



Peg Putt MHA GREENS OPPOSITION LEADER

Monday, 8 SEPTEMBER 2003

GOVERNMENT MINISTERS ARE DUCKING THREATENED SPECIES ISSUE AT RECHERCHE BAY

Plans do NOT Deal With Protection

The Tasmanian Greens today accused Tasmanian government ministers of attempting to duck the issue of a critically endangered plant species whose survival is threatened by a proposed logging road through the Southport Lagoon Conservation Area.

Greens Opposition Leader and Spokesperson on Parks, Heritage and Forestry, Peg Putt MHA, who yesterday raised the matter to mark National Threatened Species Day, called for both the Premier in his capacity as Minister for Parks and Wildlife and the Environment Minister to reveal whether they would take heed of expert opinion which identifies the proposed logging access road through the reserve to Recherche Bay in the listing statements for the swamp eyebright as a threat to the species survival.

Ms Putt said that a plan approving the road which had been prepared under the auspices of the Forest Practices Board had failed to make specific mention of, or provisions to protect, the threatened herb found only in this one place, but that fortunately that plan had now lapsed.

“Its not good enough for the Premier and his Environment Minister to try and duck their responsibility on the threat to survival of this critically endangered species by refusing to make any public statements,” Ms Putt said.

“People’s intelligence has been insulted with a generic statement from an anonymous spokesperson who claimed that threats to endangered species are assessed, when the facts of this case are that an official plan for the road was approved which did not even specifically identify the species or make proper provisions to ensure its survival.”



The listing statement for the critically endangered swamp eyebright, of which a maximum of 40 plants has ever been counted and whose current population is believed to number 10 plants found only in the one 50 metre by 50 metre area, states that the species is at risk of being destroyed by track braiding resulting from 4WD activity and:

“a logging road proposed through the Conservation Area to private land with no other viable access will provide an alternative entry point to the area south of Southport Lagoon. Even though recreational 4WD vehicles will be prohibited from using this access, it is still likely to attract significant illegal use. Worse still, the lay of the land will actually channel traffic from the proposed road through the swamp eyebright population as vehicles attempt to keep to the less boggy high ground.”¹

“I am saying to the Premier and the Environment Minister, come out of hiding and face up to your responsibilities to protect this endangered species.”

ATTACHED: (3) relevant pages from official *Forest Practices Plan, Plan Type: Roding*. (now lapsed).

¹ State Threatened Species Listing Statement, Threatened Species Unit, DPIWE, June 2001.