Consultation on the Creation of A Register of Tartan
Introduction

Jamie McGrigor, Member of the Scottish Parliament for Highlands & Islands, is considering introducing a Bill in the Scottish Parliament to create a central Register of Tartan designs.

The initiative for a Register was raised with Jamie McGrigor and is supported by existing Registers, Retailers, Weavers, Wholesalers and Exporters, Museums and Archives, The Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs and the Court of the Lord Lyon.

This consultation paper gives some information about the proposal and seeks your views on it.

To help inform debate on the matters covered by this paper, and in the interests of openness, the responses submitted on this consultation document will be made public.

It will be assumed that responses can be made public unless the respondent indicates that his or her response is confidential. Confidential responses will nevertheless be included in any summary or statistical analysis, which does not identify individual responses.

This document is being sent to the consultees listed at the back of this document.

Please bring it to the attention of others who would be interested in responding or let us know their details so we can do so.

The purpose of the Bill is to create a Register of Tartan. Currently there is no official Register of Tartan in Scotland.
Questions and a form on which to provide responses are attached at the back of the document.

These should be sent by post or faxed to:

Office of Jamie McGrigor MSP
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

+44 131 348 5656

The deadline for responses is: 20th May 2005
Background and current registration of tartan design:

Tartan is not only one of Scotland’s greatest cultural icons but also one of the world’s leading national marks of identification. Scotland is privileged to have such a strong and immediately recognisable image to proclaim the geographical or cultural roots of many of its global family of descendants – estimated at 30 million worldwide.

In the early 19th century the available range of tartans mushroomed from the few handfuls of clan tartans, to many hundreds of clan, district and fashion tartans. The popularity of tartan continued to grow with Queen Victoria adding to the romantic adoration of all things Scottish. Since 1900 the production of tartan fabric has shown steady growth with advanced weaving technology reducing the overall workforce but pushing the economic value of tartan and related Highland dress to something in excess of £200 million per annum to Scottish businesses.

In the last 20-25 years the number of new tartan designs being produced has dramatically increased. Many of the designs are made up from existing patterns and are not recorded in any proper way. There is confusion in the market place as to what is or is not a tartan.

In the 19th and the early years of the 20th centuries, historians could quite easily keep track of current tartans, but as the number of new ones increased, that task became almost impossible and by the 1960’s the need for a Register of some sort became necessary. Information on tartan needed to be systematically collated and recorded.
There are believed to be between 3,000 and 4,000 tartans in existence and the number is increasing at the rate of about 135 per annum.

Currently there is no central registration system for tartan. Tartan has evolved and developed through culture and social convention. The only channel for official notification is that it is the prerogative of the Chief of a Clan to decide what his Clan tartan or tartans should be and the facility exists for such decisions to be recorded in the Lord Lyon’s records. Approximately 100 tartans are recorded in this way.

**Definition of Tartan:**

Any legislation would need to contain a definition of tartan. A suggested definition is:

“A woven textile design whereby the warp and the weft repeat the sequence and dimension of the various colours employed throughout so as to produce a distinctive rectangular pattern.”

This definition is intended to apply to applications to the Register. There are many different versions to be found in dictionaries and elsewhere; the definition would not prevent or restrict the use of other interpretations of “tartan” in the market place.

**Q1.** Your views on the above definition and any difficulties that it may cause would be welcome.
Bodies created to record tartans

Over the last 40 years various self-appointed bodies in Scotland have attempted to record tartan designs.

The Scottish Tartans Society was formed in 1963 to research and preserve Scottish tartans. The Scottish Tartans Society established what was called The Register of All Publicly Known Tartans. Originally this was a physical register with an associated collection of fabrics, but it was eventually transferred on to computer as an electronic database.

The Scottish Tartans Society also established a tartan museum in Franklin, North Carolina which continues to function. A separate offshoot called the Tartan Educational and Cultural Association was also formed in the USA in 1982. The Tartan Educational and Cultural Association remain active in the USA providing information at Scottish Games and Festivals, running seminars and responding to enquiries. The Scottish Tartans Society ran into financial difficulties and in 2000 they stopped recording tartans.

The Scottish Tartans Authority was formed in 1995 comprising individuals with an interest in tartan, representative of major weaving businesses in Scotland and the Tartan Educational and Cultural Association. The Scottish Tartans Authority membership and Board include representatives of major weaving businesses in Scotland accounting for about 75% of tartan production. The Scottish Tartans Authority has over the past four years created the International Tartans Index.
The Scottish Tartans World Register was formed by the consultant to the Scottish Tartans Society. The Scottish Tartans World Register is based on the Register of All Publicly Known Tartans, is held in computer form and continues to register tartans as and when requested.

There is also a small register of tartans kept at Stirling University and records are kept of various tartans by bodies in Canada and the USA.

There is still no central authoritative source of existing tartan designs.

**Tourism implications**

There are some 27 million people world-wide of Scots descent, of which 11 million are in the United States, 4.5 million in Canada and nearly 6 million in Australia and New Zealand. A survey conducted by the Scottish Tourist Board in 1999 revealed that 19% of Americans gave “Scottish roots and ancestry” as the main influence on their decision to holiday in Scotland.

The explosion of tartan is closely associated with the growth over the last 20 years of worldwide interest in Scottish genealogy. Genealogical tourism has been identified as a key market for tourism in Scotland. The creation of a national Register of Tartan sits very appropriately alongside this type of initiative where the intention is to enhance the “brand image” of Scotland and its culture. Tartan enhances the brand image of Scotland through:
1. Its uniqueness.
2. Its association with the National Dress of Scotland – probably the finest National Dress in the World. Certainly Highland Dress today is more popular and worn at a wider range of occasions than ever before. Young people love it and it remains proudly worn by Scotland’s senior citizens. It is worn equally happily at football matches and scout camps as at official banquets and dinners.
3. Tartan is a lucrative product attracting tourists when they are in Scotland and which they take back with them to their home country.
4. Tartan is essentially colourful and adds glamour and prestige to events, ceremonies and parties.
5. Tartan is versatile – its use can be light hearted and happy or serious and sentimentally grave. Tartan stirs the sentiments.
6. “Tartan” equals “Scottish”. The word “tartan” is frequently used as an adjective in place of “Scottish” e.g. Tartan Tax, Tartan Tour etc.

The need for a Register

At present there is a multitude of Internet-accessed tartan databases and lists of varying degrees of accuracy and completeness, some of which give the impression of being ‘official’. This is extremely confusing to enquirers and undermines the status of tartan. Whether interest is cultural, commercial or academic, the need for a single and official register for tartan is evident.

There are now upwards of 3,000 tartans registered with the Scottish Tartans World Register and the International Tartans Index and these
numbers together with the variety of registers mean that the possibility of confusion over tartan exists. Tartans are not random patterns whose distinction relies only upon their attractiveness; tartans symbolise families, companies, regions, organisations. It is therefore important for tartan to be legitimate and properly authorised and registered because tartan by its very nature is invested with cultural significance. Individuals often choose tartans for their familial connections, companies design tartans as part of their corporate identity &c.

The register will not confer copyright on a design – or prevent its use by others, however the register will record the uniqueness of that particular tartan. The current convention is that tartan designs are unique and cannot be twice named, the introduction of a register would formalise this arrangement ensuring that a tartan registered in the Register of Tartan as X could not be entered in the Register and called Y.

The creation of a register will enhance branding opportunities. Businesses will be keen to designate their product as registered in the Scottish Tartan Register. Customers may see this as a sign that they are wearing the right tartan and that it is an “approved” or authentic design.

What should be contained in a register of tartan design

To ensure that the register would commence from an authoritative base it is suggested that the legislation could ensure that tartans registered in the Scottish Tartans World Register and the International Tartans Index would automatically be entered into the new register. Thus the register
would become not only the most authoritative register of tartan but also the only officially constituted register in the world. The legislation could also make similar provision for other tartan registers that exist to incorporate their contents in the Register. Above all it is considered essential that the Register of Tartan be inclusive and accessible.

Q2 What should happen to the existing registers?

It is envisaged that tartans would be registered in physical form with a swatch of cloth and information about their history. In the registers that currently exist the following information is listed for each tartan;

- Tartan Name
- Proposer
- Designer (if different)
- Design Date
- Who wove it or where found
- The purpose of the tartan / why designed and introduced
- Control of its use / control of production / restrictions on use / copyright
- Description / history of person / organisation involved with the tartan
- Threadcount and explanation of colours.

Q3. What information should be registered for each tartan?

The Keeper of the Tartan Register would be tasked with maintaining the Tartan Register. The Keeper’s duties could include:

1. Receiving applications for recording of tartans;
2. Deciding whether a new design should be registered or not;
3. Holding the Register;
4. Issuing registration certificates confirming the registration of each new tartan in the Register.

Q4. *Are there any other duties which the Keeper should undertake?*

**Cost:**

The introduction of a Keeper and the establishment of an official register would have cost implications. It is estimated that about 120-150 applications to the register would be made each year to record new tartans and there could be additional registrations from other registers that had not been incorporated into the official register. Handling this volume of registrations would be a relatively simple administrative task. Fees paid for registration should cover the cost of the Keeper and administration charges.

Q5. *In what areas would costs be incurred and how much would they be?*

Q6: *What would a reasonable fee be for registration of a new tartan?*

Q7. *What would a reasonable fee be for registration of existing tartans?*
Appointment of the Keeper

There are various mechanisms which could be used to appoint the Keeper. The Keeper could be appointed by the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Ministers or by Royal Appointment. We are interested in people’s views about the most appropriate way in which a Keeper could be appointed.

Q8. Who would be the most appropriate body to appoint a Keeper of Tartans?

The aims and objectives of a Register of Tartan Design

1. To collect all tartan recordings and designs, together with their background information, and place them in the public domain.
2. To eliminate the confusion that currently exists due to the number of options available for registering or recording tartan;
3. To ensure that there is a clear branding of Scottish Registered Tartan:
4. To be an open resource that can be used for information purposes worldwide both by individuals and the Trade.

The objective is to ensure that an authoritative mechanism exists for the recording of future tartan designs.
Conclusion:

It is the intention of this legislation to create an official Register of Tartan that will become the most authoritative and complete Register of Tartan in the world. This Register will include all tartans currently recorded in existing registers and, it is hoped, all new tartans created will be added to the Register.

It is fitting that Scotland, the birthplace of tartan and the country whose identity is strongly bound to tartan in the hearts and minds of many throughout the world should hold the key to the proper authentication of tartan.

Passing legislation through the Scottish Parliament would ensure that the Register will be open, public and non-commercial, and therefore a means of safeguarding a comprehensive record of tartan.

Once the Register has been established there would be, for the first time, an official way of authenticating this great Scottish asset.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this document. I would appreciate your responses on the following questions:
Questions:

Q1. Your views on the above definition and any difficulties that it may cause would be welcome.

Q2. What should happen to the existing registers?

Q3. What information should be registered for each tartan?

Q4. Are there any other duties which the Keeper should undertake?
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Q9. Please add any further comments you would like to make about this proposal.

Please continue on a blank sheet of paper, clearly marked with your name and address and the question to which you are responding, if you require additional space.

Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

The office of Jamie McGrigor MSP
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh   EH99 1SP

The closing date for submissions is 20th May 2005.
Appendix: List of consultees

Mr Walter Cameron
Kiltmaker

Mr Robin Birch
Connell Reid Kiltmakers

Mr Adair Campbell

Mr Dick Macrae

Mr Graeme Anderson
Anderson Kilts

Mr Andrew Elliot
Andrew Elliot Fine Fabrics

Ms Anne Stewart
Anta Scotland

Mr Scott Chalmers
Gaelic Themes

Mr Bill Cleazy
Argyll Bagpipes and Kilts

Mr Ruaridh Halford MacLeod
Robert Ferdinando Celtic Centre

Mr Hamish Eagleton

Ms Ann Higgins
Kiltmaker

Ms Helen MacDonald
Kiltmaker

Mr David McGill
International Tartans

Mr Donald Mackay
Luskentyre Harris Tweed Company

Sheila & Gordon Covell
Islay Woollen Mills Limited

M W Stevens
Keithbank Mill

Ms Ann Taylor
Keith Kilt School

Mr Michael MacDonald

Mr Kenneth Dalgliesh
D C Dalgliesh

Mr Keith Moncrieffe
Macnaughtons of Pitlochry

Mr Kevin MacDonald
Houston Kiltmakers

Ms Muriel Jonassen
McCreath Kiltmakers

Mr Ronnie Hek
Messrs. Ronnie Hek

Mr Scott Milson
Milson & Mann

Mr Mike King
Phillip King

Ms Rosalind Jones
Stevens and Graham

Mr Douglas Gregor
Tran Web

Mr Tom Todd
Tribal Tartans

Ms Sheila Macpherson
Macpherson of Scotland

Mr Ian Gammon
Coldharbour Mill Trust

Mr Mike Corby
MacKenzie Fain Limited

Mr Hamish MacNab
Highland Albion

Ms Sandra Redwood
Cornovi Creations

Donald & Fiona Fraser
Le Jardin Ecologique

Mr Ronald Groen van Abtsdale

Mr James Anderson
Bonbright Woollens

Ms Kathy Lara
Kiltmaker

Ms Marge Warren
Thistle Studio
Ms Sharon Grist
Tartan Designer

Ms Linda Clifford
Scottish and Irish Merchant

Mr Matt Newson
Scottish Tartans Museum

Mr Greg MacGibboney

Ms Betty Johnson
House of Tartan

Mr Douglas Manger
All Things Tartan Kiltmakers

Messrs MacIsaac
Kiltmakers

Julia & David Danskin
Danskins Gift Shop

L A Correy
Helean Kiltmakers

Mrs Gudren Joyce

Mr Gordon Prestoungrange

Mr James Scarlet OBE

Mr Peter MacDonald

Mr Blair Urquhart

Mr Ruaridh Halford-McLeod

Mr Blair Macnaughton Snr

Mrs Emma Nicolsby
Geoffrey (Tailor) Highland Crafts Ltd

Mr Romilly Squire
Secretary, Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs
Edinburgh

Mr Hugh Cheape
National Museums of Scotland

Mr Allan Carsewell
Scottish National War Museum

Mr Douglas Anderson
The Scottish Military Historical Society

Professor Sandy Fenton
School of Scottish Studies

Mr A G Murray

Mr Jim McAuslan

Mr Roddy Martine

Mr Leonard Wallace BA, LLB
Moderator of the Society of High Constables of Edinburgh

Dr Andrew Cubie CBE, FRSE

Mr Colin Liddell
J & H Mitchell

Mr John Frame
Scottish Community Foundation

Councillor Eric Milligan

Mr Bill Jamieson
Executive Editor, The Scotsman

Lord MacFarlane of Bearsden

The Rt Hon. The Earl of Elgin & Kincardine

Sir Eric Anderson

Sir Jackie Stewart

Mr Gordon Baxter

Sir Tom Farmer

Mr Magnus Linklater

Mr Richard Watling
Diageo plc

Mr William Bergius

Mr Patrick Millet
John Walker & Sons

Lord Russell Sanderson of Bowden

Mr James Walker
Walkers Shortbread Limited

Mr Malcolm McKinnon
Drambuie Limited

Mr Peter Lederer
Chairman, Scottish Tourist Board

Mr James Thompson
Scottish Trade Unions Congress
Moray House School of Education
Ethnic Business Forum
Scottish Chamber of Commerce
Scottish Tourism Forum
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
British Council Scotland
Universities Scotland
Scotland Online
The Heraldry Society of Scotland
National Library of Scotland
Scottish Roots
Electric Scotland Ltd
The Saltire Society
Scottish Textiles
Scottish Tartans Authority
The Court of the Lord Lyon
National Archives of Scotland
the Kiltmakers Association of Scotland Limited
Amicus
Textile Clothing Strategy Group
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Ingles Buchan (Textiles) Ltd
Lochcarron of Scotnadh
Scottish Tartans Museum
The Educational Institute of Scotland
An Commun Gaidhealach
The Scottish Football Association
House of Tartan Ltd
Johnstons

The House of Edgar
Scotch Corner Antiques Village
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd
Comhairle Earraghaidheal is Bhoid
Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich
Comhairle Nan Leabhraichean
Comhairle Baile Ghiaschu
Commun Na Gaidhlig