

ARTWORK OR EYESORE? The Parks and Wildlife to build an art installation in pristine wilderness.

It's our world heritage shed

DUNCAN ABEY

IT'S not exactly what nature lovers hope to find when they travel to one of the most beautiful — and unspoilt — wilderness areas on the planet.

A MONA-commissioned art installation on the button-grass shores of Bathurst Harbour, in the Southwest National Park, has driven a wedge between Tasmania's arts and conservation communities.

The *Sunday Tasmanian* travelled to the area last week to discover what all the fuss was about, and found the "art installation" consisted of a prefabricated metal shed and associated advertising billboard.

Built to celebrate the life and utopian vision of Port Davey identity Critchley Parker, the installation will remain on display in the World Heritage-listed wilderness for the next six months.

Mr Parker died in the Port Davey region in 1942 while searching for land suitable for the settlement of displaced European Jews.

The billboard that stands before the hut advertises Poynduk Holiday Villas,



ART DEBATE: MONA's controversial project deep in the Southwest park.

named for the idyllic settlement he had proposed.

One critic has slammed the Parks and Wildlife Service for a "secret" approval process and accused MONA of putting art before the environment.

When the *Sunday Tasmanian* visited, it found the blue and white hut by following a track that workers had worn through dense tea-tree scrub from the shoreline.

Tasmanian Conservation Trust director Peter McGlone has attacked the secrecy sur-

rounding the building's approval, saying MONA had kept the public in the dark over its plans for the project.

Mr McGlone appealed to federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt for a review of the decision but Mr Hunt decided there was no need.

The environmentalist warned the approval could set a precedent for a multi-permanent presence of "temporary" structures in Tasmanian wilderness areas.

"MONA needs to ensure

that all information about this project is provided, and one of the biggest pieces of information relates to visitation and all of the problems that come with that, including an increase in flights, people staying overnight, litter and disturbance of wildlife," he said.

"Maybe they don't expect anyone to visit it, but even if they don't, it doesn't mean people won't go down there.

"And MONA are not in the business of managing World Heritage Areas."

This is a temporary art project that celebrates Tasmania's history and heritage

MONA

MONA yesterday defended its decision to commission the metal structure in the wilder-

ness, saying it had followed the Government's environmental regulations to the letter.

But as to the artwork's title, creator or even opening date, the museum declined to respond.

"This is a temporary art project that celebrates Tasmania's history and heritage," a MONA spokeswoman said.

"We followed all of the requirements under the national environmental law."

Mr McGlone said moves to bypass public scrutiny had



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Service gave MONA special permission And this is what they came up with ...



Smoke rises from burn-off briefings

MATT SMITH

THE State Government's bold aim to burn off 60,000ha of Tasmanian bush a year may not target the right areas, a report shows.

The briefings, by state fire chief Mike Brown, warn the plan could have a significant smoke impact on the community.

The Government has promised to spend \$28.5m over four years on extra burn-offs in line with a recommendation from the State Fire Management Council in 2011.

A decision on the recommendation was deferred by the previous government, prompting accusations the state had not done enough back-burning before bushfires last year that destroyed about 100 properties across the state, mainly in the South.

The briefings, obtained by the Labor Opposition say "the membership of the State Fire Management Council is supportive of an increase in fuel reduction that is based on risk and making Tasmanian communities safer".

But the report raised concerns, including:

BURNING only public land will not protect communities as 20 per cent of the urban interface is with public land and the rest is with private. A 60,000ha target can be achieved easily through remote area burning, with no benefit to community safety.

THE human resources to substantially increase burning are not immediately available.

PRELIMINARY research indicates the level of burning required could have substantial smoke impacts.

Opposition Leader Bryan Green said the report showed the State Government's plan was a "sham".

Pair face drug, gun charges

TWO people were charged with drug and weapons offences after an incident in Launceston yesterday.

A 24-year-old Glenorchy man was charged with firearms offences, unlawful possession of property and driving with an illicit drug in his blood.

He appeared in the Launceston Magistrates Court and bailed to appear in the Hobart Magistrates Court on June 30.

A Hobart woman, 32, was charged with drug offences and possessing dangerous articles.

She appeared in the Launceston Magistrates Court yesterday and was bailed.

"knocked some polish" off MONA's reputation.

"What the public needs to know is all of what MONA knows - the way you deal with these things is that you're perfectly transparent and provide to the public everything that you provide to the Parks service," Mr McGlone said.

"It shows MONA are willing to put environmental concerns below concerns they have about artistic projects."

The Parks and Wildlife Service has defended the decision not to include a formal public consultation period for the project, saying none was required as part of the Reserve Activity Assessment process, although MONA did advise relevant commercial operators.

A spokesman said PWS approved the project on the basis that it contributed to the celebration of Tasmania's heritage, adding that all costs had been borne by MONA with any PWS management part of standard operations.

"We also believe that it is appropriate as parks and

reserves contribute to the community as places that inspire artistic creativity, which are supported by activities such as the artists in residence program," the spokesman said.

"Artistic installations add value to the visitor experience.

"The project was approved on the basis that it is a temporary installation which does not have significant environmental impacts."

Tasmanian National Parks Association president Robert Campbell described the project as bizarre, saying it was inconsistent with recommendations from the 2004 State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area report.

"One of those recommendations was to enhance community engagement, yet this proposal has been shrouded in secrecy," Dr Campbell said.

"Another recommendation was to maintain the natural peace and quiet of wilderness areas, and if the main way people are going to visit this project is to fly in, I'd love to know what the assessment of that was."

SO, WHAT COMES NEXT?

