

Senator the Hon. Paul Calvert

Liberal Senator for Tasmania • President of the Senate



Media Release



Tasmania's Flat Rock – biodiversity hotspot conserved forever

Part of an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot will now be conserved for future generations with the purchase of a 455 hectare property, Flat Rock, for Australia's National Reserve System.

The purchase is the result of a groundbreaking partnership formed between the Australian Government, the forestry company Gunns Limited and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC).

"The Australian Government is delighted to provide \$246,000 for the Tasmanian Land Conservancy to buy and manage this wonderful grassland and forest property," Tasmanian Senator Paul Calvert said today.

"The former owners, Gunns Limited, offered the property to the TLC for just two-thirds of its real market value.

"Flat Rock in Tasmania's southern midlands, is in an area with a very high concentration of threatened species, many of which occur nowhere else in the world, and very little of it is protected elsewhere.

"This is an outstanding example of conservation partnerships at work - government, private industry, the local council, a community group and a conservation NGO all working together to preserve our environment for our children and grandchildren."

Flat Rock was purchased with \$136,400 from the National Reserve System Programme and \$110,000 from the federally funded Tasmanian Private Forest Reserves Program.

Tasmanian Land Conservancy CEO Nathan Males said the Flat Rock Reserve created an important conservation link with the historic Chauncy Vale Wildlife Sanctuary (owned and managed by the South Midlands Council) and the Alpha Pinnacle Conservation Area.

"We are very excited to have achieved this latest win for Tasmanian conservation," Mr Males said.

"The region currently has very few protected areas. The Flat Rock Reserve purchase means we now have 1300 hectares of linked conservation areas, protecting the endangered swift parrot and Tasmanian wedge tailed eagle, as well as peppermint and grassy blue gum forest and threatened annual plants and orchids."

Gunns Limited formerly owned the land and parts of it were logged until the mid 1980s. These sections are now regrowing and provide useful wildlife habitat.

“In addition to the obvious conservation and biodiversity benefits, it is the historic nature of Chauncy Vale that makes this transfer truly special, including the history of forest operations on the site. We hope that this history becomes part of the educational elements of the Sanctuary as it is an important part of Tasmania’s heritage,” Gunns Limited Executive Chairman, John Gay said.

“It is crucial for young Tasmanians to realise that many of the forests with high conservation values today have been harvested in the past and regenerated for today’s and future generations to enjoy,” Mr Gay said.

Australia’s National Reserve System is a nation-wide network of reserves especially set up to protect Australia’s unique natural environment for current and future generations.

“Since 1997, the Australian Government has invested more than \$80 million to build the National Reserve System, adding more than 20 million hectares to the nation’s protected land areas,” Senator Calvert said.

“As the National Reserve System Programme approaches its tenth anniversary, Flat Rock Reserve brings to 283 the number of landholdings added to the National Reserve System.

“More than 80 million hectares - 10 per cent of Australia’s continent - is now protected under the National Reserve System,” he said.

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