

ISSUE 2402

"In Support of Progress" Newsletter

24 January 2024

Political games

Power supply

The "Tarkine"

Political Games.

It is becoming rather biblical - David O'Byrne has been denied thrice, it seems.

There is a rumour that Mr. Tucker might be interested in being a National Party candidate. If so, he may be a bit ahead of himself in bringing down the government, as the Nationals still have to register as a political party in this state!

The uncertainty regarding the survival of the government is now starting to unsettle the horses, and as much as the government may not wish it to be, it is developing its own head of steam, fueled of course by Mr. Tucker. Again, I ask, why is he doing it? What on earth is in it for him?

Tarraleah power

I have been asked to explain further my comment that the redevelopment of Tarraleah will provide only 30MW of additional power supply, as the present station, with an output capacity of 90 MW, will be able to produce 190 MW once the redevelopment is complete.

At present, Tarraleah is a run-of-the river station. The scheme is constrained by water flow, and has an output capacity of 90MW, it operates 24/7 throughout the year and produces 680 GWh of power each year.

(A gigawatt is 1000MW times the number of hours – over a year multiply the number by (24x365) to give you the figure of GWh per annum)

The redevelopment, we are told (see Business Case referred to below) will, through more effective water management, be able to produce an additional 200 GWh per annum of power. So, if a 90MW capacity station can produce 680 GWh per annum, then, all other things being equal (ie operating 24/7), it will take a station of around 120MW capacity to produce 880GWh per annum. The difference – approx. 30MW. Thus my figure.

Tarraleah will have an installed capacity of 190 MW once redeveloped, but the same amount of water will be flowing through its turbines as now. So, if it ran at full capacity, it would only be able to operate for approximately half the hours.

So, why do it? Three reasons really:

1 the scheme is old and has become increasingly unreliable, It is in need of a complete overhaul anyway – station, turbines, canals, pipes. However, it will be expensive – a new station, new turbines, new tunnels,

2 to use water more efficiently – at present a significant amount of water is lost through leakage and the old canal system loses height in the transmission of water, thus sacrificing the fall, or head.

3 the additional capacity will provide a more flexible operating environment – at present the station is limited to being a run-of-river baseload station and has very little capacity to meet peak demand.

A number of options are being considered by Hydro Tasmania, and these are presented in the Preliminary Business Case of May 2023, and circulated by the CEO in November. It can be found on the following link:

<https://www.hydro.com.au/clean-energy/battery-of-the-nation/hydro-system-improvement>

The "Tarkine"

Whenever the word "Tarkine" crosses your path, what is your immediate response? Forest devastation? Nature under threat? General rape and pillage? Because if this was your response, you would be wrong.

You have been led astray. Let's go back a step or two to explore how and why.

First of all, "the Tarkine" is an artificial construct. It is presently regarded as that area of the north-west of Tasmania which lies between the Arthur and Pieman Rivers, and between the sea and the Murchison Highway. But it wasn't always so.

The term "Tarkine" was first used in the late 80's to describe an area in the NW of the State - an area much smaller than what is being talked about these days.

It was the Australian Conservation Foundation, in one of its many campaigns to restrict harvesting in native forests, that invented the word, to elicit a more emotional response in support of its campaigns. So much more evocative than North West Forests, which was what the area was once called and what they were targeting.

With each campaign the claims mounted and the boundaries kept changing (and yes, you guessed it, incorporating more and more acreage). Even now, there are no set boundaries. Modern-day government documents refer to the "unbounded area of the Tarkine", with the present construct being between the Arthur River in the north, the Pieman River in the south, the Murchison Highway to the east and the coast to the west. However, the claims keep incorporating more and more ground with each passing campaign. Why stop there?

Maps of the Tarkine are many and various, and each with different boundaries. See a range of maps attached. Assuming for now the area under contention is what has been described above - some 440,000 ha...

You may be of the view that the area is unprotected, under threat and needs protection. NOT SO - over 75% of the area is already under conservation orders of one type or another, is managed by The Parks and Wildlife Service, and has been for years. For example:

The Savage River National Park (20,000 ha) and surrounding reserves (50,000 ha) contains the largest contiguous area of pristine temperate rainforest in Australia. Protected

The Arthur Pieman Conservation Area (>100,000 ha) stretches from the Arthur to the Pieman and from the coast to the Donaldson and Frankland Rivers to the east, and covers the entire coastline, with dunes, coastal scrub and inland areas. Protected

The Meredith Range Regional Reserve (70,000 ha) is an undulating granite plateau, rising to over 900m. Protected.

The Donaldson River Nature Recreation Area (30,600 ha). Again, protected.

Some would have you believe that the entire area is forested - it is not - and that the forests need protection - most are already in reserves.

As for mining, this area is large, with a small proportion of it covering parts of the Mt Read Volcanics and the Arthur Lineament zones. Yes, there are mining interests there, and have been for many decades - after all, that is where the minerals are! But seriously, what is the mining footprint? So small!

So when you next hear the phrase "Save the Tarkine" from the Bob Brown Foundation and others, recognize it for what it is - hype. Don't be conned!

To borrow a couple of quotes from JFK, still so relevant:

No matter how big the lie – say it often enough and the masses will regard it as the truth.

and

The great enemy of truth is very often not the lie--deliberate, contrived and dishonest--but the myth--persistent, persuasive and unrealistic. ... Too often we hold fast to ...cliches... We subject all facts to a prefabricated set of interpretations. We enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.

Below are three maps. Each has been drawn at a different time, each shows a different "interest", and each shows a separate boundary for the "Tarkine" area.

NB I first ran these maps in Newsletter 2119

The two forestry maps (Figures 1 and 2) illuminate the fact that the area is not totally forested, and not all forest is being targeted .

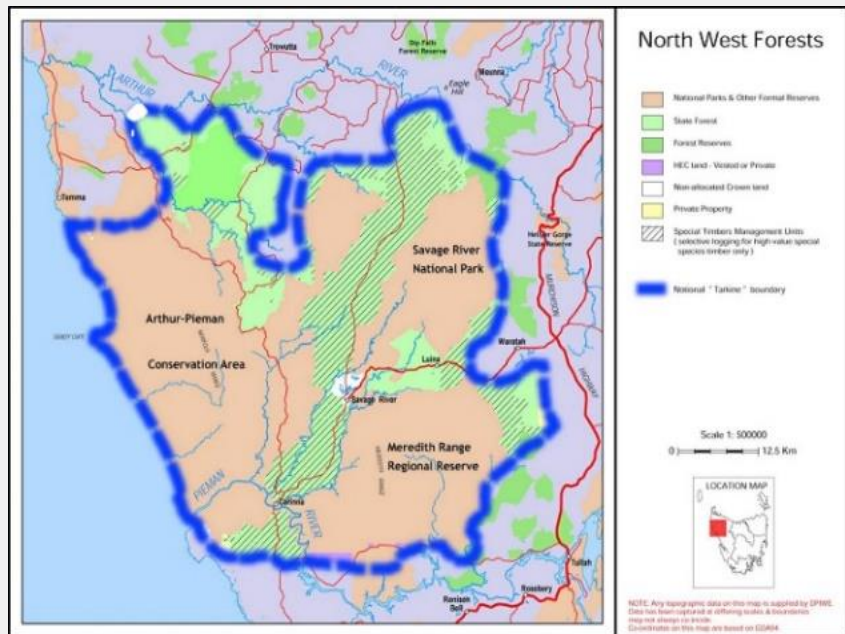


Figure 1 North West Forests

Note the existing areas of National Park, Conservation Areas and Regional Reserves.

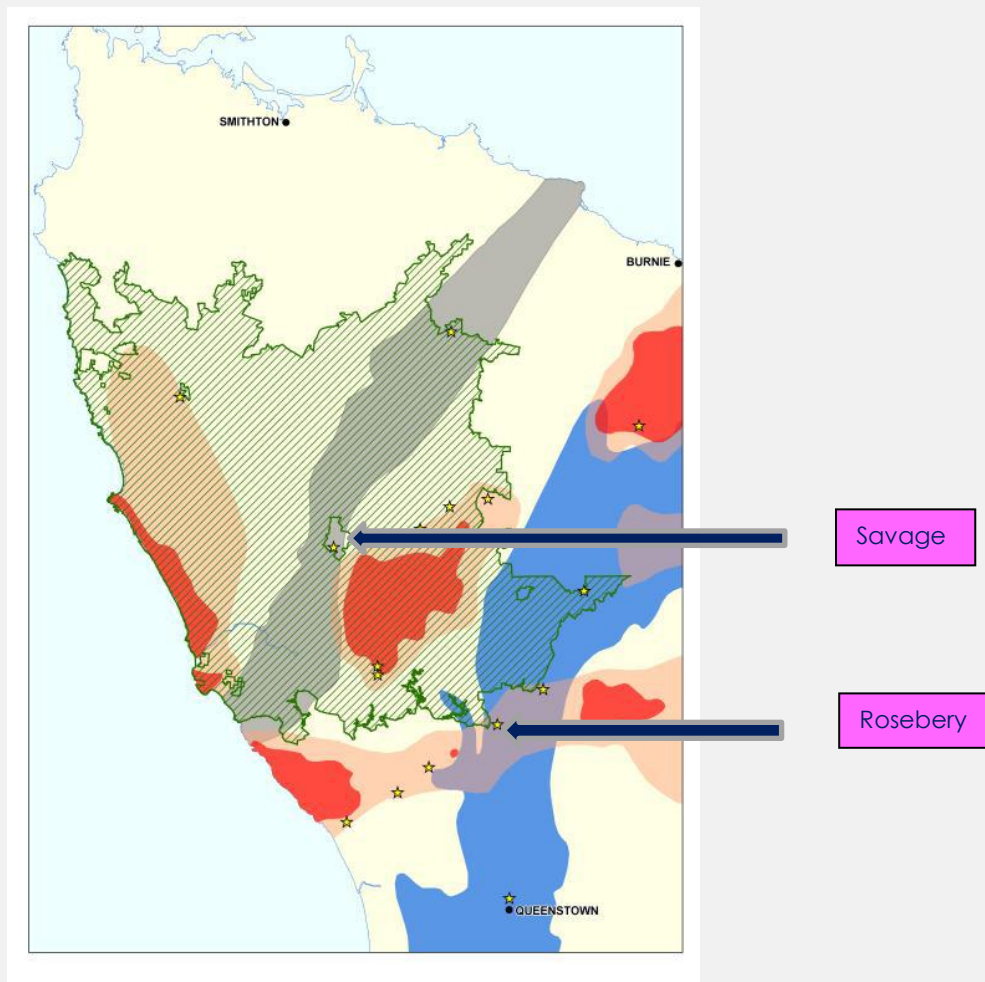


Figure 2 Forestry in the Tarkine

The third map (Figure 3) shows the various mining provinces, and where existing mining activity is occurring. Savage River, for example, is deadset in the middle of the Tarkine. Renison and Rosebery lie to the south of the Tarkine, on the southern side of the Pieman River.

The Rosebery mine operates on a long-standing mining lease which straddles the river, and the mine now wishes to build a new tailings dam on the north side of the river, on their lease, which is now seen to be within the ever-expanding boundaries of "the Tarkine".

Figure 3 The Mining Provinces in the NW



- Green-The Tarkine region (indicative)*
- Blue- Mt Read Volcanics*
- Grey- Arthur Mobile Lineament*
- Red- Granite Outcrops*
-
- Stars Mining operations*

I hope this has been of value in separating fact from fiction.

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