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TAS 7310

20 October 2009

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Consultative Committee,
Department of Primary Industry, Parks Water and Environment,
GPO Box 1751,
Hobart TAS 7001.

Dear Committee,

Re: ROADSIDE SLASHING, DOVE LAKE ROAD

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Friends of Cradle Valley community advocacy group to express members' despair and outrage at the cavalier way in which the roadside vegetation was slashed by a Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources contractor along the Cradle Valley road to Dove Lake last week, and to request that your Committee acts to prevent this kind of damage being repeated.

This road is a premier tourist route in the World Heritage Area, and it is unacceptable that a DIER contractor can hack, bash, trash and slash all the alpine vegetation alongside this tourist road just like he would do along any other road in this State.

Last weekend, there were many tourists and other visitors in the Cradle Valley who were clearly visibly distressed by the sight of so much bruised and damaged rainforest, and he has left our over-stretched Rangers having to clean up the mess as best they can.

As you are aware, the alpine vegetation in very slow to grow in this valley, and there is absolutely no reason to slash clumps of Buttongrass or native Iris,

neither of which poses any visibility problem to drivers. He even mangled the Waratah bushes that were coming into bud!

It is the view of our group that this road into the Cradle National Park needs to be managed very carefully (it is after all World Heritage Area - not some side-road along the Midlands Highway), and if there are some sections of the roadside vegetation that do need to be removed for safety's sake, then that work should be done under close supervision and preferably by hand.

We are requesting please that the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Consultative Committee establishes a formal protocol for roadside vegetation clearance, that ensures that any future works undertaken by DIER or its contractors in the Cradle Mountain National Park as part of the World Heritage Area should be in keeping with the precinct plans, and supervised on site by Park Rangers.

In this time of diminishing budgets for National Parks, it's more than ever important that all managing authorities work co-operatively according to established processes, and the best way to achieve desired outcomes is to have clear and adequate protocols.

Yours sincerely,

John R. Wilson
Hon. Secretary
Friends of Cradle Valley

cc Federal Minister for Environment, Hon. Peter Garrett MP
State Minister for the Environment, Hon. Michelle O'Byrne MHA