

## The Tarkine

**The Australian and Tasmanian governments have agreed to additional large reserves in the Tarkine, totalling 73,512 hectares, to further protect the significant tract of cool temperate rainforest found here. A new formal reserve of 30,946 hectares will now consolidate the Savage River and Donaldson wilderness areas. This and other new formal reserves in the north-west will result in formal reservation of about 308,000 hectares, stretching from north of the Arthur River to south of the Pieman River and from the shores of the west coast to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area near Cradle Mountain.**

The reserves protect a largely undisturbed extensive tract of rainforest identified by ecologists and conservationists as significant on a global scale. Cool temperate rainforests are extremely rare worldwide, the only other remnants are in New Zealand, Chile, Siberia and western North America. Cool temperate rainforests are markedly different from rainforest in warmer climates.

The rainforest in this part of the Tarkine is predominantly open, tall, cathedral-like myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) forest. These trees can grow to a height of 50 metres and reach an age of 500 years. Their presence corresponds to highly fertile basalt sites with a very high rainfall. Most of the rainforest located on basalt sites elsewhere in Tasmania has been cleared in the past for agriculture.

The Tarkine area contains extensive high-quality wilderness, natural landscape values and undisturbed catchments. The vulnerability of this rainforest to fire and disease, and the area's diversity of flora and fauna, were significant factors contributing to the reservation of around two-thirds of the area in the RFA. With the addition of the new reserves, 87 per cent of the Tarkine area will now be protected in reserves.<sup>1</sup>

Governments have also agreed to add 8,467 hectares of rainforest elsewhere in the State to the existing reserves. In total, 465,000 hectares of old-growth rainforest across the State will now be included in reserves. This will raise the proportion of old-growth rainforest in Tasmania protected in reserves to 89 per cent.

The increased rainforest reservation will enhance the conservation of over 50 rare, threatened and endangered species, including 16 species found nowhere else.

The protection of the Tarkine rainforest in formal reserves creates an enduring opportunity for current and future generations to enjoy and appreciate these old forests and sweeping landscapes.

The Australian Government is providing \$1 million over two years to assist the development of bushwalking tracks in the Tarkine area. The managed development of tracks and related facilities will ensure that the economic benefits from tourism in this area are realised, while conservation values are protected.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the National Estate boundary, which identifies 'the Tarkine' as an area of 332,000 hectares.