

STATE FOREST RESOURCES OF THE PENINSULA AND THEIR MANAGEMENT — PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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Utilisation of forest resources of Tasman Peninsula began during the convict period of Port Arthur settlement and continues today. The Tasmanian Forestry Commission manages the State Forests of the peninsula for multiple uses including wood production, conservation, recreation, landscape and water.

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INTRODUCTION

A large area of Tasman Peninsula (6295 ha or approximately 14%) is State Forest. A considerable part of the forested estate of the peninsula, particularly adjacent to roads and townships, is under private ownership. The present forest estate is mainly regrowth forest (less than 110 years old), the result of past wildfires and intensive logging operations. Forest types range from cool temperate rainforest and highly productive tall, wet eucalypt forest to low productivity open dry eucalypt forests and woodlands. The main commercial timber species are stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*, *E. delegatensis*), swamp gum (*E. regnans*) and blue gum (*E. globulus*).

HISTORY OF FOREST USE

Forest utilisation commenced on the peninsula during the days of Port Arthur settlement, when a convict sawmill operated for construction of boats and building materials. During the mid-nineteenth century many small sawmills serviced by a network of horsedrawn tramways were established employing more than 200 men.

A large mill operated at Fortescue Bay which was a main port exporting sawn timber and blue gum piles. Today there are only a few small part-time private mills.

There was no attempt at forest management until the 1930s when the fledgling Forestry Department set up unemployment camps with a

permanent office at Taranna. Activities included fire protection and regrowth thinning. Sawmilling operations were associated with selective logging with no attempt at regeneration.

In 1954 Australian Paper Manufacturers (A.P.M.) was granted pulpwood rights to State Forest on the peninsula by Parliament. Logging of mainly regrowth stands commenced in 1977.

Following A.P.M.'s cessation of operations in 1982 a short-term sale of oldgrowth pulpwood was negotiated with Tasmanian Pulp and Forest Holdings Ltd (T.P.F.H.) commencing in 1980. Most operations will be on Forestier Peninsula in cut-over forest. Future sales after 1988 are unknown, pending a decision on the use of the Southern Forests resource. These recent clearfelling operations have been fully integrated, producing pulpwood and sawlogs for Hobart and country sawmills. Following logging the areas are burnt and subsequently sown with eucalypt seed.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Management of State Forests is the responsibility of the Forestry Commission. The Commission has four full-time employees based at Taranna. The peninsula is within the Triabunna Forest District. The Commission is responsible for all planning, regeneration and fire protection. The present network of forest roads was built and is maintained by the Commission. Future roading is likely to be built by industry due to financial constraints. The Commission

also manages the forest for other values besides wood production including conservation, recreation, landscape and water.

A major forest reserve of 1470 ha protects the scenic eastern coastline from Waterfall Bay to Cape Pillar State Reserve. Within this reserve major camping facilities are provided at Fortescue Bay. A full-time caretaker has been appointed.

The whole of Tasman Peninsula is listed on the Register of the National Estate. The recent *Memorandum of Understanding* signed by the State and Federal Governments covering forest operations producing export woodchip between 1988 and 2003, allows logging operations to continue in accordance with visual management planning which takes into account the views of the Commonwealth on protection of National Estate Values.

The Forestry Commission is currently preparing a detailed zoning plan and multiple use forest management plan for State Forest taking into account the *Memorandum of Understanding* agreement. Visual

management plans have been prepared using the Commission's Visual Management System.

Forest operations on private land will from next year have to comply with the *Forest Practices Act* 1985. Harvesting plans will have to be prepared and approved. These plans will have to take into account registered National Estate Values and landscape values.

THE FUTURE

Careful management of both crown and private forests on Tasman Peninsula will ensure that the valuable forest resources can continue to be sensitively utilised without affecting the landscape, recreational and tourism values.

There is scope for increased tourist use of the forests.

(The full text of the paper presented by Mr A. Blakesley is not available. A summary is given above.)