

FRIENDS OF CRADLE VALLEY BULLETIN

July 13th 2010

1. NEW MEMBERS: A very warm welcome to celebrated landscape artist Val Whatley.

2. NEW PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICES MINISTER:

Following the formation of our first Labor-Green Government in April, the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service has a new Minister in Hon. David O'Byrne MHA.

FoCV has written to Minister O'Byrne (See FoCV Letter 8/6/10) welcoming his appointment and drawing his attention to "... *community concerns expressed not infrequently during the past few years about inadequate levels of State Government funding for the maintenance and development of visitor facilities in all of Tasmania's National Parks and Reserves*". We pointed out that "... *Cradle Valley has not been insulated from these funding inadequacies, despite it being so important to the State's tourism-based economy*", adding that there's "... *a lack of progress being made on precinct planning and a painfully slow re-development of office and accommodation facilities for resident Rangers upon whom Parks visitors depend so much.*"

Naturally, we are delighted that Minister O'Byrne has taken our concerns to Cabinet, and that the June State Budget provided an extra \$16M over the next 4 years for Tasmania's Park Services.

This new money will pay for 3 new Ranger positions, vehicles and equipment in the proposed Bay of Fires National Park on the East Coast, and 10 new field staff who will be trained to police activities in the State's Parks and conservation areas, and to assist ongoing infrastructure construction and maintenance. A special \$200,000 fund is also being created for scientific research, and another \$200,000 will be invested in partnerships with the Aboriginal Community.

3. NEW DOCUMENTARY:

Thanks to our outreach Website, we have been contacted by a US-based Nature Film and Photography Company wanting to produce a new documentary about Australia's National Parks! This is a rare opportunity for us to help showcase and promote our State's great natural areas.

After much discussion about who would be the best person to represent Tasmania's interests in the documentary, we are very pleased to announce that that Jenny Pearce, our North West Walking Club representative from Leith, will star!

This National Parks documentary is still in the planning stages, but we are hoping to see Nick, the producer, at our AGM weekend at Blandfordia Alpine Lodge in the Cradle Valley during 19-21 November. Nick also leads nature photographic classes.

4. WEATHER REPORTS AND FORECASTS:

If you've ever been caught up in thick Daisy Dell fogs or lost in a blinding snow blizzard on Marion's Peak, you'll be relieved to know that, on your behalf, we've written to the Tasmania and Antarctica Regional Office of the Bureau of Meteorology requesting that additional information pertaining to the Cradle precinct be provided in ABC weather reports (See Letter 17/6/10).

Thankfully, I copied the Bureau's letter to Brendon McMahon from the Launceston Office and to the lovely Rose Grant, so you may have noticed that our Valley has been mentioned several times on ABC Radio during the 'Rural Report' in recent weeks - an unusual but hopefully more common event from now on.

At any rate, from Steve Pendlebury, the Regional Director, I have now also received the following sage advice: *"I note firstly that what the ABC chooses to broadcast is a matter for them. However, I take your point that whilst the Bureau does provide a district forecast for the Central Plateau and Upper Derwent Valley, weather conditions relating to the iconic Overland Track may warrant separate attention. There seems to be two basic aspects to your request: (i) weather reports/ observations; and (ii) forecasts. I address these below. In respect of weather observations, the Bureau believes that, despite gaps in some areas, the current networks provide a density and distribution of observations that is aligned with national and international standards [This may be so, but it's still not relevant to us ! - Ed.]. In respect of forecasts I am pleased to report that, for Tasmania, the Next Generation Weather Forecast and Warning System (NexGenFWS) is close to becoming a reality. ... A prototype of NexGenFWS has been in operation in Victoria for approximately the last 19 months ... [and] ... is in the process of being installed in New South Wales this year, and the Bureau plans to have the system operational in Tasmania by about mid next year. Once this occurs, we will be able to produce forecasts for locations such as Cradle Valley and Lake St. Clair, which will no doubt be of great help to people traversing the Overland track."*

To check out the Bureau's Next generation Forecast and Warning System (NexGenFWS) as it pertains to Victoria, visit <http://www.bom.gov.au>, then click on the 'New Graphical forecast service' icon which is towards the bottom RHS of the screen. This will take you to: <http://www.bom.gov.au/weather-services/about/forecasts/about-graphical-forecasts.shtml>. Then click on the words "Try the Forecaster Explorer now". Chose a location, and the program will provide the current 7-day forecast for it. It's miracle! Coming our way soon!

5. WOOD-GATHERING AT BLANDFORDIA:

Congratulations to the hard-working members of the Blandfordia Alpine Lodge woodcutting working-bees who chain-sawed, carried and stacked 2 years supply of dry firewood at their beautiful mountain premises over just two days. The wood was sourced from log-heaps in an exclusion zone on the Iris Nature Reserve at Daisy Dell, and carried aloft by an ingenious method involving a winch, motor and gantry. A sustainable, low cost, low carbon-mile enterprise, and altogether an awesome, inspirational community effort!



6. OUTCOMES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING:

Thank you for all your messages, which were considered at the Executive meeting held in Devonport on Saturday 22nd May.

We will need our thinking caps on to explore new strategies for reversing the diminishing relevance of the World Heritage Area Consultative Committee which is meeting only once a year now, despite

its important State & Federal responsibilities, and we suspect that the problems associated with the shuttle buses and car-park spaces in the Valley will be best raised at the next Stakeholders Meeting - that is, when the PWS convenes one (Stakeholders have not met for 12 months).

Please note that during Cathy's absence in Scotland, Vice-President Helen Thyne will step up to handle Presidential matters, and yours truly will look after day-to-day things as best I can.

7. ADDITIONAL CONSERVATION AREAS?

One of the benefits of going along to the State Government's Community Forum Day at Sheffield last Sunday was an opportunity to sit next to the Minister for Forests, Bryan Green MHA. So of course one or two of us did a little quiet lobbying for possible additional conservation areas around Cradle Mountain National Park. Fingers crossed.

8. WHERE IS EVERYONE?

Cathy is walking across Scotland, when she's not engaged in pre-historic archaeological digs. Helen and Jim are re-discovering the outback around Broken Hill and Lake Mungo. Jim and Debbie have just returned from Kakadu, and Jenny is in Europe. No wonder Cradle Ranger Ted Bugg's been seen packing his bags for the sunnier climes of St. Helens on the East Coast!

9. CALL FOR PHOTOS:

FoCV Webmaster Richard Barnes would be delighted if members would send a few of their best photos by email to him via webmaster@friendsofcradlevalley.org, so that he can update the photo section of our website.

10. BIRTHDAY: Dave Pinkard turns 80 in August. He is hoping to keep it secret.

11. SAD FAREWELLS:

(i) **Mr. Aiden Lade** RAN Retired, who has been Master of Ceremonies at Weindorfer Memorial Services at Waldheim on numerous occasions over the years, passed away after a long illness on 17th June 2010. Aiden's Obituary in the Mercury described him as "*an old sea-dog finally at peace*", but we also knew him as "*one of nature's true gentlemen*". Vale Aiden Lade.

(ii) **Dr. Leon Wescombe** PhD was accidentally drowned while kayaking a flooded river in California on 13th June 2010. A Memorial service was held for Leon at the Gateway Church, Don Road, Devonport on Saturday 3rd June that was attended by 500 mourners, including FoCV members. Leon's PhD Diploma was presented posthumously to his father Kerry Wescombe by Professor Jack Wall of Sydney University, and a Memorial Fund for cystic fibrosis research has been set up in Leon's memory by the Menzies Research Institute in Hobart. Donations to this fund, which will be matched dollar per dollar by the University of Tasmania, can be made by phoning the Menzies Institute on 1800 638 124.

12. DIARY: A gentle reminder that the AGM of FOCV is set down for Saturday 20th November at Blandfordia Lodge which is booked for the weekend 19th -21st 2010. You are welcome to stay over this whole weekend, but you do need to BYO food, toothbrush and sleeping gear.

Best wishes,
John Wilson
Hon.FoCV Secretary