



conservation

development & eco tourism

tourism



huon nature trust

conservation

# HNT at a Glance

Huon Nature Trust is an enterprise that starts from a standpoint of conservation.

Established by environmentalists, Michael Higgins and Paul Dimmick, as a way to protect private land near Huonville Tasmania, the trust currently owns some 57 ha. This is part of a greater community conservation effort that currently protects over 4 square kilometers around the central icon of Mt Misery.

Dubbed Mt Misery Habitat Reserve, the neighbouring properties are individually owned but co-operatively managed by people with environmental sensibilities.

On this 57 ha the trust has built the first two stages of a nature based tourism village, complete with all infrastructure including walking tracks. Stages one and two comprise three studio cabins, a group or family cabin, two luxury tipis, tent and camper van sites amenities and a picnic shelter & kitchen. The entire village is leased to Huon Bush Retreats to deliver the guest services and provide day to day conservation and infrastructure management on behalf of the trust.

Whilst providing the land for conservation and the tourism facilities, HNT has an objective of financial viability. This allows financial involvement of unit holders and at the same time ensures continued conservation. Business plan strategies and ongoing unit sales are working towards achieving the realisation of these objectives.

If this model, where business facilitates conservation, sounds interesting to you, please read on, then **contact US** for more detailed information.





# conservation



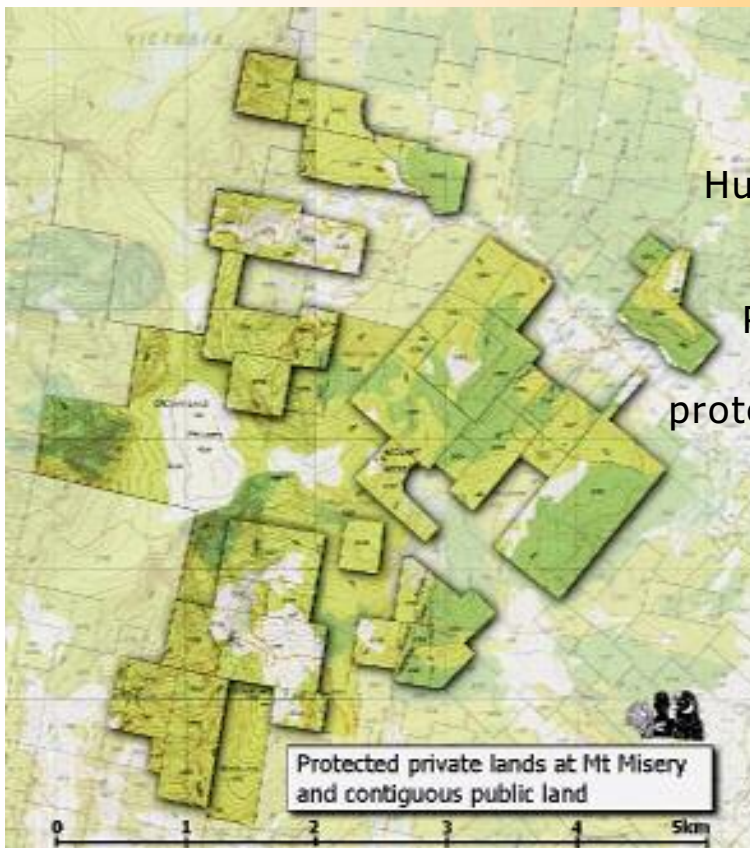
The Greater Mt Misery Habitat Reserve is a loose collection of co-operatively managed private properties. There are more than 45 titles included and it covers over four square kilometers. Many of these titles are covered by legally binding **conservation covenants**. Interspersed between is Crown land of an additional 2 square kilometers.

Within the greater reserve, nestled on the SW slopes of the mountain is the land owned and protected by Huon Nature Trust. On this land is built the

**eco-tourism village.**

Just south from the village is a formerly cleared area known as the Plantation Block. Paul and Michael own this land and are holding it for transfer to the Unit Trust. This area is established as a **eucalypt plantation**.

It will be developed as a practical demonstration of 'sustainable and ethical resource use' to become part of the total experience of staying within the village. It has a significant part to play in the trust's future plans. Adjacent to the plantation is a wildlife release pen where **rehabilitated native animal orphans** are



Huon Nature Trust is part of Mount Misery Habitat Reserve, a loose collection of protected properties comprising over 4km<sup>2</sup> of private land. Adjoining is a further 2km<sup>2</sup> of public land.



# conservation

gently reintroduced to the wild.

The village is bounded to the west by a deep stream gully complete with **hidden waterfall**. The **oldgrowth forest** in this area escaped the 1967 fires and is traversed by the Tall Trees walking track. There are enormous Eucalyptus regnans and bluegums, a stand of sassafras, some myrtles and ancient tree ferns. One area has been fire free for even longer and is a **remnant of rainforest**. Interpretive signs will explain how the complex ecosystem operates from underlying rock and the process of ecological succession through to

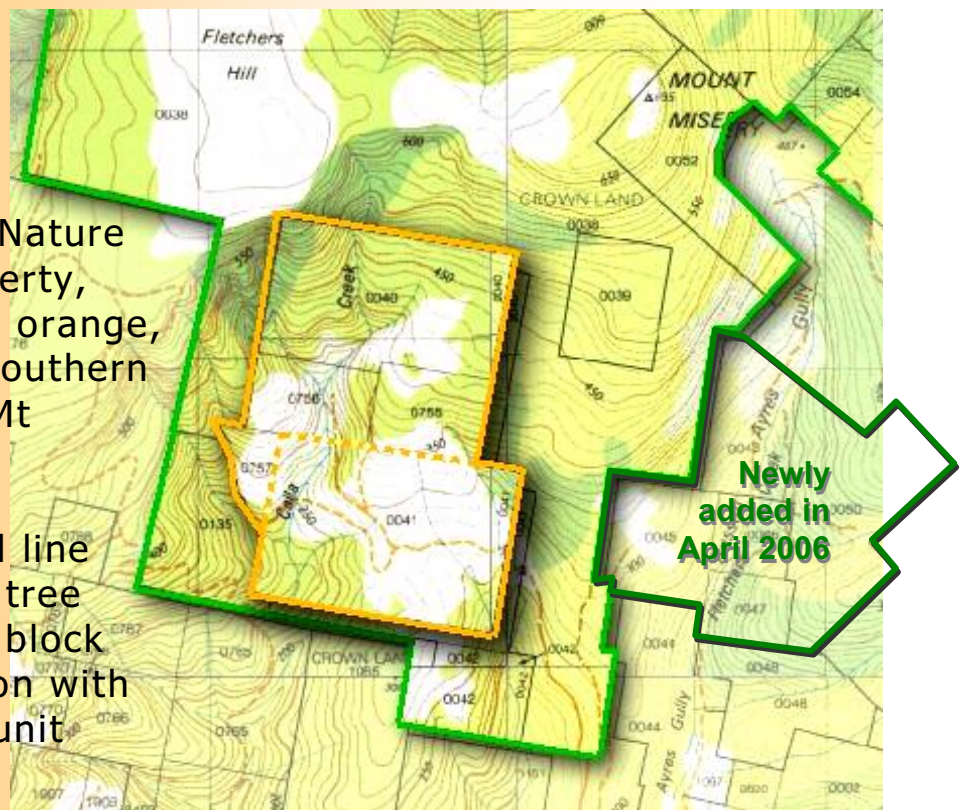
climax communities such as this rainforest.

The **primary objective** for the founders of MMHR has always been to **protect the natural values** of the land surrounding the mountain. To 'live' conservation is a challenge for any business venture but the trust is determined to live by its primary objective. The land, now owned by Huon Nature Trust, is not wilderness by any means but every decision about its development is made against the background of this objective.

In 2003 the owners believed that

The Huon Nature Trust property, outlined in orange, is on the southern slopes of Mt Misery.

The dotted line shows the tree plantation block for inclusion with sufficient unit sales.







# development

this land could support a substantial, **eco-sensitive visitor facility** without surrendering the integrity of the natural habitats. With private investment the cabin village was opened in February 2003 and the second objective of **sharing the environment with visitors** was commenced.

As a mechanism to take the concept forward, a new business plan was developed in 2005 and the venture, became available as the **Huon Nature Trust**. A Trustee company, Mt Misery Reserve Pty.

Ltd, administers the trust.

The Trustee as the new Landlord and Huon Bush Retreats, which continues as the accommodation provider, are excited about the prospect of ensuring continued protection of the land.

As the trust **grows into the future**, it is hoped to purchase and **protect more land** around the existing holdings. It is hoped that once the tourism facility is fully developed, to buy buffer land, such as the tree plantation adjacent. Strict management regimes will ensure that this area can continue to be a resource and be managed as an example of environmentally responsible forestry practices. Other adjoining lands may be purchased solely for conservation. Still others could be purchased, covenanted and on-sold, thus **enhancing the protection and value** of the entire reserve.

The development of the village has been planned carefully to have **minimal impact** on the site. All cabins are fitted with **composting toilets** and solar electricity. Rain water is collected from all buildings and stored for use within. Stream water is collected and reticulated throughout the site for a fire-fighting system, while grey water



# development



passes through an accredited natural treatment system and is returned to the earth.

**Conservation covenants** protect the natural values in perpetuity. Not only do the covenants prohibit logging and other destructive practices but also **limit the impacts** allowed from the development. Cabin numbers on the present holding are limited to eight and the area of human impact is limited in size. This will ensure that the natural values do not suffer unduly from a multitude of human pressures and that **future developments** stay in tune with the vision for protection balanced with ethical use.

There is much to be learnt from the restoration and protection of the various facets of the reserve. The research and presentation of information through **interpretative signs** and **printed information** is an ongoing project.

Continuing with the **interpretive possibilities**, east of the Cabin Village is regrowth forest returning after clearing by people and fire, which illustrates the way even-aged, low biodiversity forest regenerates after clearing. Interpretation will also embrace how the Aboriginal



# development

people utilised the area for many millennia.

The **three studio cabins** are each located in their own unique setting. **Modern steel construction** has allowed them to be built amongst the natural bushland without major clearings. Each cabin has a deck or lawn with outdoor furniture from which to enjoy the beautiful views and sounds of the surrounding reserve.

Each cabin is warmly furnished providing a queen-sized bed, a double sofa bed and single trundle bed. A **well equipped kitchen** allows self-catering or meals can be delivered from the on-site **commercial kitchen**. There is an easy to enter shower which looks out over the bush and an outdoor bath which takes advantage of the inherent privacy of each setting. An efficient wood-burning heater enhances the warmth of each cabin.

In February 2006, the Trust added a larger **group cabin** which has all of the features of the smaller cabins plus more. It meets Australian accessibility standards for **people with disabilities**. It is best suited to larger families or groups and its layout can be altered to cater for

**small conferences** and meetings.

There are three **walk-in tent sites**. Each site nestles amongst the native vegetation on the edge of the forest making them very **private**. They each have a unique view of a different aspect of the reserve.

Two **camper-van sites** are available, each within its own nook, separated by native vegetation. There are also two **luxury tipis**: not quite camping, not quite a cabin. The tipis are raised above ground on a wooden deck with outdoor setting. Inside they are fully carpeted with a queen sized bed, solar electric





# eco tourism



light and music. Warmed by a wood-burning heater they are comfortable year round.

The campground **amenities block** is modern and spacious. Equipped with composting toilets, hot showers and a laundry trough, it meets full wheelchair standards. It is located to serve campers, tipi guests, people attending functions and bushwalkers. Close by, an **outdoor bath** is a romantic place to spend a moonlit evening.

Up to 60 people can be catered for in the **outdoor entertainment area**. It also provides generous kitchen facilities for campers and tipi guests or day visitors for a barbecue lunch.

A range of **walking tracks** have been constructed or planned. The **lookout Track** (3 min), which is wheelchair accessible,

looks out over the deep gully west from the village to the hidden waterfall. The **Tall Trees** (30 - 40 min) takes visitors to the oldgrowth forest with an optional extra 10 minutes to visit the **rainforest stream**.

There are plans to add a 4-5 hour track to the iconic **summit of Mount Misery** and a 40 minute loop to the **hidden waterfall**.

Further plans include **Clifftop Cabin**. Set on a rocky outcrop this cabin will look out over the ethical tree plantation and beyond to the Snowy Range. The backdrop of the village plateau forest preserves its privacy while the broader valley view is expansive.

In the future projections there are **three further cabins** making eight in all. However, their timing will depend on availability of further funds and the Trust's continuing assessment of impacts.

Facilities have been designed to meet high environmental standards. Wood burning in this heavily forested area is estimated to be at least **carbon neutral**. Whilst firewood is currently sourced off-site the plantation block absorbs a large quantity of carbon and will be a sustainable use wood-lot into the future for supply to the village.





All buildings are powered by 12 volt **solar electric** systems which provides power for lights and CD players but no TV or hair dryers! All cleaning products used are **bio-friendly**. Unfriendly systems and products are kept to a minimum whilst maintaining the statutory health and safety requirements of providing commercial facilities for public use.

Huon Bush Retreats and Huon Nature Trust have a **symbiotic business and conservation**

**Paul Dimmick:** Conservation and infrastructure manager. Paul can help guests learn to enjoy and understand the natural values of the area and might occasionally have a orphaned creature in a pouch inside his shirt. Paul's technical skills help keep the plan and equipment running, from the solar electrics to the water supply Paul was an early member of the Wilderness Society and has been active in a range of environmental campaigns since the 1970s.



**relationship.** Each vigorously protects the natural values of the reserve and enthusiastically promotes its features.

HBR is owned and operated by Michael Higgins and Paul Dimmick, who are also heavily involved in the Trust. **Rental** received by HNT **increases** each time additional accommodation is provided by HNT.

Huon Bush Retreats **opened for business in February 2004**

**Michael Higgins:** Chef and guest services. Michael provides every comfort from the food you eat to the clean, comfortable bed guests sleep in. He oversees day to day operation, front of house and networking with the local community. Michael was a co-founder of the Huon Environment Centre and is active in various environmental campaigns.





# Observation

and has shown steady growth reaching effective saturation (more turnaways than empty nights) in November 2005. Stage two of Trust construction commenced in October 05 and opened the additional group cabin and two tipis in February 06. The growth predictions in the original Huon Bush Retreats business plan have so far proven to be quite accurate. Occupancy July 05 to April 06 has averaged 67%. Saturation is predicted to be reached again in 2007. Benefits will be maximised if extra accommodation can be completed by December 06.

## Where to from here?

If you would more information, please contact us on (03) 6264 2233 or [info@huonbushretreats.com](mailto:info@huonbushretreats.com)

Thanks for your interest,  
Huon Nature Trust

## About our logo

Dusted with colours taken from the earth, forest and grasslands, the oval shape represents the most common colours and shapes in nature.

The leaves stand for growing with nature.

The gently sloping red modest growth while the green and brown line represents the solid baseline of land holdings.

