



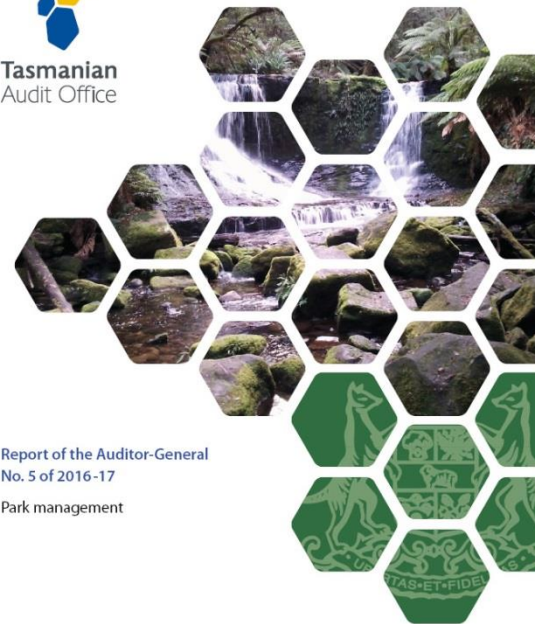
**Tasmanian**  
Audit Office

# Park management

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL  
No. 5 of 2016–17



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Park management

November 2016

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# Why this audit?

- From our *2015–16 Annual Plan of Work*
- No previous performance audit of park management
- Tasmanians expect parks to be effectively managed and protected with increasing visitor numbers

# Audit objective

To form an opinion on how effectively Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) manages the State's national parks by reference to the adequacy of:

- planning processes
- plan implementation

# Audit scope

- Performance of the PWS over the period 2010–15
- Included National Parks, but largely excluded other parks and reserves
- Chose a sample of eight National Parks for testing

# Chapter 1: Logical allocation of funding and resources?

We examined:

- allocation of funding to National Parks
- budget allocation by activity
- the impact of the 2013 transfer of 315 600 hectares (ha) from Forestry Tasmania (FT) to PWS

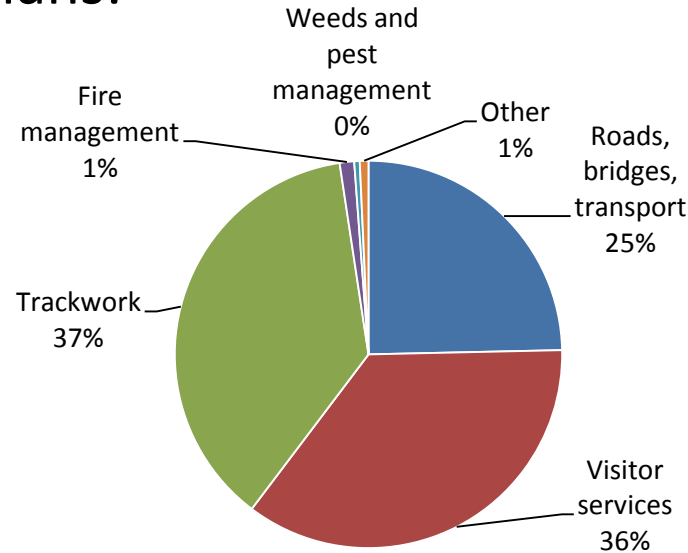
# Funding to national parks?

- Priorities for big projects e.g. Three Capes Track
- Regional business plans prioritised projects around safety, benefits to visitors and community
- At field centres, staffing based on history, visitor numbers, internal complexity model

**Concluded: PWS had a logical process for funding and resourcing parks**

# Funding between activities?

Regional business plans:



# Funding between activities?

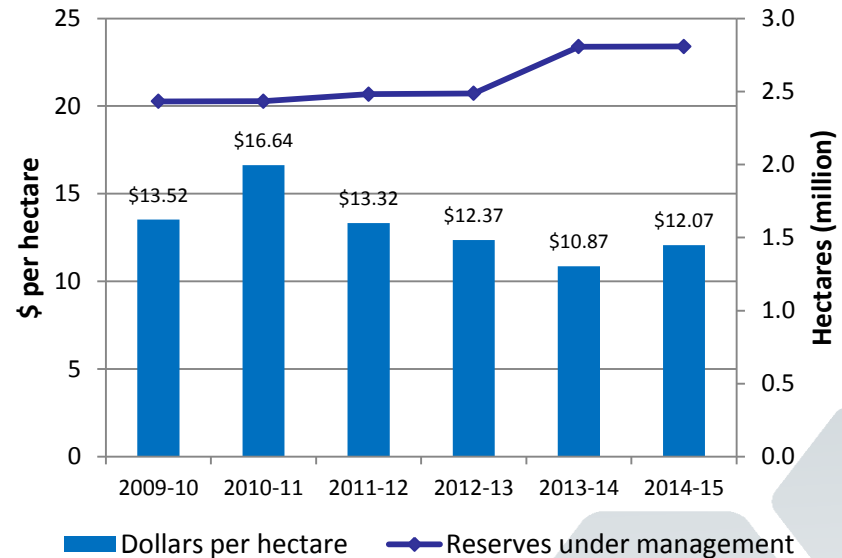
- Fire management at 10%
- Chart does not include:
  - Other PWS branches and Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) units
  - Volunteer work

**Concluded: regionally there was little priority for pests, weeds and diseases**



# Additional FT reserves?

In 2013, 315 600ha from Tasmanian Forest Intergovernmental Agreement (TFIGA) and 412 000ha as Future Potential Production Forest (FPPF)



# Additional FT reserves?

- Legislative Council Committee recommended \$10/ha to \$16/ha
- Other jurisdictions spend more (Aus average \$26/ha)

**Concluded: 2014–15 appropriation per hectare continued to be low compared to other jurisdictions or funding of PWS in previous years**

# Chapter 2: Managing high-value assets?

Were high-value assets:

- formally identified?
- protected by management processes?
- subject to risk management?

# High-value assets identified?

Park management plans (PMPs):

- Assessed park values
- PWS sought stakeholder engagement
- But PMPs outdated

**Concluded: identified high-value assets but PMPs outdated**

# Processes to protect high-value assets?

PMPs and site plans strategies and actions outdated

Other processes in place include

- Zone systems
- Reserve activity assessments (RAAs)
- Environmental management system (EMS)

**Concluded: some relevant actions, but no systematic process for management of identified high-value assets**

# Risk management for high-value assets?

*Environmental Risk Management Policy (2007)* in place:

- PMPs and site plans analysed risk
- Risk monitoring through RAAs and the EMS
- No annual report for each park to support PMPs

**Concluded: no mechanism for routine monitoring of risks for high-value assets**

# Chapter 3: Effectively managing threats?

## Threats from:

- Bushfires
- Pests, weeds and diseases (PWDs)
- Human impact

Examined whether PWS had planned and implemented strategies

# Effectively managing bushfires?

- PWS had fire management plans, strategic, regional and local
- Range of objectives and related strategies implemented
- A bushfire risk assessment model had been implemented

**Concluded: PWS effectively managing bushfire threat**



# Effectively managing PWDs?

- PMPs identifies threats, but dated
- Strategies outlined in PMPs and Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) had a specific weed strategy. Few actions in business plans and only 8% of RAAs related to PWDs
- EMS will improve monitoring

**Concluded: PWS docs out-of-date, few strategies or actions to control threats and no routine monitoring**

# Managing human impact?

- PMPs identifies threats, but dated
- *Reserves Standards Framework* established zones
- RAA process assesses human impact
- Strategies include visitor education and limits on numbers
- Need for centralised risk register

**Concluded: no effective system for monitoring identified risks**

# Chapter 4: Managing Infrastructure and visitor safety?

Examined whether PWS had:

- defined objectives?
- maintenance plans?
- monitored risks?

## Defined objectives?

- Defined objectives for infrastructure, via PMPs, *Reserve Standards Framework* and business plans
- E.g. encouraged visitors, services consistent with park values and development in zones

**Concluded: PWS had defined high-level objectives and safety requirements**

# Infrastructure maintenance plans?

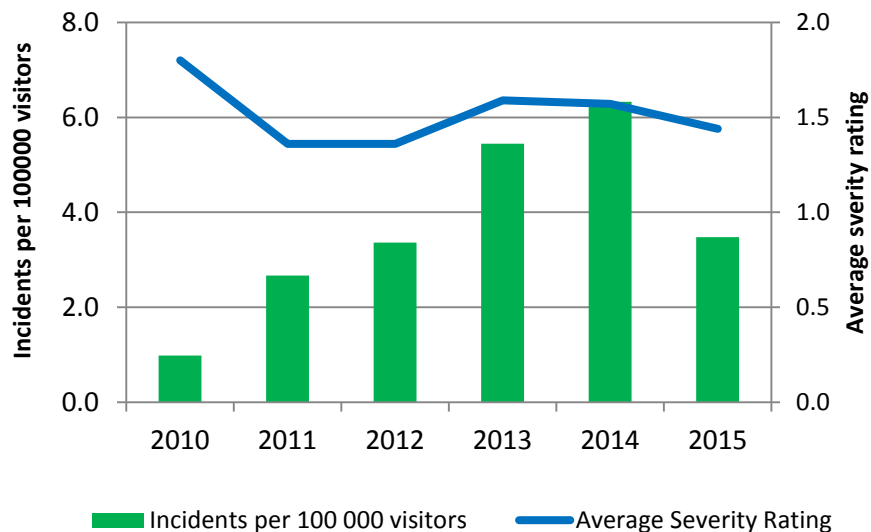
- *Reserves Standards Framework* set standards
- 48% park assets maintained in 2014–15
- Asset Management System not fully implemented

**Concluded: frequently used infrastructure was effectively maintained but little evidence of structured program for walking and 4WD tracks**

# Monitoring infrastructure and visitor risk?

- Visitor risk management policy included monitoring of assets
- 323 condition inspections in 2015–16

# Monitoring infrastructure and visitor risk?



**Concluded: extensive inspection regime. Safety statistic of incidents per 100 000 had risen**

# Recommendations

Ten recommendations including:

- More emphasis on PWDs in regional business plans
- PWS to review funding
- Update and revise PMPs and use for monitoring high-value assets and threats, measurability of goals
- Greater emphasis on PWDs
- Implement EMS
- Centralised risk register
- Structured approach to infrastructure maintenance





# Responses

## DPIPWE

- emphasised other work for PWDs with partners but will review regional business plans
- noted significant project funding in reference to infrastructure
- is reviewing PMPs and measurability of objectives
- some RAA risks not conducive to inclusion on a centralised risk register
- supported recommendations 9 and 10

Any questions?