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The Editor  
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Sir,

### **RARE CHANCE TO ENLARGE CRADLE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK**

The Friends of Cradle Valley community advocacy group are keen to promote the idea of the Tasmanian and Federal Governments jointly acquiring the 10,000 acre Middlesex Plains property that's presently up for sale by tender (Elders, tenders closing 20/1/10) in order to enlarge the adjacent Cradle Mountain National Park.

The Middlesex Plains property was granted to the Van Diemen's Land Company by Governor Arthur, and it was used originally to hold store cattle that were brought in from the company's expansive grazing lands along the North-West Coast before they could be sent on in big mobs to Launceston and Hobart along the Mole Creek road.

The old homestead is still relatively intact, and is situated in the pretty fold of a valley of the Iris River not far from Leary's Corner and the Cradle Mountain Village. Although it has had some new outbuildings recently added, the original wooden structure of the homestead built during the residency of the Field family is still relatively intact. It is clearly visible from the nearby Cradle Mountain Tourist Highway.

This property should be acquired as part of Tasmania's World Heritage. As an extension of the Cradle Mountain National Park, it's not difficult to imagine the Middlesex Plains homestead becoming another popular tourism precinct, a little like Waldheim although very different, with greater opportunities for the development of sound and light shows, open air theatre and spectacular 'Opera in the Outback' style events.

As the homestead was one of the last places in Tasmania where there was recorded warfare between colonial settlers and tribal aborigines, it would also be a magnificent venue for the telling of Tasmania's colonial history through the eyes of our indigenous people. This would provide new opportunities for indigenous tourism, and help to promote reconciliation nationally.

Yours Sincerely,  
John R. Wilson (Dr)  
Hon. Secretary, Friends of Cradle Valley.

