns about, there is the opportunity for these to be raised firstly at the next Agreement meeting. If it is still unresolved or urgent, the issue can be raised by any of the parties with the relevant person within: TICT, FT, FIAT or PFT.

### **Briefings and Education**

The parties agree to conduct briefings or otherwise assist in the education of the respective industries as the need arises.

Forestry operators, through Forestry Tasmania, FIAT and PFT, will work with the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania to provide regular briefings on forestry activities for local tourism operators.

The tourism industry, through Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, will provide annual updates of major tourism events to Forestry Tasmania, FIAT and PFT for consideration in the planning of forestry operations such as planned burns.

Tourism Industry Council Tasmania accredited operators will be invited to participate in the annual briefings on the Three Year Plan provided to local government authorities around the state.

The Tourism Industry Council Tasmania will provide an annual briefing to the forestry industry on the Tourism 21 Strategic Business Plan.

### **Media Comment**

Each party will provide prior notice of any media release or media statement relevant to any other party's interests.

Each party will, wherever possible, check any factual issues with the relevant party prior to making any media comment.

Each party will provide notification of any media comments made that may be relevant to any other party's interests.

## **Specific Issues**

A number of specific issues have been identified as requiring particular focus in the Agreement. These issues have either received significant feedback from the industries as issues of concern or they are areas with the greatest prospect for externalities (where the operations of one industry can impact adversely on the operations of another).

Each issue contains its own schedule which outlines:

- background as to why the issue is included and the preamble about exactly what externalities are being managed through the agreement
- the relevant rules covering the specific area, including legislation, codes and policies that can be enforced
- additional commitments being made by the parties under the terms of this agreement
- any specific issue resolution procedures related to the issue
- links to relevant documents and reports.

### **These schedules are:**

- A** – Planning and Sightlines
- B** – Planned Burns
- C** – Forest Access Roads and Transport
- D** – Branding and Education

## Schedule A: Planning and Sightlines

### Background:

Quality of planning is a key issue to managing the successful co-existence of tourism and forestry.

In recent years, demand for nature based tourism products has resulted in the development of tourism facilities on or adjacent to forested areas including national parks and state forests.

The forest industry encourages the use of state and privately owned forests for tourism products and services, and seeks to manage their interaction with timber production activities.

When new tourism developments are planned, it is the responsibility of the proponent to consult adjoining landowners to understand the planning processes and/or likely intentions for forestry management.

Forest operations can be highly visible because of the hilly or mountainous nature of much of Tasmania, and can sometimes have long term visual impacts. Operations generally cannot, and need not be hidden from view, but can be designed to reduce visual impact and to harmonise with the local visual character and with land use patterns.

Visual amenity is one of many values taken into account through the Forest Practices Plan process. Companies are required to consider how forest operations may impact on viewfields, particularly along major tourist highways, near attractions and near population centres, and then to put in place measures to minimise any visual impact.

### Compliance requirements:

The Forest Practices Act, the Forest Practices Code and Administrative Instructions provide a framework for forestry development including plantation establishment.

Local government planning provides a framework within which tourism developments and infrastructure are considered.

The Forest Practices Code requires Landscape Values to be considered in Forest Practices Plans. The *Manual for Forest Landscape Management* sets out Visual Management Objectives and visual quality standards to guide officers in the preparation of Forest Practices Plans.

Forest companies use a variety of techniques to minimise impact. These include retaining trees within a coupe, adjusting coupe size and shape and using software packages to assess how a landscape may look after a harvesting operation.

## Schedule A: Planning and Sightlines

### Planning for visual management is based on:

- the Visual Management System and its major elements (i.e. public sensitivity, distance zones and scenic quality), which define a rating of scenic importance (Landscape Priority Zones) and visual quality standards (Landscape Management Objectives)
- broad viewfields within which the sequencing and timing of operations can be considered to manage long term cumulative visual effects (this is especially relevant to steep country).

The Good Neighbour Charter also sets out processes for resolving landscape issues for affected tourism operators.

### Additional commitments:

The forest industry commits to inviting TICT-appointed representatives to annual briefings held for local government on the Three Year Wood Production Plan.

The tourism and forest industries acknowledge that forest operations are part of the Tasmanian landscape and agree that additional effort is required to explain the link between biodiversity and “messy” forests.

To this end, the two industries agree that interpretative signs, particularly along major touring routes are required.

The Tourism Industry Council undertakes to commission a design for signs to be used on harvested forestry coupes along touring routes.

The forest industry undertakes to manufacture and install those signs at agreed locations around the state. The signs will carry the logos of the Tourism Industry Council and the relevant forestry company.

Locations for the signs can be discussed annually.

### Links:

<http://www.planningapplications.tas.gov.au/>

[www.lgat.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=367](http://www.lgat.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=367)

[www.fpa.tas.gov.au](http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au)

[www.fpa.tas.gov.au/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDFs/Admin/FPC2000\\_Complete.pdf](http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/fileadmin/user_upload/PDFs/Admin/FPC2000_Complete.pdf)

Good Neighbour Charter: to be placed on tourism forestry protocol website.

## Schedule B: Planned Burns

### Background:

For the purposes of this Agreement, planned burns are a part of production forestry, land management and wildfire safety. Planned burns can be divided into two major categories:

- regeneration burns
- fuel reduction burns.

Regeneration burns are conducted to stimulate the regeneration of eucalypt forests or to enable the establishment of plantations. Regeneration burning aims to clear away residual woody materials and provide an ash bed for new seedlings. They are also called high intensity burns, and are designed to generate high temperatures, creating intense convection currents. This ensures that the smoke forms a tall column or plume that travels into the upper atmosphere and disperses. They are usually conducted during autumn months, on days with little or no wind. As a result, such events often have a high visual impact.

Fuel reduction burns and other vegetation management burns are used to improve public safety by reducing the risk and severity of bushfires. Fuel reduction burns also provide protection for native forests, tree plantations and private property. This type of burning is low intensity, with the smoke typically remaining near ground. The smoke can affect ground level air quality, depending on wind direction. Despite this potential inconvenience, fuel reduction burns reduce the likelihood and potential for large-scale bushfires.

Planned burns do not include wildfires or “burn offs” conducted for agricultural or domestic purposes. Wildfires by their very nature are unplanned and can cause significant damage to both life and property. Wildfire safety issues are addressed in a separate section of the Agreement. Burn offs are conducted by private and public landholders at various times of year to remove waste, assist in land clearing or for crop management purposes.

The link between tourism and planned burns arises due to the impact of smoke from planned burns. This impact can occur as a result of both high and low intensity burns. The impacts of planned burns can happen at one or two levels:

- a reduced experience for the visitor
- a reduced capacity for a tourism business or businesses in the area to offer or fully offer their services to visitors.

## Schedule B: Planned Burns

These impacts can result in reduced trade for tourism businesses in the affected area and reduced future visits to the region and the state because of lower levels of satisfaction for current visitors.

It should be noted that, while there can be some impact when burns are planned and managed effectively, impacts are more likely when the burn is either not planned appropriately or any of the variables (such as the weather or atmospheric conditions) change. These impacts mean that planned burns need to be managed carefully to reduce the scope for negative impacts on tourists and the tourism industry.

### Compliance

Planned burns are the subject of the following general compliance requirements:

#### 1. Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) 2004

The Air Quality Policy requires that persons undertaking planned burning should use best practice environmental management to minimise the effects of smoke pollution on individuals and the community. The Air Quality Policy also requires that:

Those "...agencies, companies or organisations undertaking burning on a regular basis or on a large scale should:

- *adopt efficient and effective air quality monitoring programmes;*
- *adopt a uniform approach to recording and assessing complaints;*
- *focus upon minimising the impact of smoke on the community in terms of health, amenity and safety;*
- *encourage the planning and execution of planned burning in a way that minimises the generation of smoke and improves the management of the effects of smoke; and*
- *require a responsible person involved in planned burning for land management to be competent in relevant burning procedures."*

#### 2. Forest Practices Code Smoke Management Guidelines – Forest Industry Standard for Prescribed Silvicultural Burning Practice 2009

The Prescribed Silvicultural Burning Practice 2009 includes standards relevant to:

- planning
- public notification
- smoke management
- risk management
- standards of competency.

## **Schedule B: Planned Burns**

### **Additional commitments**

In addition to a general adherence to the above requirements, as part of the Tourism/Forestry Protocol Agreement the parties agree to the following:

- the forestry industry will reduce the impact of burns on visitors and the tourism industry by:
  - avoiding conducting planned burns where there is a significant risk of adversely affecting the experience of visitors attending events
  - avoiding conducting planned burns where there is a significant risk of adversely affecting the operations of tourism businesses
  - managing smoke away from major population areas
- the forestry industry will advise TICT tourism operators and other interested operators of its intention to conduct planned burns prior to the start of the autumn burn season
- consistent with the Forest Practices Code, all neighbours will be advised of planned burns
- the TICT will advise the forestry industry of upcoming events held between March 1 and June 30 that may be adversely impacted by planned burns by January each year.

## **Schedule C: Forest Access, Roads and Transport**

### **Background:**

Forestry Tasmania, Gunns Limited and other forest companies each maintain forest roads at their own expense. Many of these roads, totalling more than 6,000kms in state forests, are used for tourism and recreation as well as forestry operations.

Forestry Tasmania has a policy of allowing public access to these roads, where possible, on the understanding that users of forestry roads do so at their own risk, acknowledging that they will be sharing these roads with heavy vehicles.

In the interest of public safety, forestry companies reserve the right to close roads, particularly when harvesting operations are underway in the vicinity. However, road closures sometimes inconvenience recreational users and tourism operators.

The presence of log trucks on public roads has been raised as an issue. A brochure has been developed to promote safe driving practices and create awareness for tourists who may encounter heavy vehicles. The brochure will be regularly distributed to log truck drivers and be available for distribution to visitors.

### **Compliance:**

Forestry roads are private roads and therefore are not required to have road furniture seen on public roads.

Operators conducting commercial activity in state forests are required to hold a CVS licence issued by the Parks and Wildlife Service.

### **Additional commitments:**

- increase distribution of the Sharing our Roads brochure to alert visitors to the presence of heavy vehicles on highways and tourist routes
- the forest industry will provide a briefing on the Three Year Forest Management Plan to the TICT, which will include details of log truck movements on the state road network
- the TICT will be advised of the dates for the local government briefings and TICT will invite accredited tourism operators to attend
- Forestry Tasmania will advise of road closures on its website
- the tourism industry acknowledges forest roads are effectively private roads, and forest companies should not be liable for the cost of installing additional roadside furniture
- the tourism and forest industries support efforts to improve rail freight options within Tasmania
- developers wanting to develop commercial opportunities in forested areas should seek information on road ownership and harvesting plans before proceeding with their development

## **Schedule C: Forest Access, Roads and Transport**

- the forest industry will investigate placing signs at the entry point of major forestry roads heavily used by tourists warning visitors to keep to the left and drive carefully. These roads will include in the first year of the Agreement:
  1. Fortescue
  2. Wielangta
  3. Styx and Florentine
  4. Arve Road
  5. Weld Road
  6. Southwood Road
  7. Oigles Road
  8. Southern Forest Tour
  9. Hopetoun Link.

### **Links:**

Sharing our Roads brochure on the tourism forestry protocol website.

## **Schedule D: Branding and Education**

### **Background:**

Tourism and forestry both contribute to a Tasmanian “brand”. A brand reflects the way that the state wants to be seen by others and is therefore important to both the tourism and forestry industries.

Both tourism and forestry are exporters. Forestry exports wood and wood products to consumers while tourism brings the consumer to the tourism product. The Tasmanian brand assists both industries by creating positive perceptions about the product. The brand therefore complements the export product and helps to drive demand for those products.

The tourism industry has always sought to create positive perceptions about the destination through use of the Tasmanian brand. While the Tasmanian tourism brand is multi-faceted, it has been largely based on a “clean and green” image built around Tasmania’s stunning and varied natural environment, wildlife, quality produce, and heritage. Increasingly, the Tasmanian tourism brand is becoming more active by incorporating experiences into the brand values.

The forestry industry is also increasingly seeking to create positive perceptions about Tasmania and the way in which wood products are produced. The Tasmanian forestry brand is based on the quality of the wood and wood products and the sustainable way in which they are harvested and manufactured. The Tasmanian forestry brand is also built around some of the high quality unique timbers that produce high quality wood products such as furniture.

Brand is inherently based on perception and any damage to the brand of either industry will inflict damage on the overall Tasmanian brand. This is why perceptions are important, but they are also linked to actual practice. There is no point creating a brand image if the reality is very different and this will inevitably cause significant harm.

All industries have to play a role in educating Tasmanians about their industry. It is also vitally important for tourism and forestry – two industries that work in close proximity to each other – to keep each other informed about industry developments with a particular focus on any “spillover” or externality issues. This is where the practices of one industry have a direct impact on another.

To create a better environment for both industries to co-exist, it is important that each industry has an understanding of how the other operates. Better mutual understanding will ensure that there is a focus on issues of substance, rather than issues based on misunderstanding or ignorance.

### **Compliance**

There is no current regulation covering these activities.

## **Schedule D: Branding and Education**

### **Additional Commitments**

The parties agree to the following commitments:

- the TICT will share information with the forestry industry about the strength of the Tasmanian tourism brand
- the forestry industry will share information with the TICT about the strength of the Tasmanian forestry brand
- the TICT and forestry industry will raise issues for discussion where either industry may be impacting on the Tasmanian brand and therefore impact on the other industry
- the TICT and forestry industry will address, wherever possible, issues of perception that impact on the Tasmanian brand through information and education activities
- the TICT will deliver briefings, either on request or annually, to interested members of the forestry industry about the state of tourism and any particular issues that impact on forestry
- the forestry industry will deliver briefings, either on request or annually, to interested members of the tourism industry about the state of forestry and any particular issues that impact on tourism
- the TICT and forestry industry will share industry communications with each other.