

# Clearfell logging simply does not fit with Tasmania's best interests

**Fiona Weaver says tourism and logging do not go together, and while clearfelling continues other far more economically beneficial businesses will struggle to survive**

A FEW weeks ago, 160 tourism operators and nature-based experience providers signed an open letter to the state government calling for an end to native-forest logging in Tasmania.

Industrial-scale logging is directly at odds with Tasmania's "clean green" image and the continued logging of forests has the potential to severely damage the eco-tourism industry.

Tasmania is internationally renowned as a world-class nature-based tourism destination. People want to come here to experience our untouched natural beauty. Our forests are among the biggest drawcards.

Our island is home to the tallest trees in the southern hemisphere and the largest tract of temperate rainforest in Australia. People want to come and experience them.

Unfortunately, to visit these

remarkable forests, tourists have to drive past large areas of clearfell, where the charred remains of massive trees litter the landscape. Huge stumps more than 4m wide are the only reminders that an old-growth forest once stood there.

Tourists are often horrified by this sight and are equally shocked to find that Tasmania is still logging trees that would be well over 500 years old.

Even mountain bikers will soon be confronted with the

sight of clearfell as they visit the world-class Blue Derby mountain bike trails. Logging will be taking place in two areas besides the trails, creating a visible scar in a landscape. Proposed logging areas have also been scheduled right next to the shuttle bus road at the Maydena Bike Park in a patch of forest that contains Tasmania's widest tree.

Tourism is a big money earner for our state. It pumps a

massive \$1.49 billion into the economy each year. The Blue Derby Bike Park alone attracts 30,000 visitors a year and contributes \$30 million into the regional community. In contrast, the logging industry has been highly unprofitable year after year.

Forestry Tasmania has lost \$1.3 billion in revenue over the past 20 years.

Jobs in forestry have continually been over-estimated by the industry in

order for it to try to maintain its legitimacy. The reality is that there are only 1100 direct jobs in native-forest logging in Tasmania, which includes the log truck drivers, through to the mill workers and the bureaucrats in planning. There are more people working in newsagents in Tasmania than in native-forest logging.

Tourism, in contrast, is one of the biggest employment sectors in the state. It accounts for 42,000 jobs — that's more

than 17 per cent of all the jobs in Tasmania. This could expand further given proper investment.

For instance, tall-tree tourism is underdeveloped in Tasmania. Our state is known for its giant trees, yet little infrastructure exists to allow people to experience these forests.

In the US, tall-tree tourism is a huge industry, with just four coastal redwood reserves drawing in \$A58 million per

year and providing more than 500 jobs to the local communities.

Tourists want to come to our state to experience nature. They want to marvel at our tall trees, not visit a clearfell.

Mountain bikers want to ride through untouched forests, not a barren wasteland.

Tasmania has a bright economic future in sustainable, nature-based tourism. It's time to embrace

this future and let go of dying, unprofitable industries such as forestry. Our forests are worth more standing.

**Fiona Weaver has been operating Tassie Bound Adventure Tours with her husband, Liam, for more than 10 years. Their business is based near Maydena. Fiona is also the founder of Derwent Valley Tasmania Tourism, a collective of more than 100 local tourism operators and stakeholders.**

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