

To FOCV MEMBERS

SUBJECT: Recent unexpected changes to the Cradle Valley Master Plan (CVMP)

The timeline below endeavours to clarify the confusion around the very unsatisfactory situation regarding the latest version of the CVMP. A draft letter to the Premier and the Minister for Parks is attached for your comment by the end of January.

Timeline of events

- 8th November 2017 - The Parliamentary Standing Committee for Public Works met at Cradle. Our Secretary attended this public meeting after seeing it advertised in the Advocate and reported that PWS presented evidence in relation to the Master Plan which has been the subject of ongoing consultation with FoCV over the past 2-3 years.
- 11th November 2017 - AGM of FoCV at Blandfordia at which Nic Deka on behalf of PWS briefed the members on the CVMP. (A full report of this presentation was included in the AGM minutes circulated to members and on the FoCV website). There was general support in principle of the CVMP as presented at the AGM as a reasonable balance between development and preservation of wilderness values, while remaining alert to the need to express concerns on aspects that conflict with these values such as the possible cable car proposal. The concept of the new PWS Visitor Centre - with the iconic view of Cradle Mountain - which would provide a world class entry point to the National Park for its many and increasing visitor numbers was seen as essential to the overall development.
- 4th December 2017 - There was a 2nd meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Public Works in Hobart. FoCV Secretary was not aware of this meeting until 16th January 2018. At this meeting a very different proposal was put forward. The following is a quote from Dr John Whittington, Secretary, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment at the beginning of his evidence.

'The proposal we are putting forward now, which is to construct buildings 1 and 2 and walkway 7, plus the civil works and all the landscaping and car parking, provides a visitor centre that meets the needs today of Parks, visitors and the businesses, while maintaining building 4 as a significant opportunity for a public-private partnership. That is very much based on the advice of the tourism industry and Office of the Coordinator-General through the steering committee.'*

(* building 4 was originally proposed as the new Visitor Centre with the iconic views to Cradle)

- 13th December 2017 - This very different proposal was cleared by the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Public Works in its final report.
- 13th December 2017 - The 'Cradle Mountain Experience' document was released in conjunction with a 'sod turning' exercise by the Government at the site for the new Gateway Precinct. The document also highlighted a plan to 'open an EOI process

within 100 days of winning majority Government for an **'iconic tourism experience'**. No details of this venture were given apart from the allocation of \$5m to support it.

- 3rd January 2018 – It was announced that the amended CVMP was the preferred option cleared by the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Public Works. FoCV members were surprised and shocked to learn through a PWS document that the so called **'iconic tourism experience'** was associated with a decision to not proceed with the new Visitor Centre as detailed in the first CVMP. Instead the site would be made available to private enterprise for unspecified developments through a tender process.



This site is the only one in the Gateway Precinct with iconic views to Cradle Mountain. Meanwhile the PWS visitor centre is to be re-housed in a new but small separate building of little appeal or distinction. These changes represent a dramatic departure from the CVMP as supported by FoCV on 11th November.

- 14th January 2018 – FoCV met at Cradle ** (see below) to discuss recent Government changes to the CVMP which were outlined in the document 'Cradle Mountain Experience' released by the Tasmanian Liberal Party on 13th December 2017 and further detailed in a document from Parks and Wildlife Services on 3rd January 2018.
- 16th January 2018 - The occurrence of the 4th December 2017 meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Public Works came to our Secretary's attention.

(Members should go to <http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Joint/works.htm> to access the evidence given at the public meetings on 8th November and the 4th December 2017 and the final report on 13th December.)

Friends of Cradle Valley are bitterly disappointed that the Government chose not to consult with all stakeholders on their dramatic changes to the CVMP during November 2017.

However, as you will note from the timeline of events FoCV is not in a position to accuse the Government of duplicity or secrecy. It is evident that information pertaining to the new

proposal was in the public domain as from 4th December 2017. But there was no endeavour by the authorities to consult with FoCV as a key stakeholder even though there had been ongoing consultation with FoCV from the inception of the first Master Plan. There has been no subsequent explanation as why FoCV was not consulted at this late critical stage.

Questions need to be asked as to

- Why was the consultation process abandoned at a critical point with its implications for dramatic change to the nature of the entry point to Cradle Mountain National Park?
- Why didn't the 'Cradle Mountain Experience' document reveal the total picture?
- Does the Tasmanian public yet understand that the Visitor Centre as planned and promoted in the CVMP, is not going to happen? The CVMP concept throughout has been largely premised on the replacement of the current inadequate visitor facilities.

****Other matters discussed by FoCV on 14th January 2018.**

1. The meeting was preceded by an opportunity to view on-site the proposed 6 changes to the road from the Park entry to Ronny Creek. These changes are to accommodate the future use of medium size buses for the bus shuttle service to increase capacity and to provide for those with disabilities.

Members were impressed by the minimalist approach proposed by PWS to establish 6 passing bays enabling safe passing by buses entering and exiting the Park. The introduction of the medium size buses will be accompanied by no private car entries between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. The site inspections occurred between 10:00 and 11:00 am and the frequency of buses entering and exiting the park was remarkable. FoCV acknowledged that the private car restrictions and the bus passing bays are the price to be paid for retention of the 'wilderness experience' given by the current road.

The six sites of the proposed passing bays. Viewed in sequential order after leaving the Ranger station.





2. The meeting also included in its consideration the recent funding commitments by the Government and the Opposition to proceeding with the development of a cable car as the future transport mode to Dove Lake.

Members reiterated concerns with the cable car concept. In view of the recently announced commitments by the Government and the Opposition to a cable car from the Gateway Precinct to Dove Lake, is the planned investigation of suitable transport modes to Dove Lake being undertaken through the Office of the Coordinator- General and funded by the \$1m grant from the Federal Government now redundant?

Jim Spinks

Secretary

21st January 2018