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The Editor,
The Advocate Newspaper,
Burnie TAS.

Sir,

As it is one hundred years since the idea of a National Park at Cradle Mountain was first mooted by Gustav Weindorfer, the traditional Weindorfer Memorial Service that is held at his graveside at 'Waldheim' on New Years Day this year will have special meaning to all of those people who come along (everyone is welcome).

When Weindorfer set foot in the Cradle Valley for the first time in 1908, he was stunned by the natural beauty of the place. He quickly recognized that many people from all around the world, of all ages and from all walks of life would come to love and appreciate this place as much as he did, as soon as they saw and experienced it for themselves.

Weindorfer's vision for a National Park encompassing the spectacular Cradle Mountain and its surrounding high country, with its wild lakes and high tussocked plains, has now come to fruition, and all Tasmanians can rightly be proud that they're the custodians of this heritage.

The Friends of Cradle Valley are a community-based advocacy and stake-holder group that has been helping to care and conserve the Cradle Mountain Lake St.Clair National Park since 1993, working alongside Parks and Wildlife Service staff in an honorary capacity, and maintaining a watching brief over the many developments and conservation needs inside and adjacent to the Park on behalf of the wider community.

As key stakeholders in Cradle Valley, we are concerned that the level of funding that's provided by the current Tasmanian State Government for infrastructure repairs and development, and for the provision of management resources has not kept pace with the increasing numbers of visitors to the Park, or with the extra demands placed upon rangers and support staff during peak seasons.

Although the Cradle rangers and their support staff are diligent and enthusiastic about their jobs, and as committed to the provision of services to the visiting public as they ever were, the Tasmanian State Government is simply not being as supportive or as generous in its budgetary allocations as it ought to be.

It is apparent that a lot of the impetus for the sustainable management of the beautiful-but-fragile Cradle Valley environment that was generated so decisively and comprehensively by the late Premier of Tasmania, Jim Bacon, who was also fortuously the State Minister for Tourism and National Parks, is now being whittled away through under-funding and under-resourcing.

For example, the detailed planning that was supposed to be undertaken to enhance visitor experiences in the Valley's four major precincts, which are at the heart of the 'Pencil Pine-Cradle Valley Visitor Zone Plan 2006', appears to have stalled, and the project officer who was initially assigned to the task of co-ordinating community consultation is nowhere to be seen.

When will work on these precincts re-commence? And when will the Parks and Wildlife Division begin the process of implementing this much-needed plan to enhance visitor experiences in Cradle Valley?

Yours sincerely,

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