

HWC Environmental Achievements

An original mission statement of the Hobart Walking Club when it was formed in 1929 was:

“To preserve and protect the natural environment”.

The Club is non-political but has always been active in voicing concerns about proposals that threaten to diminish the natural values of the State.

The Club’s annual publication *The Tasmanian Tramp* was begun in 1933 and continues to this day, as a permanent record of events and to stimulate public interest in wild areas. Its 90 years of pioneering words have aimed to publicise and protect our natural environment.

The HWC’s work on conservation of the natural environment: some key events in the 90 years, 1933 to 2023

Issue	Date	Club’s Involvement	Outcome
Campaign to create a Frenchmans Cap reserve/national park	1933 - 1941	Club trips to Frenchmans Cap (1933-34) and magic lantern slide shows led to lobbying of Government for better tracks in the area, to build the Lake Vera hut, and to spur interest in making the area a reserve.	Frenchmans area 23,600 acres gazetted in 1941 as a scenic reserve, following efforts mainly by Club member Ray Livingston
Club Photographic subcommittee formed	1935 - 1936	Photographic Committee created at AGM to start a library of lantern slides from photos from Club trips	Presentations attracted wide public interest in wild places
Mt Field National Park boundaries changed	1948 - 1951	First campaign to save a national park spearheaded by Club members and other organisations. Campaign against recission of park land and reallocation to forestry (Australian Newsprint Mills) for newsprint production. Representations to parliamentarians and Ministers.	Campaign was lost in 1951. The boundary near Mt Field West was redrawn to exclude forests.
Representation on early Park Boards: Mt Field, Cradle Mountain. The Park Boards were forerunners of NPWS.	1937/38 - 1970	1930s first Club representatives were appointed to Park Boards. Early 1950s members Bobs Petersen, Leo Luckman and Jack Thwaites were members of the Mt Field and Cradle Mountain Park Boards.	Membership enhanced the Club’s position as an authority on parks/wilderness area management.
Scenery Preservation Board	1954	Jack Thwaites was appointed a Board member. Later he became Secretary.	
Formation of Tas Flora and Fauna Conservation Committee	1950 - 1972	Jessie Luckman and other members established this committee.	Promoted interest in endemic and endangered species.
Public slide shows	1950s – 1977	Members’ colour slides were shown to audiences throughout southern Tasmania.	Presentations attracted public interest in wild places.

Issue	Date	Club's Involvement	Outcome
Lake Pedder National Park	1954	Arthur Knight and other members lobbied for reservation of Lake Pedder area as a national park.	New park gazetted on 16/2/1955.
Documentary movie "Five South West" made at Lake Pedder and Bathurst Harbour	1960	Club assisted in movie production, including six members who participated in front of the camera.	Enhanced public interest in the little known south west wilderness
Club permanent subcommittees	1967 - present	Club Parks and Environment subcommittees were formed.	Enabled Club to formulate clear policies on issues of concern.
Trackwork in southwest	1960	The Government asked the Club to advise on a program of trackwork in the southwest.	This work was completed in 1965.
Lake Pedder/ Middle Gordon HEC scheme	1962 - 1972	Brenda Hean organised a public exhibition regarding the threat by HEC Gordon River power development. Club members gave evidence to Legislative Council Select Committee re flooding Lake Pedder and revoking its National Park status. Strong anti-dam campaigns were mounted with other community groups, such as the Lake Pedder Action Committee, including deputations to Ministers, submissions to government inquiries, letter writing, slide shows etc.	Dams were built, and Lake Pedder was flooded in 1972
Omega communications base	1970 - 1977	Opposition to construction of facility in wilderness areas (rumoured that Mt Pelion area was considered)	Base built in Gippsland 1982. Now demolished.
South West Committee (1963) Tasmanian Conservation Trust (1968)	1960s	Club members including Agnete Damgaard were prominent in the establishment of these non-HWC public committees	Promoted strong interest in conservation of wilderness areas
Cockle Creek / Weld River artillery range	1972	Brief campaign (letter writing, public announcements) against army proposal to construct an artillery practice range near Cockle Creek.	Idea quickly dropped in face of strong public opposition by conservation groups
Tasman National Park proposal	1970s –	Concurrent with HWC construction of the Tasman Trail, proposals by Club president (Frank Morley) were made in the media to allocate Crown land for a new national park on the east Tasman Peninsula.	Coastal areas reserved, and then made a National Park in 1999.

Issue	Date	Club's Involvement	Outcome
Precipitous Bluff limestone mining proposal	1972 - 1980 (court cases)	Individual members and other organisations lobbied against mining of PB and for its reservation in a southwest park; HWC donated \$600 to support legal action instituted by some members (Bob Wyatt) and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust.	PB and other areas Reserved in a park in 1978.
Formation of new environmental bodies	1970s	Financial support given to establish the Tasmanian Wilderness Society (now the Wilderness Society). Support and membership of the Tasmanian Environment Centre.	Promoted strong interest in wider environmental issue and conservation of wilderness areas
Hartz Mountains Park boundaries modified	1970s	Land reserved for Hartz Park was revoked and allocated for forestry use.	Park size was diminished and wilderness values affected by nearby logging
Franklin River/ Lower Gordon River HEC Scheme	1976-1983	HEC proposals for damming the lower Gordon River were opposed in large and multifaceted campaigns.	Construction stopped by High Court in 1983
Mt Wellington Cable Car (various proposals)	1970s, 1982, 1993, 2014 - 2023	Representations made to media, rally in Wellington Park. In March 1994 the Club organised walks on Mt Wellington to highlight possible effects of the Skyway proposal. Between 200 and 300 members showed their opposition to this development and support for the mountain. Written objections were forwarded on the latest Mt Wellington Cableway Development Application in 2021.	On-going concern.
Maria Island Management Plan	2020	Constructive submission sent in from the HWC Environment Subcommittee	Ongoing
Application for a shooting range on Mount Maggs by Kentish Rifle Club	2022	Club opposition added to strong public opposition.	Declined by Kentish Valley Council
Cradle Mt Cableway Proposal	2022	Opposed by HWC.	Proposal shelved after removal of Federal finance.
Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (TPWS) walker registration system	2021	Communication with TPWS about Club concerns led to meetings in 2021, 2022 and 2023 to discuss progress and issues arising.	Ongoing
Hall Island – Lake Malbena Development Proposal	2022	Walkers formed groups and joined protests at the lake. Letter of opposition sent to Aust. Govt. Dept. of Environment.	Outcome being considered by Federal Minister Tanya Plibersek

Draft Wellington Park Visitor and Information Strategy	2023	Club provided comments on proposals to Wellington Park Management Trust	Ongoing
--	------	---	---------

Information sourced from:

- Various editions of *The Tasmanian Tramp* since 1933
- HWC annual reports, and General and Executive meeting reports
- *The Mercury* newspaper including material sourced from TROVE
- 'A timeline of some key Club events', compiled by Club Life Member Midj Jones, 2021

References and further reading:

- Luckman, Jessie. (1974) 'The Club's Role in Conservation'. *The Tasmanian Tramp*, No.21 p.7
- Hean, Brenda. (1972) 'The Tragedy of Lake Pedder'. *The Tasmanian Tramp* No.20 p.10 and p.13
- Angus, Max. (1975) *The World of Olegas Truchanas*. Wilke and Co. Victoria.
- Daly, Helen. (2022) 'Vale Lake Pedder'. *The Tasmanian Tramp*, No.44, pp.131-135.
- Damgaard, Agnete. (1966) 'The South-West Committee'. *The Tasmanian Tramp*, No.17 pp.50-52
- Gee, Helen, Fenton, Janet. (1979) *The South West Book*, Australian Conservation Foundation.
- Brown, Bob. (1985) *Lake Pedder*, Wilderness Society. Tien Wah Press Singapore.
- Cica, Natasha. (2011) *Pedder Dreaming*. University of Queensland Press.
- Southwell, Les. (1983) *The Mountains of Paradise: The Wilderness of Southwest Tasmania*, Les Southwell Pty. Ltd. p. 211