

## **World Heritage values, Aboriginal heritage and conservation issues of the Mole Creek karst explained**

DEB HUNTER, Mole Creek Caving Club

Several post-conference trips are in caves of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) at South Mole Creek (Sassafras/Mayberry divide). The TWWHA is believed to be one of only three properties world-wide possessing as many as seven of the possible ten natural and cultural criteria. Representation of the glacial history, written in the caves and surrounding landscape, was enhanced when the South Mole Creek karst area was added to the TWWHA in 2013.

While small squares drawn around cave mouths have been typical of local cave reserves, decades of documentation and liaison gradually secured more meaningful protection for these caves. The effort continues today, to address the significant omission from conservation tenure of part of the karst window and a group of magnificent heritage trees. The involvement of Aboriginal custodians, the potential for plantation forestry in corporate management for conservation and the function of the caves as glacial meltwater drains are discussed.