

Peter Gutwein MP, Minister for Tourism
Luke Martin, Tourism Industry Council Tasmania
Steve Whitely, Sustainable Timber Tasmania

Friday 18 December 2020

Dear Peter, Luke and Steve

Re: Tasmania's widest known tree

I am writing to you about the recent discovery of Tasmania's widest known tree, near Maydena.

Apologies for including you in the same letter but all being on the same page seemed the most efficient approach.

The tree in question - its coordinates are -42.770839 146.626811 - is

- found just outside Maydena
- measures over 20 metres in circumference
- on Permanent Timber Production Zone land
- metres from logging coupe TN031B, which is on Forestry Tasmania's current logging schedule and is due to be clearfelled
- metres from a track used by Maydena Bike Park.

Trees as close as this one is to logging boundaries regularly become 'collateral damage' when logging takes place. As the tree is 66 metres high, it is under Sustainable Timber Tasmania's (entirely arbitrary) giant tree height of 85 metres and so is loggable.

I understand that no logging tape has been added to coupe TN031B boundary meaning that no logistical decisions have yet been made about the specific area that will be clearfelled. This tree currently falls outside the proposed coupe boundary but that boundary could easily move to include it when the tape is added to determine the specific area to be logged. Bottom line: this tree is currently unprotected and vulnerable.

There is a huge opportunity to turn this tree into a local tourism asset. It's possible to picture it with a walking board to and around it, information

signage at its base and featuring in tourism marketing collateral. As it's also close to the Styx Big Tree Forest Reserve, it's also possible to envisage it as a logical stop-off destination en route. The local Maydena community would, I am sure, readily appreciate a new tourism drawcard like this.

Having been in touch with Maydena Bike Park, I can confirm that they are open to considering ways this tree and its location could be activated to become a tourist attraction.

Therefore, I hope it will be possible to turn this into a 'good news story', whereby the tree and area around it is protected from logging and steps can be taken to create a tourism destination out of this opportunity. Perhaps, in the first instance, STT could confirm that the tree won't be logged and that it has created a buffer zone around the tree.

This is also an opportune moment to suggest that the Government consider developing a big tree tourism plan, comparable to places such as [New Zealand](#) and [California](#). It's hard to see how Tasmania's new widest-known tree wouldn't have a starring role in such a plan.

For nature,



Tom Allen
Campaign manager
Wilderness Society Tasmania