



Tourism and Forestry Protocol Agreement

A code of mutual understanding



20 March 2017

Purpose

The tourism and forestry industries recognise that both our industries are crucial for the Tasmanian economy, employment and investment, and that both industries can and do benefit from the resources and opportunities created by Tasmania's forests.

Our industries also recognise that tourism and forestry successfully co-exist around the world, and are successfully managed within regional communities for the benefit of those communities and the mutual benefit of both industries. In addition, we also recognise that both tourism and forestry are important and often co-existing elements to the diverse agricultural sector in Tasmania.

The purpose of this Protocol Agreement is to provide a framework, guiding principles and process for the tourism and forestry industries to continue to work together to develop and implement mutually beneficial outcomes that support both ongoing wood production and tourism growth.

Parties to this Agreement

This Tourism & Forestry Protocol Agreement is made between the following parties:

- Tourism Industry Council Tasmania
- Forestry Tasmania (which will become Sustainable Timber Tasmania from 1 July 2017)
- Forest Industries Association of Tasmania
- Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association.

The tourism and forestry industries have had a Protocol Agreement in place since 2003, which was extensively revised in 2009. This new 2017 Protocol Agreement replaces these previous agreements, but builds upon the communication, consultation, cooperation and mutual understanding achieved through working together under those agreements.

Key guiding principles

The Parties to this Agreement:

- Recognise that both tourism and forestry are important for the sustainable growth of the Tasmanian economy, employment and investment – and that both industries can and will continue to successfully coexist into the future

- Recognise the diverse nature of both the tourism industry (experience operators, accommodation providers and hospitality providers), the forestry industry (native and plantation forestry, industrial and agri-forestry) and the incorporation of elements of both industries in the agricultural sector
- Recognise that tourism and forest operations are part of the Tasmanian landscape, and that both industries benefit from the opportunities created by Tasmania's forests
- Recognise that Tasmania's forests are well protected by a very extensive reserve system and that remaining forests are managed for multiple uses on a sustainable basis
- Agree that Tasmanian forest planning and management should continue to utilise best practice systems that are similar to those widely adopted in Europe, North America and New Zealand where tourism and wood production operations co-exist and are integrated into the landscape
- Acknowledge that this Agreement is a key tool for building on Tasmania's natural tourism and forest industry advantages – and that all Parties have a shared responsibility for making it work
- Commit to close and ongoing communication and cooperation
- Through respect and consideration of each other's business needs, seek to avoid the creation of areas of potential conflict
- Agree to continue to work together to develop and implement mutually beneficial outcomes that support both ongoing wood production and tourism growth, including where potential or actual issues arise.

Implementation

The parties agree to meet at least once per year to identify emerging or potential strategic issues of concern to either or both industries; to identify additional opportunities to work cooperatively together; and to develop and implement mutually beneficial outcomes that support ongoing wood production and tourism growth.

The parties also agree to meet with or brief each other whenever the need arises if there are significant emerging developments that are likely to be of interest to or affect the other industry.

The parties agree to work cooperatively and constructively together to try to find mutually agreeable solutions whenever specific issues arise in relation to existing or planned forestry operations or tourism developments.

Each party will also continue its current practice of:

- Providing prior notice of any media release or media statement relevant to any other party's interest
- Wherever possible, checking factual issues with the relevant party prior to making any media comment
- Providing notification of any media comments made that may be relevant to any other party's interests.

Operational commitments

In recent years, demand for nature based tourism products has resulted in the development of tourism facilities and operations on or adjacent to production forest land. The forestry industry encourages the use of these forests to support tourism products and services, while also maintaining ongoing wood supply.

Ensuring that both industries continue to benefit from the opportunities these forests create requires awareness and respect for the business needs of all Parties.

To assist this awareness, the forestry industry will brief the TICT (and member organisations if requested) each year on its future planned harvesting and burning operations. Both industries will use this opportunity to proactively identify and provide the earliest possible notification of any issues of potential concern.

To avoid subsequent problems, it is also important that tourism operators take into account the ongoing requirements of the forestry industry when making investment decisions. For example, when new tourism developments are planned, it is the responsibility of the proponent to consult adjoining landowners to understand the surrounding land tenure, road ownership and use, and the likely intentions for forestry management.

While forestry operations can be highly visible because of the hilly or mountainous nature of much of Tasmania, operations generally cannot and need not be hidden from view, but can be designed to reduce visual impact and to harmonise with the local visual character and with land use patterns. The forest industry will therefore seek to put in place measures to minimise visual impact where this is safe, practical, commercially viable, and does not significantly impact on the wood available to industry.

The forestry industry will also seek to reduce the impact of planned burns on visitors and the tourism industry by:

- Avoiding conducting planned burns where there is a significant risk of adversely affecting the experience of visitors attending events
- Managing smoke away from major population areas.

While tourists are permitted to use forestry roads on public land, it is accepted that this must be on the understanding that these roads are first and foremost built and maintained for forestry operations. It is therefore important that users of these forestry roads do so at their own risk, acknowledging that they may be sharing these roads with heavy vehicles.

The parties acknowledge that in the interest of public safety, forestry companies may need to close roads, particularly when harvesting operations are underway in the vicinity. In making decisions about these road closures, forestry companies will seek to minimise inconvenience to tourism operators.

Issue resolution

The intention is to avoid issues but, where they do arise, to seek to resolve them at the local level between those most directly affected wherever possible. However, where necessary, issues may be escalated for resolution at a higher level if local level consultations have not resolved the matter, or where any Party to this agreement believes this is more appropriate or more likely to result in an optimal outcome.

Where issues are related to individual forest operations and/or individual tourism developments, these should be addressed where possible through consultation between local representatives of the directly affected forestry and tourism businesses. If the issues are broader or resolution is not easily achieved at the local level, the issues may be elevated for consultation between regional representatives (e.g. regional tourism industry associations and regional forest managers).

Where an issue cannot be resolved at the local or regional level, or if it is considered by any Party to this agreement to be of strategic importance, it may be elevated to senior management within the relevant parties for consideration and consultation. This may also involve the board of the organisation.

Where there are unresolved issues that any Party to this agreement has major concerns about, a meeting will be convened of senior representatives of the Parties. These representatives will work cooperatively together to develop an agreed and acceptable solution for all parties, or an agreed process for arriving at an acceptable solution.

In all cases, consideration of any issues raised will be assessed for their consistency with, and resolution will be guided by, the key principles set out in this agreement.

Signatories



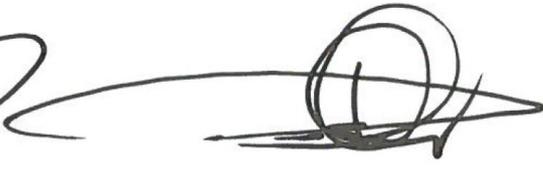
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