

Save the Tasmanian Devil Program



Communication Strategy Stage 3: 2008 - 2013

Situation Analysis

The Save the Tasmanian Devil Program (the Program or STDP) is an integrated response to the emergence of a new disease that threatens the survival of the Tasmanian devil. The Program involves a partnership between the State Government (viz. The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment [DPIPWE]) and the Commonwealth Government as well as the University of Tasmania (UTAS), the Zoo Aquarium Association (ZAA – formerly the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria [ARAZPA]), and the Australian Wildlife Health Network (AWHN).

As well as these partners, the Program is delivered through collaboration involving numerous research institutions, universities, wildlife parks and zoos in Australia and overseas.

Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD) is spreading through the population of wild devils in Tasmania and occurs across about 65% of the island. The population of devils has declined by more than 80%. The species was listed as 'vulnerable' in 2006 and has been upgraded to 'endangered' in 2008.

From the commencement of the Program in 2004 until June 2006 (Stage 1), the Program, based in the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment (DPIWE), focused on understanding the nature of DFTD, recording the impacts of the disease, and initiating research into the strategies most likely to save the species from extinction. In July 2006, the various components of the disease response were integrated within a governance structure, under the guidance of a high level Steering Committee with representation from the main partners (Stage 2, 2006 - 2008).

During Stage 2, the Steering Committee endorsed and published a Strategic Plan, an Insurance Population Strategy, a Business Plan for 2007-2008 and a 5 year Business Plan for 2008-2013. The Program also entered into a formal agreement with ARAZPA regarding management of a captive Insurance Population, and initiated such a population on the Australian mainland.

In Stage 3, 2008-2013, the Program will continue to focus on actions to ensure that the Tasmanian devil does not become extinct, and will support and facilitate collaborative research to develop tools and strategies to protect wild and captive devils from DFTD. The Commonwealth Government has committed funding of \$10 million over 5 years from 2008 to 2013. A proposal for a 5 year budget commitment from the State Government is under consideration.

In this context, and with the number of parties involved, an effective, integrated communication strategy for the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program is a key success factor.

Background

DFTD was first noticed in the late 1990s in the north-east of Tasmania and has now been recorded across more than 60% of the State. In some localities, population declines of more than 90% have been recorded.

In April 2004, a working group of veterinarians, wildlife specialists and veterinary pathologists was formed by DPIWE to develop a co-ordinated response to DFTD.

Diagnostic testing commenced at the Animal Health Laboratory at Mt Pleasant, and a structured statewide monitoring framework was established.

Since 2004, much has been learned of the nature of the disease, its impacts on devil populations, the prognosis for its continued spread in the wild, biosecurity requirements, and strategies for ensuring that the species does not become extinct.

Since 2006, the focus of the Program has been on undertaking management actions to reduce the chance of extinction of the species. An emphasis has been placed on establishment of an effective Insurance Population.

DFTD has significant implications for Tasmania's unique wildlife and biodiversity, and poses a threat to both tourism and agriculture. The devil plays an important role in disposing of carcasses in the wild and on farms and has been identified as a possible barrier to the establishment of foxes in Tasmania.

Objectives

The Program demands wide consultation and communication with stakeholders, both government and non-government, as well as with the broader community.

This communication strategy therefore has the following objectives:

- To raise awareness of the threats faced by the Tasmanian devil.
 - To raise awareness of the current and potential environmental impacts of the loss of the Tasmanian devil from native ecosystems.
 - To foster collaboration, cooperation and support in understanding Devil Facial Tumour Disease and in acting to ensure the survival of the species.
 - To facilitate input and participation by stakeholders, through the use of positive and targeted communication.
 - To manage community and media expectations on the handling of an emerging lethal disease outbreak in an iconic native species by providing information about issues and plans.
 - To inform the public about work being conducted by the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program and ensure that progress and results of research and management are communicated in a timely and effective manner.
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Target audiences

The key groups of people to communicate with are:

Stakeholder Group	Organisation	Represented by	Communication Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State Government – Corporate Sponsor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Premier ○ Minister for Primary Industries and Water – Program sponsor ○ Minister for Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts ○ Minister for Economic Development ○ DPIPWE Secretary, DEPHA Secretary and DED Secretary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministerial Minutes and Briefing Notes ○ Cabinet submissions and budget process submissions ○ Interdepartmental committees, working groups and liaison ○ Quarterly reports to Steering Committee on budget, progress, risks and issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Australian Government – Corporate Sponsor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cwlth Minister for Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Briefings and reports ad hoc as requested; plus quarterly reports to Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University of Tasmania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vice Chancellor ○ Appeal representatives ○ Foundation representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marketing, Fundraising and Communications Group monthly meetings (<i>see Appendix A</i>)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ARAZPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chair, ASMP Committee 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AWHN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Coordinator 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tas Parks and Wildlife Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General Manager, PWS 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key external stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stakeholder Reference Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tasmanian Conservation Trust ○ Tas. Farmers and Graziers Association ○ Environment Tasmania ○ Professional Associations - ecotourism operators ○ Community organisations – RSPCA, AACT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quarterly briefings to the Stakeholder Reference Group ○ Quarterly Program newsletter

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Captive Management Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tasmanian Wildlife Parks ○ ZAA (Species Coordinator) ○ NGOs/Fundraisers (E.g. Devils in Danger, Devil Island, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildlife Park Liaison Officer ○ Quarterly meetings ○ Ad hoc meetings as required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Broader Tasmanian community 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ad hoc presentations to community groups (Lions, Rotary etc.), schools etc. ○ Regular updates and improvements to website: tassiedevil.com.au
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Media/Publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tasmanian and national newspapers ○ Tasmanian and national television ○ Tasmanian and national radio ○ Documentary film makers (national and international) ○ Journals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequent strategic media releases, aiming to be proactive and minimise risks to the Program's success ○ Ad hoc briefings and interviews and photo opportunities ○ Facilitate filming ○ Facilitate publication of articles in journals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program Business Owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General Managers for Biodiversity & Product Integrity; Resource Management & Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monthly and ad hoc Business Owners' meetings with Senior Scientist, Program Manager and Business Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DPIPWE employees (RMC and BPI divisions) ○ Branch Managers for Wildlife Management and Diagnostic Services ○ UTAS researchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regular Technical Reference Group meetings; regular project meetings; regular meetings of team leaders ○ Ad hoc meetings and briefings at regular intervals ○ Quarterly Program team meetings

Scope

The scope of this communication strategy includes media management; marketing, sponsorship and fundraising; education and community awareness; stakeholder management; and Program governance and team building.

While the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment plays the lead and coordinating role in relation to each of these areas, the Australian Government and the University of Tasmania are key and active players.

Communication policies and processes

- All communication about the response to Devil Facial Tumour Disease will be integrated and coordinated.
- All partners in the Program will promote the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program as the official recovery program and be consistent in using the Program name and the Program website in all publications i.e. www.tassiedevil.com.au

Media management

Coordination

Requests from media come in through DPIPWE, STDP, the Appeal, UTAS and the Menzies Research Institute (MRI) and are directed to the Program's coordinator of media management.

This enables the Program to keep track of all opportunities, to maintain a unified message, to maintain an integrated calendar of events, and to allocate Program resources for optimum efficiency.

Media Releases

All media releases from the Program must be provided in draft form to the coordinator of media management for checking and updating for accuracy prior to release. Media releases from Program partners to be sent out under their own name, but related to STDP activities and research, will be sent to the coordinator of media management for information prior to release to the media.

Publications

All general publications of the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program will be badged to acknowledge the Program. Partner logos will be badged at the discretion of the coordinator of marketing.

Marketing, sponsorship and fundraising

All marketing, sponsorship or fundraising opportunities are provided to the coordinator of marketing for the Program. The coordinator of marketing will liaise with the Save the Tasmanian Devil Appeal (the Appeal), who will coordinate and manage relationships. The Appeal will provide a monthly report on all marketing, sponsorship and fundraising opportunities and activities to the Marketing, Fundraising and Communications Group (Appendix B).

This enables the Program to keep track of all opportunities, to maintain an integrated calendar of events, to maintain a consistency of approach and quality control and to allocate Program resources for maximum effect.

All fundraising for the Program is directed to the Save the Tasmanian Devil Appeal (www.utas.edu.au/devilappeal). Funds are disbursed, in accordance with priorities of the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program under the direction of the Tasmanian Devil Research Advisory Committee (TDRAC). The Program Manager represents the Program on that committee.

Education and community awareness

The Program supports, facilitates and coordinates projects that help to educate the public and raise community awareness in relation to Devil Facial Tumour Disease and the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program. All requests and enquiries regarding education and community awareness events are directed to the Program Communications Consultant.

Activities may include participation in events, school visits, the provision of information packs and web-based activities. This will necessitate the development of supporting collateral. Planned activities will be collated to an integrated calendar of events for the Program hosted on the Program website.

The Save the Tasmanian Devil Program website identifies the Program as the official response to the impact of Devil Facial Tumour Disease by the State and Federal Governments, in partnership with the University of Tasmania.

The website (www.tassiedevil.com.au) provides information, research and management updates, Program newsletters and key strategic documents. It provides links to relevant Government websites and to the Insurance Population throughout Australia. It also enables the public to donate directly to the Save the Tasmanian Devil Appeal and to become a Program volunteer.

Stakeholder management

A revised Stakeholder Reference Group, chaired by the Program Manager, will meet quarterly to provide the opportunity for key stakeholders to be informed of progress and plans for the Program, and to provide community input in relation to issues as they emerge and are managed. Other working groups, discussion groups or ad hoc meetings are arranged with different stakeholder groups as the need arises. A formal Captive Management Group has been formed with representation from Tasmanian Wildlife Parks, to deal with operational issues relating to captive management in Tasmania. An informal Veterinary Advisory Group has been formed to provide ad hoc advice to the Chief Veterinary Officer on issues relating to biosecurity and risk categorisation.

The Program's objective is to conduct all research in a scientifically rigorous manner and to make all research results available to the public and stakeholders as soon as possible through publications such as refereed scientific journals, technical reports, newsletters, etc.

A quarterly Program newsletter is printed and distributed widely in Australia and overseas. The aim is to keep stakeholders informed about the latest developments in the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program.

Program governance and team building

Internal communication is critical to the success of the growing and expanding Program. Within each division (RM&C and B&PI) in DPIPWE, meetings of project team leaders and of project teams occur approximately monthly. The entire Program team meets quarterly. Team building events are to be held as required. The team receives a bi-monthly email newsletter (Speak of the Devil).

A secure web-based facility is in development in 2008-09 as part of the Tasmanian Devil Database Project. It will form part of the Natural Values Atlas. All Program data and associated research will be centralised to aid in the development of fully informed management strategies. It will also inform ongoing Program initiatives and provide source material for technical reports for publication.

The Program team provides information on issues, plans, suggestions and progress reports which, together with input from the Stakeholder Reference Group, are presented to the Steering Committee at their quarterly meetings.

Key messages

- The Save the Tasmanian Devil Program aims to break the transmission cycle of DFTD.
- An effective Insurance Population through managed captive breeding programs is vital to the success of the Program. This is a proven strategy and results so far are encouraging.
- The Save the Tasmanian Devil Program is acting now to ensure that the Tasmanian devil is maintained as a functioning species in the Tasmanian ecosystem.
- Rigorous science, in the laboratory and in the field, is needed to fully understand the nature of DFTD.
- A major response to the disease threat has been mobilised, involving wildlife and disease experts and institutions from around the world. Efforts are being directed to areas of greatest potential benefit to the ongoing survival of the species.
- As evidenced by human cancer research, this work is complex, lengthy and expensive, with uncertain outcomes. It's not black and white.
- The problem is critical and time is short, however there is still a window of opportunity to save Tasmanian devils in the wild.
- We need to harness worldwide interest and support, engaging all sections of the community and forming strategic partnerships to save the species.
- There are other threats to the survival of the Tasmanian devil in the wild that need to be addressed E.g. road kill, foxes, feral cats.
- The Tasmanian devil is a keystone species in Tasmania's unique ecosystem.
- Loss of the Tasmanian devil from the wild in Tasmania would have enormous and far-reaching ecological ramifications.

Timeframes

The timeframe for the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program (Stages 1–3) is 15 years. This communication strategy applies only to the period of the 5 year business plan commencing 1 July 2008 (Stage 3).

Communication strategies

The communications strategy builds on the success of earlier strategies and stages of the Program (Refer to Appendix B).

Stage 3 (July 2008 to 2013)

Stakeholder management

- Continue to produce quarterly Program newsletter and distribute in hard copy and electronically to stakeholders.
- Continuously update and improve the Program website.
- Regularly audit current public phone numbers and first point of contact information for effectiveness.
- Ensure high level support is given to the revised Stakeholder Reference Group, and that their input and suggestions are heard and provided to the Steering Committee.
- Ensure high level support is given to the Captive Management Group, and that their input and suggestions are heard and provided to the Steering Committee.
- Participate in events to raise awareness of the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program.
- Develop collateral to promote Program initiatives.
- Facilitate the involvement of Tasmanian Wildlife Parks in the fight to save the Tasmanian devil.
- Strengthen links with whole of Government, State and Federal, to coordinate promotion of the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program to the public and potential contributors.

Media management

- Refer all requests and suggestions for interviews and media coverage to the coordinator of media management, who will integrate and guide the response in consultation with key partners.
- Refer all plans to release media information on behalf of or related to the Program to the coordinator of media management for information and verification.
- Direct all requests from documentary and news film crews to the coordinator of media management to coordinate a response and resources.
- Develop a media page on the STDP website.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the communications strategy through informal feedback, paper based and telephone surveys etc; fill communication gaps where identified.

Marketing, sponsorship and fundraising

- Ensure that Program and Appeal branding is used consistently and appropriately.
- Audit current publicly used names, phone numbers and web and email addresses for effectiveness and ease of use.
- Refer all opportunities for marketing, sponsorship and fundraising to the coordinator of marketing, who will liaise with the Appeal for relationship management and the marketing project officer for advice.
- The coordinator of marketing to liaise with the Appeal to develop an online events calendar relating to community, school, volunteer, awareness-raising and fundraising events.
- The Appeal representative to develop 12 monthly marketing plans.
- Strategically target key stakeholders through public events, meetings, information networks, etc.
- Develop collateral as needed, E.g. posters, brochures, flyers, DVD.

Education and community awareness

- Liaise with the Appeal and UTAS to organize and present public lectures about DFTD and the fight to save the Tasmanian devil.
- Facilitate projects that help to educate the public and raise awareness about DFTD and the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program.
- Support the Tasmanian Wildlife Parks in their role in educating the community about the Tasmanian devil and the infectious cancer DFTD.

Program governance and team building

- Continue to streamline Program structure, reporting lines and communication lines.
- Facilitate, encourage and improve communication within the Program team, within government and between government officers and non-government team members, partners, supporters and stakeholders.
- Continuously improve communication strategies, encourage feedback and implement innovative methods to make communication more effective within the Program.
- Encourage recognition of the contribution of team members and their roles within the Program.

Communications – Action Plan

Target audience/ stakeholder group	Key messages	Communication strategies/methods	Who to action?	By when?
<i>Identify the target audience</i>	<i>What do you intend to communicate to the stakeholder groups?</i>	<i>What communication strategies are most appropriate for the stakeholder groups?</i>	<i>Who will be responsible for implementing each action?</i>	<i>When must the action be implemented?</i>
Ministers	The STDP is well managed, efficient, and important for Tasmania – environmentally, socially and economically.	Fortnightly reports through General Managers. Media events and photo opportunities for Minister to be associated with STDP.	Program manager (PM) to report to Business Owners. Business Owners and Secretary to report to Minister. Coordinator of Media Management (CMM) to suggest media opportunities to PM.	Monthly Fortnightly Ad hoc
Media (TV, print, radio)	Devil is endangered. The cause is urgent. STDP is doing... Public support is needed.	Provide timely and informative press releases and media opportunities. Develop media page on website. Arrange team media training for spokespersons.	CMM, Comms Consult and Program Manager. Comms Consult. CMM, Comms Consult.	As required ASAP ASAP
Corporate sponsors	Devil is endangered. The cause is urgent. STDP is doing... Corporate support is	Funding proposals tailored to needs of individual sponsors, and Program priorities.	Save the Tasmanian Devil Appeal (STDA).	On-going

Target audience/ stakeholder group	Key messages	Communication strategies/methods	Who to action?	By when?
	needed.			
Tas Wildlife Parks	The cause is urgent. Support of wildlife parks is needed. It is about saving the Tasmanian devil.	Liaison officer to develop projects with each park to help to conserve the devil and educate the public.	PM, Wildlife Park Liaison Officer(s)	On-going
Schools and school children	The devil is endangered. Public awareness and support are needed. You can help.	Create an education resource kit.	Comms Consult (STDP)	
General Public	Devil is endangered. The cause is urgent. STDP is doing... Public support is needed.	Present annual public lecture series. Produce quarterly STDP newsletter. Upgrade and maintain the Program website. Develop and produce supporter/ volunteer collateral (stickers, etc.)	Comms Consult in liaison with the Appeal. Comms Consultant, DPIPWE Corporate Comms. Comms Consultant, DPIPWE Corporate Comms and the Appeal. Comms Consult in liaison with the Appeal.	Annual Quarterly Ongoing Ongoing

Appendix A – Marketing, Fundraising and Communications Group

Position	Organisation
Communications Consultant	STDP, DPIPWE
Manager	Save the Tasmanian Devil Appeal
Coordinator of Media Management	STDP, DPIPWE
Media Manager	UTAS

Appendix B – Milestones of Stage 1 and 2 Communications Strategies

Stage 1 (to June 2006)

Informing community of the disease and its implications and engaging community support

This stage was about raising awareness of the emergence of DFTD and the research and management conducted in response to the disease. Stage 1 aimed to provide timely information to all stakeholders and encouraged input into the Program.

Communication during the course of Stage 1 included:

- Preparation of an initial brochure about DFTD;
- Media launch;
- Preparation of briefing notes;
- Minister for Primary Industries, Water and Environment briefed MPs;
- Information on the disease provided on DPIPWE website;
- Briefing of Parks and Wildlife staff;
- Briefing of Tourism staff;
- Scientific information provided to wildlife and animal health networks throughout Australia;
- Ongoing monitoring and updating of media on the disease and measures in place;
- Preparation of one page information sheet on the disease provided to wildlife park operators, tourism operators, Parks and Wildlife Service offices;
- DPIPWE staff and information on disease provided at Burnie, Launceston and Hobart shows;
- Facilitation of a workshop on the disease in Launceston on Tuesday 14 October 2003;
- Contact and confirmation from nominated Steering Group members to ensure they are able to take up their positions;
- Ministerial announcement of Steering Group and Project Team establishment;
- Establishment of Steering Group consisting of Kim Evans DPIPWE, Malcolm Wells (Tourism Tasmania), Stan Matuszek (Parks and Wildlife Service), Nick Mooney (DPIPWE), Geoff King (ecotourism operator), Henry Edgell (Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association), Professor Rob White (University of Tasmania);
- Alistair Scott (DPIPWE Project leader);
- Development of a sponsorship operational plan to be endorsed by the Steering Group (to investigate options for involvement of corporate, community and scientific groups);
- Establishment of Steering Group and Working Group reporting process for Minister and Government (either through briefing note or establishment of fortnightly/monthly report);
- Identification of relevant experts from workshop to undertake media interviews that focus on key messages;
- Identification of ongoing media stories to focus on the Program in place;
- Identification of updated information to be provided to the community and scientific organisations;
- Facilitation of the workshop on the disease in Hobart, facilitated by AusVet, in October 2005, which recommended appointment of a full time Program Manager;
- Steven Smith appointed as Program Manager in February 2006.

Stage 2 (July 2006 to June 2008)

Engaging Community support and raising awareness of disease management

Completion and sign-off of the Program's strategic plan 2006 and business plan 2007-2008 and marketing them to stakeholders. This stage was about ensuring that all stakeholders had access to the Program's plans, policies and progress and that team members had clear plans, milestones and performance measures.

Communication during the course of Stage 2 included:

- Establishment of a high-level Steering Committee chaired by Kim Evans, with representation from the University of Tasmania, the State Government, the Australian Government, and the Australian Wildlife Health Network in July 2006;
- Establishment of a Stakeholder Reference Group chaired by Steven Smith, with representation from Tasmanian Wildlife Parks, RSPCA, volunteer wildlife carers, Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Against Animal Cruelty Tasmania, private wildlife veterinarians etc., in July 2006;
- Production of quarterly glossy Program newsletters, distributed internationally to stakeholders;
- Program Manager visited Montana, New York and California, raising awareness about DFTD at film festivals, cancer research institutions, zoos and business forums;
- Establishment in September 2006 of the Program's senior scientist position at the University of Tasmania, and appointment of Professor Hamish McCallum from University of Queensland;
- Development of an integrated portal for the Program's website: www.tassiedevil.com.au, December 2006;
- The Senior Scientist's Scientific Forum, at the University of Tasmania, Hobart, February 2007;
- Black and White Day was held in 39 Tasmanian Schools and raised \$10,500 for the Program in May 2007,
- Public lecture series in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie from May to September 2007;
- Endorsement by the Steering Committee of the Program's Strategic Plan;
- Endorsement by the Steering Committee of an Insurance Population Strategy;
- Endorsement by the Steering Committee of the 2007-08 Business Plan;
- Drafting by an inter agency working group of a proposal to establish a not for profit corporate entity to represent the Tasmanian devil;
- Publication in September 2007 in an international journal of the proceedings from the 2007 Senior Scientist's Scientific Forum;
- Production of "Errol" the Tasmanian devil costume for promotions and events;
- Focus on Tasmanian devil during National Threatened Species Day, 7 November 2007;
- Facilitation of a genetics workshop in November 2007, the outcomes of which were released by the senior scientist to the news media;
- Production of pull up Program banners and display flags for use at promotional events;
- Liaison and negotiations with a range of organisations and corporate bodies regarding future sponsorship of the Program, and use of Program logo etc.