

# TEA News

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION INC

## **LANDMARK APPEAL AGAINST PRIVATE TIMBER RESERVE GOES TO THE SUPREME COURT**



View of Woodville from the Bass Highway at Exton Photo © Andrew Ricketts

by Andrew Ricketts and Annemaree Woodward

Tasmania's largest, longest running Forest Practices Tribunal appeal was lost on 13 October 2006.

The hearing over Private Timber Reserve 1698 ran for 17 days. The Environment Association appealed that "the land is not suitable to be a PTR", Meander Valley Council, the PTR was "not in the public interest" and 6 direct neighbours, it would cause them "direct and material disadvantage".

The PTR was supported by the landowners, the Forest Practices Authority, Private Forests Tasmania and Gunns.

We say the decision is wrong and unjust - the Forest Practices Tribunal didn't properly consider the evidence, considered irrelevant factors and erred in law.

In November 2006 The Environment Association lodged an appeal in the Supreme Court to review the Forest Practices Tribunal's decision under the Judicial Review Act. The Forest Practices Tribunal has entered a Notice of Submission and Gunns has indicated it will appear.

During the Tribunal hearing TEA advocated that 'Woodville', the land covered by PTR 1698, be referred to the Minister under the Nature Conservation Act. This proposal, within the Tribunal's jurisdiction, was not given sufficient weight.

We demonstrated to the Tribunal that the owners of 'Woodville' could make more money through conservation

now than by woodchipping over the next 10 years as they plan.

Conservation is far more perilous and the plight of threatened species more pressing on private land than public. The rate of forest extraction, clearance and conversion are greatest on private land, aided by PTRs. Significant private forest conservation is urgently needed to avoid extinctions.

'Woodville' is rich in Threatened, Rare, Endangered and Priority Species - the Spotted Tailed Quoll, Wedge Tailed Eagle, Grey Goshawk, Swift Parrot, Eastern Barred Bandicoot, Green and Gold Frog, Masked Owl, Tasmanian Devil, Eastern Quoll, Tasmanian Bettong and Rare plants *Pimelia filiformis* and *P. curviflora*.

It has diverse geographical environments from rocky hilltops and rock shelves, aeolian dune systems, forests and woodlands to grasslands, steep slopes, swamps and ephemeral watercourses and is an important large remnant of high biodiversity, linking the Meander River with the existing state reserves in Reedy Marsh.

Since 1998 local people have worked to conserve 'Woodville' with some success at opposing logging operations through the Council Development Application process as well as by complaints to the Forest Practices Board and via the media. There's been no logging since February 2003 when a Forest Practices Plan was revoked following a Channel 9 Sun-

day Program exposé of breaches of the Forest Practices Code.

The decision in the Federal Court on Bob Brown's Weilangta case sets a precedent over public land, threatened species, and Federal Law. The Environment Association's Supreme Court action likewise has strong potential to set important precedents under Tasmanian Law for protection of forests and threatened species on private land.

Our long-term dream is to protect "Woodville" with all its biodiversity for the benefit and enjoyment of all. This Supreme Court Appeal is the next step.

Unfortunately our case has stalled as we are having difficulty gaining legal representation probably because this is a forestry issue and Gunns Ltd is a potential opposing party. As well TEA's impoverished state is a stumbling block.

We do have a barrister who is willing to act for TEA if we can't get someone else but we urgently need a solicitor to progress the case.

If you know a legal professional who might help please call Andrew Ricketts on 6368 1343.

The Environment Association recently embarked on a major fundraising drive to provide the necessary financial support to continue this landmark appeal. Donations have started to flow in and you will probably hear from us soon in this regard.

# ENVIRONMENT HOUSE — invest in the future now



Environment House Photo © Annemaree Woodward

## **BUY NOW AND BEAT THE SYSTEM!**

***This is your last chance to purchase a units in Environment House Trust at the original price of only \$500.***

This price was based on the purchase price of \$47,500. This month the new State Land Valuations for Meander Valley Municipality will be applied.

***We expect the new valuation will be at least \$150,000.***

Your \$500 unit could be worth as much as \$1500 next month. This is not only a great investment in the future but a sound financial one. Where else can you buy part of an asset that will increase this much in value within the month?

Don't miss out.

**Send your cheque, payable to Environment House Trust, before June 30, 2007 for one or more units to: The Trustees Ross Ulman & Annie Willock PO Box 75 Deloraine 7304**

## **Solar Upgrade for Environment House**

The long-term plan for Environment House is to redevelop the back to create a solar efficient, solar heated house and to provide a showcase of environmentally responsible options and products. Already the house features low toxicity paints and floor finishes and a low energy electric hot water service.

The latest Commonwealth Government solar rebate scheme could make the solar upgrade of Environment House a reality. The sale of 20 units would bring sufficient funds to apply in this generous dollar for dollar scheme. So do consider buying one or more units to help work towards this worthy goal.

Note that the solar panels would be on the back of the roof and would not intrude on the heritage façade.

If you want to be involved in planning and implementing the solar redevelopment please contact the Trustees at the address above.

To find out more about the solar rebate scheme visit the website of The Australian Greenhouse Office.

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## **Rooms to rent**

Environment House has two commercial rooms available for rent together or separately.

For information about the rental please contact of Lennice of Deloraine 1st National Real Estate on 63623570

### **Meeting room available**

The meeting room is available for hire on a half day or full day basis.

It's a good space meetings, craft activities, discussion groups, lectures etc.

Hire fee for a Full day is \$30 and for half day, \$15 (with concessions for non-funded groups).

The Environment Association Inc provides Public Liability insurance for people using the meeting room at no extra cost.

To book the room please call Annemaree on 6368 1343.

# A Great Western Tiers National Park NOW!

In 1995 the Great Western Tiers National Park Campaign, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Tasmanian Conservation Trust and The Wilderness Society launched an extended proposal for A Great Western Tiers National Park.

During the Regional Forest Agreement this popular national park proposal was almost granted. The failure of the governments to declare the national park left many local people feeling despondent. Now there is renewed interest in working towards that long-standing goal.

The Environment Association Inc grew out of the campaign to protect the Tiers from logging and remains a firm advocate for the Great Western Tiers National Park.

Many TEA News readers would have signed a petition back in the 1990s calling on governments to make the Great Western Tiers a national park.



Photo Western Bluff from the north © L. Goldsworthy

You can affirm your support for the Great Western Tiers National Park. Please email us on [tea\\_inc@tasmail.com](mailto:tea_inc@tasmail.com) and tell us that you want a Great Western Tiers National Park — *NOW!*

Don't let this magnificent icon of northern Tasmania fall prey to the rapacious demands of a Gunn's pulp mill.

We'll be in touch again to let you know what else you can do to help make the national park a reality.

## Meander Valley Council's PAL Planning Scheme amendment

There surely isn't a resident of Meander Valley who doesn't know about this unpopular move on the part of Meander Valley Council. If you want to know more about it visit the MVC website then visit the TEA website to read our submission.

Council received over 200 submissions objecting to various aspects of the proposed amendment. The amendment is anti-community and opposition is coming from all sectors of the community.

A recent meeting of the newly formed Meander Valley Action Group attracted over 500 people despite that night having gale force winds and heavy rains.

It's good to see other groups taking an interest in the activities of council. Only by people keeping council under scrutiny that proper representation of community needs and aspirations can ensue.

From an environmental perspective it's important to note that the PAL amendment would remove all environment protection from the zone intent.

Many people believe the amendment is designed to promote the expansion of forestry on private land in readiness for a pulp mill

This year there will be local government elections in October or November. There is a real need for new people to be elected to council. If you've ever thought about standing for council now might be the right time to do it.

If you want to stand on an environment platform and would like some help with issues please feel free to contact TEA on 6368 1343.

If you live in the Meander Valley don't miss the Public Meeting called by the Council in response to a community petition.

**7.30 pm Thursday, 5 July 2007**  
**Deloraine Community Centre**  
**Alverston Drive, Deloraine.**

Council will receive submissions for or against the issue up to the close of business on 18 June 2007, addressed to Meander Valley Council  
Greg Preece  
General Manger  
PO Box 102 Westbury Tas 7303.

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## **Important Community Event coming up**

A meeting called by the Western Rivers Preservation Trust and other community groups to hear five excellent speakers talk on water issues.

**June 27, 7.30 pm at the Deloraine Community Complex Alverston Drive Deloraine**

Speakers are: Mr Robert Belcher, Founder and Chairman of Sustainable Agriculture Communities Australia; Dr Alison Bleaney, Community doctor at St Helens; Dr David Lehman, expert hydrologist; Councillor David Clement of Break O Day, very involved in water issues in his municipality.

**Visit The Environment Association's website <http://tassie.org.au/tea/>**

Soon to be posted are:

TEA's submission to the Meander Valley Council's Draft PAL amendment  
The Convenor's Report to the recent AGM  
Great Western Tiers National Park Proposal

Please bear with us as we update the website as the website volunteer has many other commitments.