

A REVIEW OF COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT IN THE
MANAGEMENT OF THE
ARTHUR-PIEMAN
CONSERVATION AREA

NORTH-WEST ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

REPORT PREPARED BY
DAVID HENDERSON
&
MATTHEW CAMPBELL-ELLIS

PO BOX 999
BURNIE 7320

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Many members of the community have a deep love and commitment to the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area. While we have not been able to contact everyone with an interest in the area, we have endeavored to talk with a representative cross section of groups and parties involved with the management or use of the reserve. We have found the strong feelings toward the area from all groups and individuals involved in the management and use of the reserve remarkable. We would like to acknowledge and emphasize the community-wide commitment and overwhelming importance all parties we contacted placed on appropriate and careful management of the reserve. There is consensus that improvement in the management of this important reserve is urgently required.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area (APCA) is a large and unique reserve on the West Coast of Tasmania. The reserve contains one of the greatest concentrations of Aboriginal heritage sites in Australia, is home to an array of threatened and endangered species, is a recreational area for a diverse range of users and is also managed for primary and extractive industries. In 2002 a comprehensive management plan was approved by both houses of the Tasmanian Parliament prescribing a unique community based management structure to be implemented by the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS). This report reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of both the prescribed structures and their implementation by the PWS. The review is based on the results of a series of interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, secondary data sources, academic literature, observations of formal meetings and insider knowledge as the authors are also participants in the management process. The report makes 44 recommendations aimed at improving the community involvement in APCA management.

The main finding of the review is that while the broad structure for community involvement is sound, significant confusion surrounds the roles and responsibilities of the various groups created by the APCA Management Plan (APCA MP). The central point of confusion is whether the APCA Management Committee (APCA MC) is an advisory group or a management committee. This confusion permeates throughout the varied structures and interactions between the PWS and the community. The review has collected evidence suggesting this confusion has fostered conflict, frustration and a paralysis of management action leading in turn to cultural heritage and environmental degradation.

There is consensus that involving the community is important, however the review found that PWS staff have an outdated view of community relationships, attitudes and values toward management issues and are not actively fostering and supporting the strong stewardship ethic that exists within the community toward the APCA. The review found that the PWS could make significant gains in their relationship with the community through the implementation of current best practice community engagement processes and procedures. The PWS requires officers with specialist community facilitation, strategic planning and communications skills to implement the community involvement prescriptions contained in APCA MP. These are not the traditional skill set of PWS staff managing the APCA.

The review argues that building the capacity of the PWS through the appointment of community engagement and strategic planning specialists, combined with increased resourcing of the more traditional reserve management activities and a greater commitment of PWS senior management to the community involvement structures would significantly decrease the levels of angst within the community directed towards the PWS. These small changes would also increase the effectiveness of community involvement and lead to significantly better on ground outcomes. Supporting the community to make the difficult management decisions as well as implementing these in an effective and timely fashion should be the key strategy employed by the PWS to manage the often complex and sometimes politically charged task of managing the APCA.

Recommendations

1. Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan

- 1.1. The APCA MP be updated at the next review to explicitly state the level of community involvement the plan aims to achieve.
- 1.2. The results of recommendations 4.1 and 4.2 regarding the clarification of roles and responsibilities of the differing community involvement tools engaged under the plan i.e. the APCA MC, GCG and the ORVCG be explicitly stated in the APCA MP or associated documents.
- 1.3. That after the next review, the APCA MP contains no room for confusion in relation to community involvement.
- 1.4. That the aimed level of community involvement and the tools to achieve that aim are consistent.
- 1.5. That the results of the final prescription in section 7.3 of the APCA MP to develop constitutional and procedural details for the APCA MC and the sub-committees be re-released to those involved in APCA management. If these results cannot be re-released then a process to undertake this prescription is conducted as soon as possible.

2. Building and maintaining relationships is important for successful management

- 2.1. That the APCA MC considers hosting a regular event aimed at building and maintaining Ministerial and political support for the management of the APCA.
- 2.2. That the APCA MC decides the most appropriate style, timing and attendees of the event with the aim of maximizing Ministerial and opinion leader support.
- 2.3. That resources be supplied to the APCA MC to undertake this event.
- 2.4. That the APCA MC sends a delegation to brief new Ministers on APCA management issues.
- 2.5. That the APCA MC be provided with an operational budget to be spent on supporting the community involvement structures and their respective roles and functions.
- 2.6. That the APCA MC is provided with an appropriately skilled and fully devoted officer to support the functions of the committee.

3. Reimbursement of costs

- 3.1. That members of the APCA MC be entitled to claim a sitting fee and travel expenses.
- 3.2. That members of the GCG and the ORVCG be entitled to claim travel expenses to attend meetings.
- 3.3. That all volunteers be commended by the Minister for their dedication to the management of the APCA.

4. Defining powers and responsibilities

- 4.1. That the PWS and APCA MC engage in a process to form an agreement regarding the functions under the plan that will be managed by the APCA MC.

4.2. That a process be run to resolve and clarify decision-making boundaries between PWS and the APCA MC.

5. *Lack of formal link between the Off Road Vehicle Consultative Group and the APCA MC*

5.1. That the APCA MC explores and implements the most appropriate options to build better linkages between the MC and the ORVCG.

6. *Representativeness and membership of the APCA MC*

- 6.1. That the roles and responsibilities including interest groups being represented by individual MC members be defined more clearly.
- 6.2. That a mechanism be developed to identify and engage with new interest groups as they emerge.
- 6.3. APCA Management Committee members should have five year terms, with half the committee spilling every two and half years.
- 6.4. That the APCA MC and the PWS work together to provide the Minister with a preferred mechanism for appointing MC members at the time of the Committee spill and to fill casual vacancies, and that this process including selection criteria be open to the public.

7. *Lack of Clear Central Contact Point Between the PWS and the APCA MC*

- 7.1. That different modes and channels of contact need to be clearly articulated for what purpose(s) they are to be used and to enable the PWS to effectively communicate internally.
- 7.2. That a single point of contact be appointed within PWS for all official communications between the PWS and the APCA MC.
- 7.3. That a communications log be kept by the PWS that is available to members of the APCA MC.

8. *Lack of formal contact between the APCA MC and the community including other stakeholders*

- 8.1. The APCA MC and the PWS better communicate the roles, functions and opportunities for external stakeholders to be involved in the management of the reserve to stakeholders and the broader community.
- 8.2. A management structure diagram with the roles and responsibilities, a clear understanding of who should consult who and when, particularly for prospective proponents and a clear set of contact details for the APCA MC be published and made easily accessible to stakeholders and the broader community.

9. *Power of the Chair*

- 9.1. That the APCA MC Chair is provided with professional development training in facilitation and that all members of the APCA MC be provided with the opportunity to undertake training in community governance and meeting procedures.

- 9.2. That meetings are held on a regular (monthly) basis and that all dates for meetings are set annually.
- 9.3. That the APCA MC considers hosting half-yearly open/public committee meetings in accessible locations.
- 9.4. That members of the APCA MC and PWS staff have until 14 days prior to a scheduled meeting to ask for items to be included in the coming meeting's agenda.
- 9.5. That the setting and distribution of meeting agendas and associated documents occurs at least seven days prior to a meeting to enable the perusal of relevant information by APCA MC members.
- 9.6. That APCA MC meeting minutes are recorded and distributed in a timely fashion to all members of the APCA MC and the relevant PWS staff.
- 9.7. That the position of a Deputy Chair be created for the APCA MC and that the APCA MC elect a deputy chair to assist the chair in their duties when required or when the chair is absent.

10. Process and Procedures

- 10.1. That the PWS and the APCA MC, with the consent and approval of the Minister, construct a decision tree (boundary exercise) to clarify which matters the APCA MC will decide upon and those that the PWS are directly responsible.
- 10.2. That a clear set of guidelines be constructed stating which matters must be brought to the committee's attention and what level of contribution is required of the APCA MC (decision, advice or consultation).
- 10.3. That the APCA MC and the PWS create a Processes and Procedures Manual for members of the APCA MC, the ORVCG and the GCG that encompasses results of recommendations 10.1 and 10.2.
- 10.4. That an operational plan is constructed annually between the APCA MC and the PWS, and that the PWS report to the APCA MC against that plan on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- 10.5. That the provisions for accountability in the APCA MP be reinforced through regular reports from the Chair of the APCA MC to the Director of PWS and the Minister.
- 10.6. That the APCA MC has a single point of contact and method for engagement with external groups and the broader community. This point of contact may be best served by a secretariat.
- 10.7. That the APCA MC develop and implement an active community communications strategy such as a newsletter, community report, or community based meetings, etc. to better facilitate and encourage community engagement, participation and the encouragement of new enterprise activities.

11. Trust and Relationships in partnerships and decision making

- 11.1. That the APCA MC's decision making process, as prescribed within the APCA MP, is better defined.
- 11.2. That issues unable to be resolved at an APCA MC meeting are defined and become a priority agenda item, with a formal proposal to resolve the issue, at the next meeting. If consensus remains unachievable then the agreed dispute resolution process be employed.

- 11.3. That an independent arbitration and dispute resolution processes be adopted by the PWS to facilitate decision making where consensus cannot be achieved within the APCA MC.

12. Resourcing

- 12.1. That the PWS increases available resources to the APCA for staff employment and development, APCA MC and sub-committee professional development, community engagement, reserve values protection and restoration, and for compliance and enforcement.
- 12.2. That the PWS and the APCA MC seek additional financial and other resourcing support for the effective management of the APCA from the State Government and other funding sources.
- 12.3. That the PWS consider refocusing its APCA human resourcing on community facilitation and engagement skills rather than traditional reserve management skills focused on natural and cultural values.
- 12.4. That the PWS adequately resource and empower the APCA MC and its sub-committees to assist with effective reserve management in accordance with the APCA MP.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	I
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW	1
BACKGROUND TO THE APCA MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES	2
METHOD	3
SCOPE	3
DATA COLLECTION	3
DATA ANALYSIS	4
LIMITATIONS	4
RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY	4
BEST PRACTICE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	5
RESULTS	6
ARTHUR-PIEMAN CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN	6
CURRENT STRUCTURE	11
<i>Broad support for current structure</i>	12
<i>Building and maintaining relationships is important for successful management</i>	12
REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS	14
DEFINING POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	15
LACK OF FORMAL LINK BETWEEN THE ORVCG AND THE APCA MC	16
REPRESENTATIVENESS AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE APCA MC	17
LACK OF CLEAR CENTRAL CONTACT POINT BETWEEN THE PWS AND THE APCA MC	18
LACK OF FORMAL CONTACT POINT BETWEEN THE APCA MC AND THE GENERAL COMMUNITY INCLUDING OTHER	19
STAKEHOLDERS	19
POWER OF THE CHAIR	20
PROCESS AND PROCEDURES	21
TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS IN PARTNERSHIPS AND DECISION MAKING	23
RESOURCING	25
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE APCA OF THE “TARKINE COAST”	26
REFERENCES	28

ACRONYMS

APCA	Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area
APCA MC	Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Committee
APCA MP	Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan (2002)
CCNRM	Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management
GCG	Grazing Consultative Group
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NWEC	North-West Environment Centre
ORVCG	Off Road Vehicle Consultative Group
PWS	Parks & Wildlife Service

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

This report has been instigated by the North-West Environment Centre (NWECC), a local community environmental NGO committed to the sustainable management of our social, natural and cultural assets, including the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area (APCA). The NWECC is engaged in the public management of the APCA at three differing levels. Acting as the Tasmanian Conservation Trust representative on the APCA Off-Road Vehicle Consultative Group (ORVCG) the NWECC is engaged within the official management structures prescribed in the APCA Management Plan 2002 (APCA MP). The NWECC also has a representative on the Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management (CCNRM) Committee which acts as a third party funding body directing significant National Heritage Trust and Caring for Our Country resources for research and on-ground work in the APCA. Finally, through the Priority Sea Spurge Eradication in Identified Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Orange Bellied Parrot Feeding Grounds (OBP Sea Spurge) project, the NWECC has conducted on-ground NRM activities within the APCA.

These activities and roles have provided the NWECC with direct exposure to the management, stakeholder involvement and community engagement processes utilised by the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) in the management of the APCA. Based on this exposure and interactions with differing stakeholders it became clear that ‘something’ has not been working in the PWS’s approach to management in the APCA. It was apparent at the beginning of this review that management problems centre on the organizational, social, cultural, financial and political (governance) aspects of management rather than technical, environmental or economic aspects. The aim of this report is to try and use a systematic approach to shed light on what, if any, structural organizational issues are creating or contributing to the perceived problems in management. We also aimed to gain a solid grip on what the actual management problems are from all perspectives and try to make sense of some of the conflicting messages we were hearing from our varied involvement within APCA management structures.

This review focuses on ‘community involvement’ as the central theme for three reasons. Section 7.3 of the APCA MP (PWS, 2002) prescribes an innovative management structure, unique to reserve management in Tasmania, which aims to develop an effective and long lasting partnership between PWS and the community to manage the reserve. Secondly, the process of facilitating community involvement seemed central to some of the perceived problems expressed by community based stakeholders. Finally, levels and types of community involvement processes is a topic of debate in the academic literature on best practice public participation in environmental management. This allows us to set some of the experiences, processes and procedures employed in the APCA into a national and international context. We believe this is important and comparisons with experiences elsewhere have informed recommendations for improvements to the APCA’s management structures.

One of the guiding principles of the NWECC is to take a solutions based approach to environmental and social justice issues. We therefore, conducted a series of interviews with as many of the stakeholder groups and individuals that we could in order to grasp as many of the issues as possible. Importantly, we also found that many stakeholders had policy ideas and positions that are potential solutions to many of the perceived problems.

Following on from the NWECC's guiding principle to be solutions based, it is important to make explicit that this review has never been intended to focus on problems nor apportion responsibility or blame on particular parties. Instead this review seeks to find areas where change is possible and suggest improvements that could be made. Everyone we have spoken to would agree that management in the APCA has at times been politically charged. This review does not aim to 'stir the possum' but rather find areas of agreement for improvements.

Background to the APCA management structures

The APCA is a reserve of 100,135 hectares located in Northwest Tasmania aiming to protect 'an extraordinary richness of Aboriginal cultural heritage... highly significant and diverse ecosystems, and... spectacular coastal landscapes and wilderness values' (PWS, 2002). The area has been described by the Australian Heritage Commission (1990, cited in Richards and Richards in Harries, 1992) as 'one of the world's great archaeological regions' due to its abundant Aboriginal heritage qualities. In addition, the coast forms an important food resource for Bass Strait migratory birds including the Orange-Bellied Parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*), and various threatened shorebirds (PWS, 2002). Some respondents in our review remarked that an area from West Point in the north to Macquarie Heads in the south, 5kms wide would meet the criteria for World Heritage listing based on cultural heritage and biodiversity values.

The reserve is managed by a small team of PWS personnel with some input provided by the voluntary community-based non-statutory Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Committee (APCA MC). The purpose of the APCA MC and associated community involvement is to ensure that the reserve is managed in such a way as to be 'relevant to community needs and expectations' and that the reserve maintains community support (PWS, 2002). The area is a popular destination for recreational coastal activities including fishing, boating, surfing, and skin-diving as well as land-based activities such as off-road vehicle use, camping, hunting, bushwalking, horse riding, and nature study (PWS, 2002).

The APCA MP claims that the key to successful implementation of the plan is to 'have the community understand, accept and own the plan' and that this can best be achieved by 'ensuring the plan reflects the community's concerns' and to 'involve the community directly in aspects of management' (PWS, 2002). To this end, in addition to the APCA management committee two consultative groups have been formed to provide direct input into the management of off-road vehicle access and grazing. The aims of these sub committees are to undertake research and planning to determine levels and systems of sustainable use and to enhance community involvement in reserve management processes.

The APCA MP outlines key issues where community involvement is important including: controlling vehicle use; off road vehicle area management; grazing; kelp harvesting; hunting; natural and cultural values education; and, management of cultural heritage. The plan adds that the aim of community engagement is to: 'develop community appreciation of and support for reserve values; promote a positive image of the reserve and its benefit to the community; and to involve the local and broader community in reserve management partnerships'. Of particular note is the plan's prescription for the encouragement of community involvement through partnerships

(PWS, 2002) and the aim to ‘achieve community ownership through involvement in policy development, planning and on ground management’. It is these issues that have been contentious and problematic, and are the focus of the review.

METHOD

To facilitate an understanding of the ideology and effectiveness of community engagement processes as a management tool for the APCA, a hypothesis-generating qualitative approach to the research problem was applied to a non-random sample of stakeholders in a manner adapted from Hall and Hall (1996). Underpinning this approach is an evaluative research methodology that aims to assess the effectiveness of community participation in the APCA’s management. This methodology supports the utilization of research results by stakeholders to inform additional program evaluation and/or decision-making processes.

All respondents were offered confidentiality both in terms of their participation in the research and the data that they supplied. With the consent of the respondents, the data collected through interviews and survey was combined and analyzed for recurring themes. Respondents were given commitments that no individual participant in this study could be identified in this report.

Scope

The study is constrained to a desktop analysis of the APCA MP and our empirical research. Interview questions were contextually specific to the APCA reserve. The study focused on the period post the development of the APCA MP. It should be noted that it was not practical or necessary to contact and interview all APCA stakeholder groups and key individuals. As such, a representative sample were approached that could provide a detailed and intimate understanding of the processes involved in APCA management and community engagement.

Data collection

Interview questions were semi-structured and based on existing participatory and external observer knowledge of APCA management and community engagement processes, and informed by the literature. Questions were designed to enable an exploration of the range of stakeholder opinions surrounding the management and community engagement processes employed in the APCA. Questions were flexible enough to guide the interviews while allowing the different respondents scope to express and explore their views. Some specific questions were tailored to suit clustered stakeholder circumstances whilst maintaining comparable commonalities. The questions were broken down into four sections: (1) Community involvement in the APCA, (2) Decision-making and community involvement, (3) Engaging external stakeholders, and (4) General questions and discussion.

Interviews were conducted during August and October 2008 with 13 selected stakeholders in APCA management. Most interviews were with individuals, however some stakeholders preferred

to be interviewed jointly. Some respondents were unable to be interviewed and instead gave a response through written answers to the prepared interview questions. These respondents were followed up with telephone and email conversations to clarify any points of confusion or requiring further exploration. David Henderson and Matthew Campbell-Ellis jointly interviewed respondents, with the exception of one interview conducted by David Henderson solely. During the interviews both interviewers took extensive written notes. Directly after the interviews were conducted the interviewers discussed the interview and compared interview notes while the interview was still fresh, to ensure that the interpretations of points made in the interview were consistent. Any inconsistencies in interpretation were recorded. Phone calls were made after the interviews to some respondents to clarify any ambiguous or confused points recorded in the interview notes.

David Henderson and Matthew Campbell-Ellis also attended an APCA MC meeting as observers. Notes were taken of the observations at the meeting. This data has been used in conjunction with other data to aid in interpretation and analysis.

Additional sources of information included the APCA MP (PWS, 2002) and the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area: Report on Implementation of the Management Plan Prescriptions based on 18 specified Performance Indicators 2002-2005 (Tyson, 2005).

Data Analysis

Research results were analyzed using a thematic analysis method to standardize data and determine common themes. Specifically, this involved creating a spreadsheet-based response matrix to identify grounded themes within the data using a frequency of repetitive words and common concepts and views identified within interviewee responses. Observations taken during the November APCAMC meeting were also analyzed in this manner. This approach aimed to reduce the impact of interviewer bias and maintain participant confidentiality.

Limitations

The analysis is limited to an exploration of the institutionalized and informal processes for community engagement, participation and management within the APCA. The sample was limited to provide data on this particular area of APCA management. As a result the study did not contact every group or individual with an interest in the APCA and generalizations regarding the views of all stakeholders cannot be made. The study is also temporally limited as the interviews were conducted during August through to October 2008 as well as observations made during the November APCA MC meeting.

Reliability and Validity

A degree of familiarity existed between interviewers and respondents that is likely to have resulted in some level of social desirability in interview responses. Participants demonstrated a high degree of independence during the interviews and were provided scope to explore issues and

guide resulting discussions. The familiarity between interviewer and respondent, combined with the stakeholder status held by the NVEC within the context of the issue, enabled a deep and liberal exploration of the issues that may not have been possible without such a level of trust and familiarity. Data that may have been elicited through interviewer bias and social desirability was crosschecked through subsequent interview questions and discussions, clearly articulated confirmation of responses with the interviewee, and an explanation of the question's relevance to the study.

The research approach described above provided rich and contextual data that when analyzed using the response matrix, provided interesting insights into respondent's perceptions of the management structures employed in the APCA. The use of semi-iterative open-ended questions, thematic analysis and the consistency of participant responses from a highly diverse sample support the reliability of the data.

BEST PRACTICE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

This section aims to briefly outline the main currents in community involvement in environmental management literature. This literature is extensive to say the least and many differing fields feed the debate surrounding community involvement in environmental management. Public participation, community engagement, community consultation, deliberative practice and planning, participatory democracy, social impact assessment; of natural resources, reserves, environment, agriculture, forestry, mining, land use and water allocation are all key areas in the literature where the challenge of how to involve the broader public to be part of the management of the environment is examined. A very accessible and recent study, focused on the role and dimensions of public participation in environmental management and decision making (NRC, 2008). This major study undertook an exhaustive review of the available literature aiming to provide empirically valid advice to practitioners and policy makers on the success or otherwise of public participation processes and practices. A brief précis of the key results of this study will provide a touchstone to the discussion in the following chapters, and of our results and recommendations.

Two main points emerge from the literature reviewed in the NRC study. First, public participation processes are similar to any other program in terms of the management practices required to gain successful outcomes. Successful public participation processes are most often characterized by 'clarity of purpose, commitment, adequate resources, appropriate timing, an implementation focus, and a commitment to learning...' (NRC, 2008, p 96). Second, the way of organizing the participation itself is important. While there are literally dozens of methods available to practitioners, a number of attributes are associated with success.

“Successful outcomes are more likely when a process includes the full spectrum of parties who are interested in or will be affected by a decision and encourage their voluntary commitment to it; involves the parties in formulating the problem for assessment or decision and in designing the participatory process; is transparent to

participants and observers; and is structured to encourage the parties to communicate in good faith” (NRC, 2008, p 111).

While commonsensical, these two main points are backed by empirical evidence and are common to a wide range of differing styles, reasons, sectors and methods. These main points have guided our research and analysis and are reflected in our recommendations for improving community involvement in APCA management.

RESULTS

Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Plan

It is important to place the results and recommendations of this review within the context of the APCA Management Plan. The plan sets out how the APCA is to be managed through the setting of management prescriptions to be undertaken. There are several prescriptions that involve community involvement, and before an in-depth discussion of the results it will be useful to review the sections of the APCA MP that relate to community involvement. Sections in the following list all contain prescriptions relating to community involvement in APCA management, however this review will focus primarily on those sections and prescriptions that relate to the operations of the APCA management committee and the two consultative groups.

- Section 5.1 Stock Agistment
- Section 6.1 Camping
- Section 6.2 Shacks
- Section 6.4 Vehicles Used Off-Road
- Section 6.11 Interpretation and Education
- Section 6.12 An Enterprise Unit
- Section 7 Involving the Community

The major mechanism applied by the PWS to help engage and involve the community in APCA management has been the establishment of two consultative groups and a management committee. The two consultative groups, the Off-Road Vehicle Consultative Group (see section 6.4 of the APCA MP) and the Grazing Consultative Group (GCG) (see section 5.1 of the APCA MP), are focused on issue specific management challenges and are prescribed quite specific tasks under the management plan. The APCA MC (section 7.3) on the other hand has a more overarching role than the two consultative groups and aims to work in partnership with the Managing Authority (the PWS) to ‘undertake the management of functions under the Plan as agreed between the Director and the committee and as approved by the Minister.’ Section 7.3 of the APCA MP essentially sets out the roles of the Managing Authority (PWS); provides for the setting up of the APCA MC; gives some guidelines to how the APCA MC should make decisions; and directs that constitutional and procedural details be developed through the establishment phase. These prescriptions are introduced through discussion of principles for engaging the community and the identification of a spectrum of community involvement ranging from ‘information’ to ‘self management’. Due to the importance of this particular section of the APCA MP and the regularity that it will be referred to in the following sections it has been reproduced below.

7.3 Management Options & Community Involvement

Management responsibility for a reserve as large and as important as the Arthur–Pieman Conservation Area is complex. The reserve is an important source of economic resources, recreational opportunities and historical linkages for local people. It is also a reserve of national standing when it comes to the conservation of Aboriginal heritage and as part of the National Reserve System for conservation of natural systems. It is an area in which all Tasmanians have a stake in ongoing management.

All modern park management agencies are looking for ways to involve the community in the business of managing parks and reserves. This is not a case of governments abdicating responsibility for management but is aimed at ensuring that management is relevant to community needs and expectations and that the community is supportive of the direction of management.

Principles for Community Involvement

Transparency Government has a responsibility to ensure any arrangements aimed at participation in management made with particular interest groups are open, transparent and fair to the wider community.

Inclusiveness Management must be inclusive of all groups in society. To exclude particular interest groups, either from being consulted or from having a direct input into day-to-day management, is to foster division in the community.

Equity Management decisions must take account of all stakeholders including future generations.

User Pays In general, where users derive particular benefit from an area they should be prepared to at least cover the costs of managing that activity.

Efficacy Community involvement in management should be commensurate with the capacity of the community group to undertake the responsibility on behalf of the wider community.

Options for Community Involvement

There are a number of different levels at which the community can become involved in management of reserves. These can be considered in terms of the spectrum:

information consultation collaboration participation self – management

Provision of information about a reserve or its management is a very important but basic form of involvement.

Consultation goes a step further and seeks the community's views about policy and management direction. This document is an important example of consultation.

Collaboration is where the managers and the public work side by side. Volunteer groups working with the managing authority to repair a road, build a toilet or conduct a survey are all examples of collaboration.

Participation in management partnerships provides for groups within the community to take responsibility for aspects of reserve management and then to operate with a degree of autonomy in line with the terms of a partnership agreement

Self-management is where a community group becomes the managing authority for the reserve.

Aims

- To achieve an appropriate level of public involvement in management of the conservation area consistent with the principles outlined above.
- To achieve community ownership through involvement in policy development, planning and on ground management.
- To increase the efficiency of management by encouraging community groups to take responsibility for managing their particular activities in the conservation area.

Prescriptions

- Establish a two tier approach to the management of the reserve, recognising that:
 - the reserve has values of State, national and international significance that need to be managed on behalf of this broad audience; and
 - the local community has a large stake in the reserve, and that working closely with the community can reap significant advantages of local knowledge, goodwill and on-ground stewardship.
- The Director of National Parks and Wildlife is the responsible managing authority for the APCA. The managing authority is responsible for:
 - overall management of the reserve and its suite of natural and cultural values ;
 - overseeing implementation of the management plan; and
 - coordinating, liaising with and supporting the Management Committee and sub-committees set up under this plan.
- Establish a non-statutory Management Committee to undertake the management of functions under the Plan as agreed between the Director and the committee and as approved by the Minister. The Management Committee will be responsible for:
 - engaging the users of the reserve in supporting the overall management strategy;
 - advising the management authority on the management of recreation and commercial use;
 - contributing to development and implementation of works programs.
 - overseeing the operation of an enterprise unit; and
- Management Committee members will be appointed by the Minister. In selecting members the Minister will consult with the range of interest groups, however, the members of the committee will be appointed to serve the best overall interests of the reserve rather than specific interests.

- The Management Committee will be made up of six full members and one ex officio member selected to provide a balanced range of expertise. The members will be selected to cover the following skills and knowledge:
 - a chairperson, skilled in facilitation, mediation and having an appreciation of the significance of the reserve for its users;
 - a person with skills and knowledge of nature conservation issues;
 - a person with skills and knowledge in local government;
 - a person with skills and knowledge in the recreational uses of the reserve;
 - a person with business skills and an appreciation of the economic uses of the reserve; and
 - a person with skills in cultural heritage and an appreciation of the cultural heritage of the APCA.
- In addition an ex officio member will be nominated by the managing authority to assist the committee in discharging its functions.

- The Management Committee's mode of decision making is to be based, where possible, on consensus seeking rather than on an adversarial model. A dispute resolution process will only be employed when it becomes clear consensus is unreachable.

- Constitutional and procedural details for the Management Committee, the Off-Road Vehicle Consultative Group and Grazing Consultation Group are to be developed as part of the above establishment process.

For community members interested in being involved in the leadership and stewardship of the APCA, section 7.3 of the APCA MP is quite encouraging in a number of ways. The plan discusses the importance of community involvement, provides some very good principles that could form the basis of successful partnerships between government and the citizenry and prescribes an active management committee who has both an advisory roll and a set of functional responsibilities. Another encouraging feature of the plan is that the APCA MC, the GCG and the ORVCG will all be supported by the Managing Authority and that flexibility to construct best practice processes and procedures exists. This leads to the conclusion that the APCA MP provides an adequate basis for a highly engaged, best practice, community partnership approach to the sometimes complex and politically charged task of managing the APCA.

On the other hand, there are some obvious gaps and difficulties in section 7.3 of the APCA MP. While there is laudable discussion of principles of community engagement, there is no prescription obliging the PWS to undertake to meet these principles. Furthermore, while a continuum of options for community involvement is provided and described, the APCA MP does not actually specify at which point on the continuum the plan will apply or indeed aim. This omission of specification leads to a significant lack of clarity surrounding the overarching theoretical or 'philosophical' approach the APCA MP takes on community involvement. Without this clarity it makes it difficult for the community and the PWS to be certain how to interpret and operationalize the prescriptions under section 7.3 of the plan, despite words in the prescriptions stating that the "...Management Committee will undertake management of functions under the plan...". This uncertainty, we will report below, leads to confusion surrounding the actual level of responsibility, the power and relationship between the APCA MC, the two consultative groups and the PWS.

The confusion created in the APCA MP can best be summed up as leaving the following question unanswered:

Is the APCA MC a management committee or an advisory group?

Many of the issues identified and solutions provided in this report stem back to this central question. The research undertaken in the preparation of this report has highlighted the confusion held by people closest to the management of the APCA surrounding this distinction. The research undertaken for this report also revealed that similar confusion seems to exist within the community at large due to the APCA MC often being the public face of the APCA in times of controversy. One implication of this confusion elicited from the study is that members of the committee and the two consultative groups are placed in a sometimes unenviable position of being expected by the general public and the groups they represent, to have information, influence and responsibility for management actions, or often a lack of action, when in practice they do not.

While the APCA MP does not clearly answer the question above, the authors were interested to examine how the practice of community involvement is applied in the APCA and whether the reality answers the above central question. The research examined the community involvement structures with a particular emphasis on the interactions between the PWS, APCA MC and the two consultative groups.

The research asked a series of questions aiming to understand and unravel the attitudes and expectations of whether the APCA MC is seen as an advisory group or a management committee. The results fall into two camps with the vast majority of respondents arguing that the APCA MC should be the 'management committee' with strong support for the notion that the PWS should implement the decisions of the APCA MC, within resource constraints, in all cases except where the decision might break the management plan or the law. The second group of respondents' views, while in the minority, indicate that the PWS should be managing the APCA under a different land classification (e.g. World Heritage Area or National Park) and that the APCA MC's appropriate role would be as an advisory group similar to others in existence.

When this differing view of land tenure was put to one side, the vast majority of respondents believed that the community had the best idea of how to manage competing values and uses and that the current structure can work to solve complex management problems. The key problem in the scenario expressed by most respondents was the quality and quantity of support received by the community based structures from the PWS and the attitudes of the PWS toward the legitimacy of the APCA MC.

The APCA MP does prescribe that the constitutional and procedural details for the three groups will be worked out throughout the establishment phase of the APCA MP and one of the responsibilities of the PWS is to support, liaise and coordinate the activities of the committee and consultative groups. Respondents in the study revealed a consistent view of the structural relationships between the two consultative groups and the APCA MC. Respondents reported that the sub-committees are assisted by PWS staff and 'sit under' the APCA MC. It is readily accepted by respondents that advice on grazing and off-road vehicle issues should be sought from the

respective consultative groups and recommendations presented to the APCA MC, who in turn deliberate on the information and pass on recommendations or decisions to the PWS. While there is evidence of consensus in reporting structures this does not necessarily mean that the APCA MC is making management decisions instead of providing advice only.

To conclude this brief discussion, it is the authors' view that the prescriptions contained in the APCA MP and subsequent practice and procedures fail to provide a clear and unambiguous answer to the question of whether the APCA MC is a 'management committee' or an 'advisory group'. There is however, overwhelming support within the group of respondents we interviewed to maintain and strengthen the 'management' role and functions of the APCA MC and the two consultative groups. Respondents felt that many of the management problems in the APCA stem from the confusion surrounding the management powers and functions held by the APCA MC, its inability to make the PWS account for its actions or lack of actions, and the lack of resources at the disposal of the PWS to help support and implement the management decisions of the APCA MC. Clarity of purpose and commitment from a management authority and adequate resources are key characteristics of successful public participation identified in the literature. The lack of 'clarity of purpose' reported to this review is a major concern for the success of community involvement in the APCA. The authors argue that this needs resolving with some urgency. Specific recommendations on a process to resolve and clarify these issues will be made in the next section of the report. However, the recommendations appropriate for this section follows.

Recommendations

- The APCA MP be updated at the next review to explicitly state the level of community involvement the plan aims to achieve.
- The results of recommendations regarding the clarification of roles and responsibilities of the differing community involvement tools engaged under the plan i.e. the APCA MC, GCG and the ORVCG be explicitly stated in the APCA MP or associated documents.
- That after the next review, the APCA MP contains no room for confusion in relation to community involvement.
- That the aimed level of community involvement and the tools to achieve that aim are consistent.
- That the results of the final prescription in section 7.3 of the APCA MP to develop constitutional and procedural details for the APCA MC and the sub-committees be re-released to those involved in APCA management. If these results cannot be re-released then a process to undertake this prescription be conducted as soon as possible.

Current Structure

This section of the report analyses the research results with a particular focus on the current structure of community involvement in APCA management. A number of commonly reported

issues are presented as section headings with a discussion of contextual information and potential solutions thereafter. Following from these discussions, recommendations are presented.

Broad support for current structure

There is broad support from respondents across the interviewed stakeholder groups for the current structure of community involvement. The APCA MC, the ORVCG and the GCG are seen as sound from a structural point of view. This is good news in many ways for community involvement in APCA management and for the APCA MP. Our results indicate that the structure outlined in the APCA MP is adequate for the task (with some clarification as discussed above) with respondents reporting that the current structure has the potential to provide opportunities for the community to be involved in a meaningful way. There was little support for extending or contracting the powers of the APCA MC or the consultative groups. For example, there was little support for the APCA MC to replace the PWS as the Managing Authority resulting in an extension of influence and responsibility resting with the representative community members. On the other hand a small minority of respondents supported the idea that the APCA MC contracts its role to become an 'advisory group' officially. As reported above, this view was correlated with a view of land tenure change. It was found however, that many respondents expressed frustration that the APCA MC is being treated as an advisory group by the PWS. This was a significant 'bone of contention' for many of the respondents, with a general feeling that the APCA MC is being constrained and is unable to progress important management functions resulting from this treatment.

Building and maintaining relationships is important for successful management

While there was broad agreement about the benefits and appropriateness of the structures, there was also recognition that to work effectively these structures require further institutional support, particularly Ministerial, Departmental and resource support. A consistent theme expressed by most respondents is that Ministerial support is crucial for good management outcomes. It was observed generally, that when there have been Ministers with a good understanding and an interest in the APCA, management outcomes have been enhanced. One difficulty, expressed generally, regarding Ministerial support is that with fairly regular changes in Ministers over the last six years, it has been difficult to create a relationship with individual Ministers. Strong Ministerial support means more than resource allocation because it provides power and legitimacy to management decisions made through the community-based structure and by the PWS. Strong Ministerial support also provides a backstop for the resolution of conflicts, particularly for any conflict between the PWS and the community. A solid and direct relationship between the APCA MC and the Minister provides the Minister with a direct line of advice regarding the attitudes and feelings within the community surrounding any potentially controversial policy decisions. Ministerial support for the APCA MC, GCG and ORVCG decision-making processes is also a key when controversial management decisions are being debated. A strong partnership between political power holders, community based management and departmental officers is required if difficult management decisions are going to be made using the principles outlined in section 7.3 of the APCA MP. There is a general perception within the group of respondents we interviewed that a *strong* partnership between the Minister, the PWS and the

APCA MC does not exist and this has resulted in (or has been an excuse for) inaction, uncertainty, and poor management outcomes for the APCA.

The development and maintenance of the partnership between the Minister and the APCA MC is currently, and should continue to be, a strategically important task for the APCA MC. The APCA MC currently undertakes this task mainly through correspondence and ad hoc meetings and presentations to Ministers. The authors argue that the current efforts could be boosted in a number of ways. There is scope for the APCA MC to host (with support from PWS) a regular event/ meeting/ fieldtrip/ workshop/ forum/ conference etc aiming to attract the Minister and opinion leaders in Circular Head in order to showcase the achievements and challenges faced by the APCA MC. It is not suggested that this event replace existing efforts at creating and maintaining Ministerial and political support, but rather to boost these efforts. Details of the proposed event are best left to the APCA MC to discuss, however the proposal does not necessarily have to be a public event, but rather a focused effort at building and maintaining Ministerial and political support and understanding of the management challenges, decisions and actions in the APCA.

In addition it is recommended that within the context of Ministerial turn-over that the APCA MC provide newly appointed Ministers with a briefing on APCA management. From information collected, it seems that this does currently occur, however we argue that the APCA MC could pursue further opportunities to present to Ministers.

Departmental and resource support are also critical for good outcomes both in terms of community involvement and on ground management outcomes. There was consensus from respondents that a lack of resourcing is a major issue. At this point we would like to distinguish between resourcing and departmental support of the management activities in the APCA and community involvement structures and processes. This report does not deal with the funding of management activities, except to report that there is a clear consensus from all respondents that PWS generally and the APCA specifically is underfunded.

The structure of community involvement in the management of the APCA is extremely reliant on the support of PWS staff and the relatively small levels of resources at their disposal. Currently casual secretarial support is provided to the APCA MC by PWS and PWS officers have coordinated and attended meetings of the consultative groups. PWS staff involved with the committee and consultative groups have numerous roles other than supporting the community involvement process and at busy times of the year other tasks take priority. Furthermore, the APCA MC has no independent operating budget that can be devoted to its strategic planning activities. There is also, no 'Executive Officer' type position, whose majority role is to assist the APCA MC with its business. These factors lead to a situation where PWS operational staff are being expected to guide strategic community based planning and policy development processes at the same time as organising bushfire response, enforcement, works management, general reserve management activities, undertaking reserve activity assessments and helping the public access the reserve to name a few activities.

The research results lead to the conclusion that despite the best efforts of all involved, the PWS operational staff have too many pressing activities to be able to provide the required level of support to the APCA MC and the two consultative groups. In addition, two differing skill sets are required with an excellent reserve manager not necessarily being a good strategic policy planner and community consultation expert. The APCA MC requires the services of someone skilled in

strategic community based planning, facilitation, conflict resolution, governance and process, research, analysis and reporting who is devoted to assisting and pursuing the APCA MC's responsibilities and functions. We believe that this type of position is required to allow the APCA MC to be as effective as possible in fulfilling the intentions of the APCA MP.

Recommendations

- That the APCA MC considers hosting a regular event aimed at building and maintaining Ministerial and political support for the management of the APCA.
- That the APCA MC decides the most appropriate style, timing and attendees of the event with the aim of maximizing Ministerial and opinion leader support.
- That resources be supplied to the APCA MC to undertake this event.
- That the APCA MC sends a delegation to brief new Ministers on APCA management issues.
- That the APCA MC be provided with an operational budget to be spent on supporting the community involvement structures and their respective roles and functions.
- That the APCA MC is provided with an appropriately skilled and fully devoted officer to support the functions of the committee.

Reimbursement of Costs

The community based structures of the APCA MC and the two consultative groups are currently operating completely voluntarily. Some respondents suggested that travel expenses are supposed to be paid. To the best of our knowledge travel expenses are currently not paid and we have not been able to establish if or when they were consistently paid. It was repeatedly stated by the respondents that they are happy with their role as volunteers and there seems to be a certain reticence in asking for money. The APCA MC however, had met 43 times at the time of the study and the two consultative groups had met on numerous occasions, with most members undertaking significant amounts of volunteer work between sessions. Other committees within Tasmania and created in a similar fashion to the APCA MC are paid a sitting fee and travel cost reimbursement. It is the authors' view that the committed members of the community who engage in regular activities with high levels of public benefit should not be out of pocket. To this end, we believe that it is appropriate that the APCA MC be paid a sitting fee in line with other State Government sponsored committees. The NRM committee members, for example are currently paid a sitting fee of \$150 per meeting and are paid travel expenses. The authors believe this level seems appropriate. In relation to the GCG and the ORVCG, we believe that travel expenses should be covered for members to attend meetings. While not the authors' view, the idea that things are not valued unless they are paid for has been expressed by a variety of respondents over many issues to do with APCA management.

Recommendations

- That members of the APCA MC be entitled to claim a sitting fee and travel expenses.

- That members of the GCG and the ORVCG be entitled to claim travel expenses to attend meetings.
- That all volunteers be commended by the Minister for their dedication to the management of the APCA.

Defining Powers and Responsibilities

One of the most significant issues identified in this review is the lack of certainty, clarity and agreement surrounding the powers, functions and responsibilities of the APCA MC, the GCG and the ORVCG both in practice and as defined in the APCA MP. The lack of clarity leads to the question of whether the APCA MC is an advisory committee or a management committee. The currently unanswerable nature of this question has led in turn to conflict, frustration and a seeming paralysation of management actions with resulting poor reserve management outcomes. A number of examples were identified by respondents of a paralysation in reserve management activities resulting from governance confusion, including; lack of implementation of the Off road Vehicle permit system; fencing works paid by grazing levies not implemented; Natural Heritage Trust funded activities poorly managed, risking more than \$400,000 worth of further potential investment; closure of No Mans Creek bridge; failure to undertake works to protect cultural heritage sites at Greens Creek; and, a lack of enforcement of recreational vehicle use in line with the prescriptions in the APCA MP.

In short, the results of the research suggests that the lack of clarity surrounding the powers, functions, responsibilities and a lack of functionality in the relationships between the PWS, the APCA MC and the consultative groups has lead to an erosion of trust and a situation of frustration, stagnation and paralysis in the management of the APCA. This is a situation that, in the view of all respondents, needs resolving urgently.

The review has identified a prescription in the APCA MP that can provide an opportunity to work through some of the issues outlined above. It seems, within the limitations of information available to this review, that a prescription in the APCA MP aiming to define powers and responsibilities has not been undertaken. Section 7.3 of the APCA MP contains the following prescription;

Establish a non-statutory Management Committee to undertake the management of functions under the Plan as agreed between the Director and the committee and as approved by the Minister.

The first section of this prescription has obviously been undertaken, that of establishing a Management Committee. The second part of this prescription could be interpreted to mean that a formal agreement stating the functions to be managed by the APCA MC would be negotiated between the Director of PWS and the APCA MC and then be approved by the Minister. Information available to this review suggests that an agreement of this nature has not been negotiated between the parties. We believe that unless an agreement of this nature exists, then the PWS, has not complied with, or is in breach of prescriptions in the APCA MP as the Managing Authority responsible for implementation of the MP. This breach might provide an opportunity where the PWS and the APCA MC embark on a process to negotiate the specific functions under

the plan that the APCA MC will manage. If such a process were conducted, then a significant outcome would be clarifying the powers, responsibilities and relationships of all involved in the APCA community involvement process.

The review has identified the following areas where clarification of responsibilities is required. The review does not intend to determine who should have responsibility for the following, rather it is hoped that through the identification of these areas some discussion might be generated between the interested parties.

Clarification is required in terms of who is/should be responsible for;

- Strategic planning,
- Operational planning,
- Construction and approval of work plans,
- Approval of commercial and recreational activities,
- Financial management including the allocation of discretionary funds and funds raised through levies and fees etc, and
- Coordination of the community involvement process.

Clarification is also required for the following questions;

- When does the PWS need to consult the APCA MC before making a decision?
- Which decisions should the APCA MC make?
- Who makes decisions and of what type?
- How can the APCA MC and PWS be held accountable?
- How is advice sought and considered from the ORVCG and the GCG?

It is suggested that the PWS and the APCA MC engage in a process to work out the 'functions' to be managed by the APCA MC whilst simultaneously seeking to answer and clarify these issues. If the parties choose not to engage in a process of that nature, then it is suggested at a minimum some sort of boundary exercise be undertaken to help address the issues described above.

Recommendations

- That the PWS and APCA MC engage in a process to form an agreement regarding the functions under the plan that will be managed by the APCA MC.
- That a process be run to resolve and clarify decision-making boundaries between PWS and the APCA MC.

Lack of Formal Link Between the ORVCG and the APCA MC

The combination of an analysis of the APCA community involvement structures, the experience of ORVCG members and the results of interviews with stakeholders has informed our conclusion that better linkages are required between the ORVCG and the APCA MC. Currently, both the APCA MC and the ORVCG are facilitated by PWS staff with this being the only 'linkage' between them. PWS staff are placed in a position where they need to explain and advocate positions and recommendations of the ORVCG at the APCA MC meeting. The research results

suggest that there have been a number of communication breakdowns between the two groups. Some respondents have argued that PWS staff should not be expected to be conduits for stakeholder positions. They argue unintentional bias, misreporting or omission of some decisions has occurred, resulting in a breakdown in trust. A number of respondents argued that there is a distinct gap between the ORVCG and the APCA MC that is detrimental to good management outcomes. In contrast, the GCG has a direct link to the APCA MC through two joint members. While there are reports that GCG is not used effectively, there were no reports from respondents that the views and issues raised by the GCG are 'not getting through' to the APCA MC.

There are a number of actions available to help address the issue of the lack of linkage between the APCA MC and the ORVCG with differing degrees of difficulty and complexity to adopt. For example, the Chair of the ORVCG could become a member of the APCA MC. While in some ways this option has significant merit, it might not conform to the membership requirements of the APCA MC as specified in the APCA MP. An easier to implement option might be to have the Chair of the ORVCG as a standing, non-voting, invitee to the APCA MC meetings. Other ways of fostering the linkage between the APCA MC and the subcommittees could be to increase the number of joint sittings. This might have the added benefit of providing time to informally network and discuss issues and potential solutions to management challenges more generally. If the recommendations in this report to provide the APCA MC with dedicated secretariat/project officer support is adopted, then there exists an opportunity for that officer to provide similar support to the ORVCG.

Recommendations

- That the APCA MC explores and implements the most appropriate options to build better linkages between the MC and the ORVCG.

Representativeness and Membership of the APCA MC

The central question to begin this section on the representative nature of the APCA MC is;

Does the APCA MC need to represent all interests in the reserve's management?

There was interesting and significant debate surrounding the issue of representativeness of the APCA MC in the interviews conducted for the review. One theme of the debate was around the notion of representation in terms of elected officials versus 'peak interest' representation. Discussion in this area surrounded the role of the PWS and the management plan in providing legitimacy for the existence and the decisions made by the APCA MC. Some argued the Governor's signature on the APCA MP provides the plan (and prescriptions within) with the legitimacy of both Houses of the Tasmanian Parliament. There were however, sentiments expressed by members of the community and external stakeholder groups questioning the legitimacy of unelected people 'telling the public what they can and cannot do'. Another theme focused on the gaps in current peak interest representation that exist on the APCA MC. The question was posed by a number of respondents about who represents the interests of bush walkers, surfers, general public tourists, commercial fishermen and the kelpers? These groups are all significant users of the reserve yet are not represented specifically in the APCA MP's prescriptions for MC membership. A fourth but

related set of points commonly made in relation to representativeness is the issue 'multiple hats'. Discussion surrounded who represents what, and the levels and quality of interaction between committee members and interest groups.

It is not the role of this review to answer the central question posed at the beginning of this section however, the themes identified through this research regarding representativeness should form a context in which discussions surrounding the structures of community involvement could take place. From a community engagement theory point of view, aiming to resolve the tensions between these themes and agreeing upon the terms of community involvement should be the first step in the process for successful community engagement. The NRC (2008) study outlined above argued that 'the full spectrum of parties' be involved in a process 'transparent to participants and observers'.

The other main issue raised in the interviews regarded the process of membership of the APCA MC and the lack of specification surrounding membership in the APCA MP. The APCA MP does not specify terms of committee membership, nor how members might be replaced. It seems from the results of the interviews that the initial recruitment process was fairly informal, with suitable candidates 'tapped on the shoulder' by senior management of PWS and the Minister's office. Respondents were generally unclear on the process for replacing a member and the terms of committee membership.

Recommendations

- That the roles and responsibilities including interest groups being represented by individual MC members be defined more clearly.
- That a mechanism be developed to identify and engage with new interest groups as they emerge.
- That APCA Management Committee members have five year terms, with half the committee spilling every two and half years.
- That the APCA MC and the PWS work together to provide the Minister with a preferred mechanism for appointing MC members at the time of the Committee spill and to fill casual vacancies, and that this process including selection criteria be open to the public.

Lack of Clear Central Contact Point Between the PWS and the APCA MC

One of the striking features of the management structures currently operating in the APCA is the fractured and multiple communication lines between the community in general, APCA MC members and the PWS. When members of the community interact with State and Federal bureaucracies there are often multiple lines of interaction. A simple example is when an individual interacts with an officer within the bureaucracy on an issue and also interacts with the Minister or local members of Parliament. In relation to the APCA however, the research reveals that members of the community (including the APCA MC) are interacting directly with field staff, rangers, planners, managers, senior managers, executive staff, the Minister's office and Parliamentarians

as well as the APCA MC, NGOs and funding bodies. Many of the respondents interviewed were aware and savvy users of political communication strategies and employ them to advocate positions relating to management issues. Some individuals and groups might interact with all those levels and different groups at once in order to engage on particular management issues. This fractured communication structure has positive and negative aspects.

On the positive side, the community has an incredible amount of 'access' to decision-makers. This openness of access means that hard questions can be asked and influence brought to bear on every level of the decision-making hierarchy. For some members of the community this is a real asset, particularly when they understand this unstructured system and are keen and able to engage with it. This level of openness and access can result in a degree of transparency that gives some members of the community a fair idea of what information and decisions they are or are not privy to. This is seen as a positive aspect by a number of the respondents. On the other hand, this can be very confusing and alienating to members of the community unfamiliar with the structures, actors and the political nature of community involvement.

On the negative side, this fractured or unstructured system can lead to participant and stakeholder perceptions of being unsupported, under inspection and/or working within a system of conflict. The authors observed feelings of mistrust and conflict between the PWS staff and APCA MC members during the attended APCA MC meeting in late 2008. In addition, the fractured and unstructured style of communications between the PWS and the APCA MC can also result in confusion, exacerbated by no clear point of contact providing consistent messages, information or positions. This can lead to one section of the community, Departmental or Ministerial staff being 'played –off' against another during meetings and interactions.

Recommendations

- That different modes and channels of contact need to be clearly articulated for what purpose(s) they are to be used and to enable the PWS to effectively communicate internally.
- That a single point of contact be appointed within PWS for all official communications between the PWS and the APCA MC.
- That a communications log be kept by the PWS that is available to members of the APCA MC.

Lack of Formal Contact Point Between the APCA MC and the General Community Including Other Stakeholders

The APCA MP identifies the APCA MC as one of the primary 'tools' of consultation and communication with the 'community'. One of the significant outcomes of the research conducted is that stakeholders outside the APCA MC and PWS network presented the following views regarding the APCA MC. External stakeholders were not generally cognisant of the role (or existence) of the APCA MC; some argued that the management and engagement of the APCA MC is a 'Parks problem' or that PWS would mediate any interactions with the APCA MC; and they were

generally unclear on how to contact the APCA MC. While the study did not interview every 'external' stakeholder, these results seem at odds with the notion that the APCA MC would be one of the primary 'tools' for community consultation, communication and 'engaging the users of the reserve' (APCA MP page 72). The experience of the NWECC when 'engaging' with the management structures in the APCA accord with these views – with our activities being mediated through PWS and having a very limited understanding of the role of the APCA MC. If the NWECC had had a better understanding of the role of the APCA MC when undertaking the OBP Sea Spurge project, there is a high likelihood that we would have presented our proposal to the APCA MC and perhaps improved the project based on discussion and feedback with the APCA MC.

Recommendations

- The APCA MC and the PWS better communicate the roles, functions and opportunities for external stakeholders to be involved in the management of the reserve to stakeholders and the broader community.
- A management structure diagram with the roles and responsibilities, a clear understanding of who should consult who and when, particularly for prospective proponents and a clear set of contact details for the APCA MC be published and made easily accessible to stakeholders and the broader community.

Power of the Chair

The research revealed that the functions of the APCA MC Chair are not being optimally performed due to a lack of secretariat support. It should be noted, that most respondents felt that the Chair is to be commended for his efforts and is highly valued for his contribution and strength of commitment to the APCA and the APCA MC. Respondents felt however, that resources need to be provided to the Chair and the APCA MC to administer committee business and assist in the smooth running of committee processes. Secretariat tasks that could be performed to enhance the functionality of the Chair and the APCA MC includes the construction and prior distribution of APCA MC meeting agendas, minute taking and distribution, the following up of business, and the provision of support for APCA sub committees. The authors would argue that a secretariat could also provide strategic planning and facilitation support as described above. Respondents also felt that when APCA MC meetings were held on a regular basis, the ability of the APCA MC to better engage in management resulted and that members maintained a 'finger on the pulse' of APCA issues. In addition to the role and functionality of the Chair several respondents commented on the lack of a Deputy Chair and felt that the occurrence of meetings was too dependent on the presence of the Chair. The creation and appointment of a Deputy Chair could result in the improved scheduling of regular meetings and increased attendance. Some respondents stated that through the position of the Chair the APCA MC could improve its engagement with stakeholders. Some suggestions included opening the APCA MC meetings to stakeholders and the public on a planned and regular (half yearly) basis and other suggestions as previously outlined.

The research also suggested that the lack of appropriate secretariat support for the Chair combined with communications challenges surrounding APCA engagement has resulted in ambiguity around the Chair's roles and responsibilities. It seems that this ambiguity, combined

with other factors discussed above, has fostered a number of commonly reported beliefs including; ‘no-one is ultimately responsible for management decisions in the APCA’, ‘Parks do what Parks want, despite the MC’, ‘the APCA MC chair is only rolled out to deliver bad news’ and ‘the APCA MC is effectively disengaged from its management roles’. These viewpoints reinforce the need for clarity surrounding the roles and responsibilities of the PWS, the APCA MC (and the role of the Chair) and the consultative groups.

Recommendations

- That the APCA MC Chair is provided with professional development training in facilitation and that all members of the APCA MC be provided with the opportunity to undertake training in community governance and meeting procedures.
- That MC meetings are held on a regular (monthly) basis and that all dates for meetings are set annually.
- That the APCA MC considers hosting half-yearly open/public committee meetings in accessible locations.
- That members of the APCA MC and PWS staff have until 14 days prior to a scheduled meeting to ask for items to be included in the coming meeting’s agenda.
- That the setting and distribution of meeting agendas and associated documents occurs at least seven days prior to a meeting to enable the perusal of relevant information by APCA MC members.
- That APCA MC meeting minutes are recorded and distributed in a timely fashion to all members of the APCA MC and the relevant PWS staff.
- That the position of a Deputy Chair be created for the APCA MC and that the APCA MC elect a deputy chair to assist the chair in their duties when required or when the chair is absent.

Process and Procedures

The research undertaken for this review was not able to identify a clear process for determining what matters and associated information should be put to the APCA MC, or the ORVCG and the GCG, for deliberative decision-making, advice and/or consultation by the PWS. APCA MC and consultative group participants were uncertain of precisely what matters they were required to provide decisions to PWS or how decisions made would be implemented. Uncertainty also existed regarding how recommendations or advice forwarded by them would be considered and incorporated into decision-making processes conducted by the PWS, or in the case of the consultative groups, the APCA MC. Additionally, APCA MC and consultative group participants were unaware of any processes and procedures to seek accountability for actions or lack of action from the PWS. A consensus view was not expressed by PWS respondents on the process or procedures for decision-making, advice or accountability or a clear view on what should be brought to the attention of the APCA MC. No respondent interviewed was able to point to a document outlining processes and procedures covering the scope of decision-making,

implementation and accountability of the various groups despite a specific prescription (final prescription in section 7.3) in the APCA MP stating that these sorts of documents would be 'developed as part of the establishment phase'. Respondents reported that the ambiguity surrounding responsibilities, decision-making and accountability process and procedures has directly resulted in on-ground degradation in the reserve.

The authors note that these problems seem to stem back to the central question identified by the review and discussed above, 'is the APCA MC a management committee or an advisory group?'

In addition to the lack of clarity of internal processes and procedures, the review was unable to identify a clear process used by the APCA MC to engage with external groups or an explicit process for external groups to instigate engagement with the APCA MC. Respondents indicated that engaging with the PWS was relatively easy, however, pathways for engaging with the APCA MC are missing or at best, unclear, ad hoc and informal. The authors argue that this lack of clarity and process affects the APCA MC's ability to perform its core responsibilities (APCA MP section 7.3) of:

- engaging the users of the reserve in supporting the overall management strategy;
- advising the management authority on the management of recreation and commercial use;
- contributing to development and implementation of works programs.
- overseeing the operation of an enterprise unit...

Key questions need to be asked to formulate a clear set of processes and procedures for the APCA MC in relation to external stakeholder engagement. Questions such as, when and how should NGOs, including investors, volunteers and businesses engage with the APCA MC? Who will be responsible for ongoing communications with external organisations? And, what powers should be assigned to the APCA MC under those engagement processes?

Common to many community-based committees are identified processes and procedures encapsulated in a procedures manual that is supplied to committee members. These manuals aim to clearly define roles and responsibilities, processes and procedures, and other matters related to governance, management and communications. The structure outlined in the section 7.3 of the APCA MP is fairly unique in terms of organizational models, which adds further weight and urgency to the development of clear processes and procedures for decision making, advice provision, implementation, accountability and community engagement.

Recommendations

- That the PWS and the APCA MC, with the consent and approval of the Minister, construct a decision tree (boundary exercise) to clarify which matters the APCA MC will decide upon and those that the PWS are directly responsible.
- That a clear set of guidelines be constructed stating which matters must be brought to the committee's attention and what level of contribution is required of the APCA MC (decision, advice or consultation).

- That the APCA MC and the PWS create a Processes and Procedures Manual for members of the APCA MC, the ORVCG and the GCG that encompasses results of the above recommendations.
- That an operational plan be constructed annually between the APCA MC and the PWS, and that the PWS report to the APCA MC against that plan on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- That the provisions for accountability in the APCA MP be reinforced through regular reports from the Chair of the APCA MC to the Director of PWS and the Minister.
- That the APCA MC has a single point of contact and method for engagement with external groups and the broader community. This point of contact may best be served by the secretariat.
- That the APCA MC develops and implements an active community communications strategy such as a newsletter, community report, or community based meetings, etc. to better facilitate and encourage community engagement, participation and the encouragement of new enterprise activities.

Trust and Relationships in Partnerships and Decision Making

The establishment of trust is a critical component of relationship building and decision making within institutionalized governance frameworks and community engagement activities such as those prescribed for in Section 7 of the APCA MP. Trust is established through the perception of confidence in the actions and behavior of others, free from a fear of harm and with an assumption of mutual support (Onyx and Bullen, 1997, cited in Hughes *et al.*, 2007). This study has found that historical conflicts between user groups, conservationists, the Aboriginal community and PWS have been exacerbated by poor process and poor implementation of community engagement activities.

Respondents reported that for the first few years after the APCA MP was signed there were some positive relationships built between differing stakeholders and the PWS, however trust built in this time is reportedly dissolving due to the failure of the PWS to organize and facilitate high quality community engagement. There was a general consensus amongst respondents indicating that a breakdown in trust in the PWS has occurred with feelings of mistrust and skepticism becoming more widespread. Discontent amongst many of the study participants has resulted in a feeling of underlying conflict between those participants and the PWS. The author's argue that this is a significant opportunity cost for the PWS who require the cooperation and engagement of the community to effectively manage the reserve. Also, with significant changes to user activity management underway, it is important that the PWS address the issues of trust, transparency and effective stakeholder relationship development to avoid future hostility and to breakdown existing feelings of conflict.

Study participants clearly articulated that management decisions regarding the APCA were regularly made by the PWS with minimal or no consultation with the APCA MC and particularly the ORVCG. Recent examples of this failure to communicate, reported by respondents, include the

closure of No Mans Creek Bridge, the holding back of the PWS coordinated tracks report, the APCA's Tarkine tourism development discussions undertaken with the Cradle Coast Authority and Cradle Coast NRM on-ground work proposals. These examples were used to support views expressed by respondents that the PWS held back and restricted important information from stakeholders within the existing governance structures and the broader public. Several participants claimed that PWS staff had deliberately misrepresented views put forward by members of these groups, and that PWS staff had failed to keep accurate records of meetings and associated decision making outcomes. Respondents also expressed the view that PWS staff operated to an agenda that is removed from public participation and is dominated by external decision making and non-user motives.

According to Coleman *et al.* (2008) facilitators of community partnerships and engagement activities should undertake a genuine effort to understand community participant motives that may be divergent and the constraints that impact on those motives. Engagement facilitators seeking participatory decision making outcomes need to elicit and understand stakeholder concerns and enable a readiness for institutional change-based action (Gill, 1998, cited in Coleman *et al.*, 2008). By establishing a meaningful engagement and communications environment that supports and demonstrates trust and transparency, the PWS could facilitate best practice, high quality participatory decision making within the APCA MP's institutionalized framework.

Respondents reported that current participatory decision making is stymied by confusion regarding the APCA MC's scope, failure of process, lack of transparency, and lack of institutional support from the PWS as well as the ambiguous nature of the consensus model prescribed within the APCA MP at Section 7.3:

The Management Committee's mode of decision making is to be based, where possible, on consensus seeking rather than on an adversarial model. A dispute resolution process will only be employed when it becomes clear consensus is unreachable.

Respondents indicated that attempting to achieve consensus often resulted in the avoidance of some contentious issues and the blocking of majority-supported decisions. Some argued this lead to a disempowerment of participants from subsequent PWS decision making activities. One group of respondents felt that any lack of consensus was a failure of the prescribed decision making process and that 'majority-based consensus' or a straight majority process was not possible. There were however, contrasting views on the interpretation of the consensus section in the APCA MP with some arguing that the 'where possible' clause allowed for decisions to be made and any dispute be minuted. The authors were unable to identify a situation where the dispute resolution process described in the APCA MP has been employed despite reports of issues where consensus has not been reached. Clarification regarding how the APCA MC will make these difficult and contested decisions is urgently required.

A number of respondents reported that PWS staff view the failure of the APCA MC to achieve consensus as an opportunity for the PWS to make decisions outside of the community involved governance structure. The review has observed this process occurring and notes acceptance by some stakeholders of this arrangement. This decision making outcome seems contrary to the intent of the APCA MP which seeks the involvement of the community to help solve the difficult or perhaps intractable issues. Acceptance of this situation has significant implications. First, it accepts

that the community is unable to make hard decisions, second that PWS is the groups that 'knows best' and third, it raises questions of the value of any community involvement at a management level. The respondents in the review, generally, do not accept these notions, meaning that reform in this area is required from both the community's view. The authors also argue that there is a high opportunity cost in accepting this arrangement for the PWS. The PWS should be facilitating or even compelling the participatory structures prescribed in the APCA MP to undertake their functions. The costs in terms of political backlash alone should motivate the PWS to facilitate the community to 'solve' any difficult issues. The authors suggest that the PWS hierarchy would benefit from seeing the success of the APCA MC, the ORVCG and the GCG as being closely linked to the success of the PWS in managing the reserve.

Recommendations

- That the APCA MC's decision making process, as prescribed within the APCA MP, is better defined.
- That issues unable to be resolved at an APCA MC meeting are defined and become a priority agenda item, with a formal proposal to resolve the issue, at the next meeting. If consensus remains unachievable then the agreed dispute resolution process be employed.
- That an independent arbitration and dispute resolution processes be adopted by the PWS to facilitate decision making where consensus cannot be achieved within the APCA MC.

Resourcing

It was generally argued by all respondents that a lack of resourcing is a major issue affecting the management of the APCA. Respondents were divided in their view about why the APCA lacks resources. PWS staff indicated that the resources were simply not available *for* the APCA, whilst other stakeholders were divided into agreeing with the PWS view or believing that the allocation of resources to the APCA was a result of deliberate 'non-management' by the PWS. Regardless of the underlying causes, the issue of resourcing in the APCA remains a major hurdle to effective management of the reserve and is demanding of immediate attention.

It is not within the parameters of this report to discuss and make recommendations for the broader allocation of resources to and within the PWS. However, these issues come to bear on the ability of the PWS to manage the APCA. Given the APCA's known natural, cultural, recreational and other values, it is a reserve that requires careful and appropriate management. It can be argued, that at the heart of this management is the requirement to have appropriately skilled staff with suitable enforcement powers to protect, manage and develop the reserve in accordance with the APCA MP. Successful management therefore, requires multiple skill sets from reserve managers and support staff. Facilitation and conflict resolution, natural and cultural values management, communications and administration are all essential ingredients required within PWS staff managing the APCA. The authors acknowledge that it is difficult to find all of these skills and others within a single employee, but argue that the APCA would benefit from PWS shifting their human resourcing focus from reserve management based on natural and cultural values to a more

community-based facilitation specialization. In addition, the authors argue, that through adequate resourcing and empowerment of the APCA MC and the consultative groups, the PWS may be able to better achieve the multiple objectives of the APCA MP. This empowerment may also save the PWS money and provide access to external funding and in kind support.

In order to enable appropriate resourcing for the APCA, increased financial contributions are required to: secure and maintain appropriately skilled PWS staff; to improve through professional development opportunities the skill base of current and future PWS staff; provide professional development opportunities for APCA MC members and sub committees, enable improved and meaningful engagement with stakeholders and the broader community; to enable the protection and restoration of reserve values; and to support compliance and enforcement requirements for the reserve that will ensure appropriate use is achieved and conservation values are maintained.

Recommendations

- That the PWS increases available resources to the APCA for staff employment and development, APCA MC and sub-committee professional development, community engagement, reserve values protection and restoration, and for compliance and enforcement.
- That the PWS and the APCA MC seek additional financial and other resourcing support for the effective management of the APCA from the State Government and other funding sources.
- That the PWS consider refocusing its APCA human resourcing on community facilitation and engagement skills rather than traditional reserve management skills focused on natural and cultural values.
- That the PWS adequately resource and empower the APCA MC and its sub-committees to assist with effective reserve management in accordance with the APCA MP.

Conclusion and Implications for the APCA of the “Tarkine Coast”

One of the striking findings of the research was the consensus that existed surrounding the management challenges in the APCA. While there is debate surrounding the details, there also exists a broad consensus in how to deal with management challenges. This review has made a number of recommendations aiming to improve the community based management of the APCA. One of the key messages coming from this review is that the Tasmanian community, through the PWS, should be supporting and strengthening the stewardship ethic of the community currently involved in APCA management.

It is the view of the authors that a significant and positive culture shift has occurred, and is still occurring, in relation to the APCA. The authors also argue that this has not been acknowledged let alone capitalised on by the PWS. While a culture shift within the Circular Head community is occurring, significant and irreversible cultural heritage and biophysical degradation is also

occurring within the APCA. It seems however, based on the snapshot reported in this review, that conflict between peak bodies has reduced, that all groups respect the importance of Aboriginal cultural heritage, and stakeholder consensus that access should be granted to responsible users and denied to irresponsible users.

While there are still divergences of views (sometimes entrenched on particular issues), more often than not the issues that give rise to feelings of conflict are related to how the PWS have managed the issue. In many instances the conduct of the PWS has not lead to a trusting and transparent partnership with the community, rather it has lead to a situation where the 'community' is given enough information to know exactly what they aren't being asked or told. This is where many gains in APCA management can occur. The PWS would benefit from involving the community as partners, and by facilitating the community to make the hard decisions. For example, while there is consensus that irresponsible users should be denied access the reserve, the PWS has not inclusively and cooperatively assisted the community involved in APCA management to develop workable policy solutions. The authors conclude that this has not occurred because of capacity constraints of the PWS staff (ie they are often reserve managers not community managers/facilitators), perceptions of community divisions that may not be current, a lack of resource and political support, and most importantly, an apparent lack of will. It is the view of the authors that departmental and political commitment, resources and adequately qualified and experienced staff will go a long way to improving the management of the reserve in this respect.

Getting the management right is extremely important given foreseeable development pressures that will affect the APCA. Forestry Tasmania's Tarkine Road proposal aims to deliver hundreds of thousands of tourists onto the APCA or the emerging "Tarkine Coast". Forestry Tasmania is not alone in proposals to increase tourism and recreational pressure on the APCA. It is fair to say that there is a 'whole of government approach' to increasing tourism and recreation with all the major political parties at State and Commonwealth level, local governments and peak body groups agreeing that the Tarkine, including the Tarkine Coast, are 'tourism assets' to be developed, with disagreement only on how best to capitalise on this asset. This means that in the foreseeable future there will be increasing and changing groups of people wanting to access the APCA. Change is coming and if Forestry Tasmania and the Cradle Coast Authority are correct, it will bring a massive increase in visitation. In light of this prospect, there is even greater urgency for the APCA to have a high quality management structure capable of managing the competing uses, current damaging processes and future challenges that exist and will likely increase.

The APCA's management structure would benefit from engaging the community at both the strategic level and at the visitor/user level to ensure the world-class heritage values contained in the reserve are preserved for future generations. Luckily, the APCA has a good basis to do this with the APCA MP in place. The implementation of the MP however, particularly the sections involving the community, would benefit from urgent attention and improvement. As outlined in the international literature, community involvement in environmental management requires 'clarity of purpose, commitment, adequate resources, appropriate timing, an implementation focus, and a commitment to learning...' (NRC, 2008, p 96), from managing authorities and from Governments. This review has found both the PWS and the State Government lacking in one way or another in all of these community participation key attributes with regard to APCA management. We hope that this review is a constructive step in pointing out some of the areas where improvements can be made and that positive adjustments will result.

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