



Dear Mr Jacobi,

We are writing to you in relation to the proposed heli-tourism development at Lake Malbena. After a number of public statements made by you as the Director of the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS), we believe that there are significant number of questions in the public interest that are yet to be addressed. Given the importance of this area to all Tasmanians, and your responsibility to protect its World heritage values, we urge you please provide a response to the following questions to clarify the confusing and contradictory statements made so far.

1. Is the exclusive lease over Halls Island in force?

On the 28th of November 2019 you gave the following statement on ABC radio:

“The reality is though that the lease is in effect and anybody visiting Halls Island should seek Daniel and Simone Hackett’s approval or permission to go there”

However, earlier that year on the 4th of March 2019 you had a seemingly different message when, in a letter to the Tasmanian National Parks Association, you stated:

“The commercial lease over the remainder of the island is contingent on the development obtaining all necessary approvals. If those approvals are secured, then the lease affords the operator exclusive use.”

These statements appear to contradict each other. How can you say that people need the approval of the Hacketts to visit Halls Island when you have also said that exclusive use relies on approvals? Approvals that had not been obtained by the time of your statement in November and indeed have still not been granted at the time of writing. Please now clearly explain the status of public access to Halls Island. If indeed permission from Daniel and Simone Hackett *is* required, meaning that public access to the island has been restricted, then you are required by PWS regulations to publicise this through signage and published materials. Again, at the time of writing, no such statements or signage exist.

2. Why does the lease describe huts rather than a standing camp?

Despite the rezoning of Halls Island from ‘Wilderness’ to ‘Self Reliant Recreation’ (at the request of the developer), according to the TWWHA Management Plan, huts are not permitted to be built within this zone. Instead, in the PWS Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) the buildings were classified as a ‘standing camp’. Could you please clarify how the proposed four huts, consistently referred to in the lease as ‘huts’, can now be classed as a standing camp in PWS documents?

3. What was the exact area of Halls Island that was historically leased, and what were the conditions?

On November 28th 2019, you told ABC radio that:

“Halls Island has been the subject of a lease for many years”.

There appears to be no public record of a lease covering Halls Island prior to the one signed by Wild Drake (the Hacketts' business) in 2018. Can you please provide a copy of this lease?

4. Why is the private boat, authorised for surveys for Stage 2, still in place, even though Stage 2 has been abandoned?

In 2019, you authorised Wild Drake to deliver a drift boat (a boat specifically designed for fishing) by helicopter to Lake Malbena. As justification for this action, PWS wrote that this boat was authorised to facilitate surveys for Stage 2 of the development. Given that Stage 2 has effectively been abandoned, it would now appear that the boat was flown in for a reason that no longer exists. Can you please confirm whether PWS has or will now ask Wild Drake to remove the boat? The Inland Fisheries Service Code specifically lists the World Heritage Area lakes where fishing from a boat is allowed. Lake Malbena is not one of them, so how can a fishing boat be allowed to remain?

5. Who is actually responsible for the management of Halls Island?

According to Wild Drake's own botanical assessment, Halls Island is home to large areas of highly sensitive alpine vegetation. Given this assessment, and the increased visitation since PWS and the developer have been promoting the proposal, can you please clarify who now is actually responsible for the management of the environment on this ten-hectare World Heritage listed island? If public access is indeed still possible until permits are granted, do visitors need to notify the PWS of land management issues and impacts or do they notify the Wild Drake company?

6. What approvals were given to Wild Drake to install surveillance cameras on Halls Island, and what policies governed their use?

Given that it is still unclear whether the exclusive lease on Halls Island is in effect because permits have not yet been granted, it is therefore still unclear whether the Island can be accessed by the public. Can you please clarify what regulations or PWS policies govern the use of surveillance cameras in World Heritage Areas? In addition, what, if any, permission was granted to Wild Drake to install cameras on Halls Island? What plan was in place to ensure the privacy of people accessing the Island, given that no signage was ever installed advising that cameras would be in operation? Who now owns the images on these cameras and what can they be used for?

7. How will conflict with existing users be managed?

Given that the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council advised against approving this proposal and specifically cited conflict with other users in the area, how do either the PWS or Wild Drake intend to manage inevitable conflicts between users of the Island? Can you please clarify if PWS intend to provide developers and their employees with powers under the National Parks and Reserves Management Act to evict people from World Heritage land?

8. Who paid for the Parks/ Wild Drake helicopter flight to Halls Island?

In March 2019 you took a helicopter flight to Halls Island with the developers. You took this flight after planning permission for the project had been rejected by the Central Highlands Council. Can you please

clarify what the purpose of this flight was and if any of the cost of this flight was charged to Wild Drake or whether it was paid for by the PWS with public money?

9. Walk to Halls Island prior to signing off?

Before you sign off on the final permits for this proposal, will you commit to walking into Lake Malbena and spending time exploring the area, experiencing the silence, wildness and World Heritage Values with Tasmanian bushwalkers and fishers who access the area by foot? You gave your time to fly in with the developers, will you also afford the same to the users of the area by walking in with Tasmanians?

We would appreciate your help in clarifying the details surrounding this proposal in our World Heritage Area and look forward to your response to our questions as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Jacobson, Brett Smith and Dan Broun

On behalf of Fishers and Walkers Against Helicopter Access (FAWAHA)