



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP**

**Minister for the Environment**

MS16-000001

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Dear Dr Rössler

**State Party Report on the state of conservation of the Tasmanian Wilderness**

I am pleased to provide you with the *State Party Report on the state of conservation of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area* in response to World Heritage Committee Decision 39 COM 7B.35 paragraph 10. The report provides an update to the 2015 State Party Report and responds to the recommendations of the report of the reactive monitoring mission to the Tasmanian Wilderness.

I have enclosed four hard copies of the document and four electronic pdf copies on USB drives.

Australia would be pleased for the World Heritage Centre to upload the report to the Centre's publicly accessible State of Conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>). I should be grateful if you would provide the Department of the Environment (the Department) with at least one business days notice of when the report will be publicly accessible on the Centre's website. This will give the Department time to include a link on the Department's website and advise key stakeholders that the report is available.

If you would like any further information, please contact Dr Kate Feros, Director, International Heritage, [Kate.Feros@environment.gov.au](mailto:Kate.Feros@environment.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Greg Hunt'.

Greg Hunt

enc



**Australian Government**

**STATE PARTY REPORT  
ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION  
OF THE  
TASMANIAN WILDERNESS WORLD HERITAGE AREA  
(AUSTRALIA)**

**PROPERTY ID 181 sexies**

**IN RESPONSE TO  
WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE DECISION 39 COM 7B.35**

**FOR SUBMISSION ON 8 APRIL 2016**

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This report should be attributed as '*State Party Report on the state of conservation of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (Australia)*, Commonwealth of Australia 2016'.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report on the state of conservation of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (the property) responds to World Heritage Committee Decision **39 COM 7B.35** (Appendix 5.1) and the recommendations of the 2015 reactive monitoring mission.

The Australian and Tasmanian governments are fully committed to protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and ensuring its integrity is maintained. **The Australian and Tasmanian governments support all 20 recommendations of the mission.** The new management plan for the property, which will be completed in 2016, will reflect the recommendations of the mission and past decisions of the World Heritage Committee.

As requested by the World Heritage Committee, a mission to the property was held from 23 to 29 November 2015. The mission concluded that the property is in an overall good state of conservation in regard to its natural values, but notes that the property faces a number of threats likely to be aggravated by climate change. The Australian and Tasmanian governments welcome the advice of the mission, which will assist us to maintain and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The Tasmanian Government has recently formalised its Aboriginal Heritage Council which provides advice on the protection and management of Aboriginal heritage on behalf of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The Council will develop and oversee the cultural heritage study of the property requested by the World Heritage Committee. Australia will use this work to deliver a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value at the earliest possible date after mid-2017. These actions will support an improved understanding and documentation of the property's Aboriginal cultural values.

The Tasmanian Government has publicly ruled out all forms of commercial logging and mining in the whole of the property. Tourism development will continue to be strictly regulated and assessment criteria adopted to ensure commercial tourism proposals do not impact negatively on the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

The Australian and Tasmanian governments will continue to provide the resources necessary to support the effective management of the property so as to ensure its Outstanding Universal Value is maintained.

Australia will continue to work with the World Heritage Centre to provide any additional information required in the lead up to the World Heritage Committee's 40th session in mid-2016.

# RÉSUMÉ

Ce rapport sur l'état de conservation de la Zone de nature sauvage de Tasmanie (le bien) répond à la Décision du Comité du Patrimoine mondial **39 COM 7B.35** (Appendix 5.1) et aux recommandations de la mission de suivi réactif de 2015.

Les gouvernements Australien et Tasmanien sont complètement engagés dans la protection de la Valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien et la garantie de la maintenance de son intégrité.

**Les gouvernements Australien et Tasmanien soutiennent l'ensemble des 20 recommandations de la mission.** Le nouveau plan de gestion pour le bien, qui sera terminé en 2016, reflètera les recommandations de la mission et les décisions antérieures du Comité du Patrimoine mondial.

Comme l'a demandé le Comité du Patrimoine mondial, une mission s'est déroulée sur le bien entre les 23 et 29 novembre 2015. La mission a conclu que le bien se trouvait dans un bon état général de conservation par rapport à ses valeurs naturelles, mais a remarqué qu'il était confronté à plusieurs menaces pouvant être aggravées par le réchauffement climatique. Les gouvernements Australien et Tasmanien sont satisfaits de l'avis de la mission qui nous aidera à maintenir et améliorer la Valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien.

Le gouvernement Tasmanien a récemment formalisé son Conseil du patrimoine aborigène (Aboriginal Heritage Council) qui donne des conseils sur la protection et la gestion du patrimoine aborigène au nom des populations aborigènes de Tasmanie. Le Conseil développera et supervisera l'étude du patrimoine culturel du bien demandée par le Comité du Patrimoine mondial. L'Australie utilisera ce travail pour communiquer une Déclaration de valeur universelle exceptionnelle rétrospective dès que possible après la mi-2017. Ces actions étayeront une compréhension et une documentation améliorées des valeurs culturelles aborigènes du bien.

Le gouvernement de Tasmanie a publiquement exclu toutes formes d'exploitation forestière et minière commerciales sur l'ensemble du bien. Le développement touristique continuera d'être strictement réglementé et des critères d'évaluation seront adoptés afin de garantir que les propositions de tourisme commercial n'aient pas d'impact négatif sur la Valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien.

Les gouvernements Australien et Tasmanien continueront de fournir les ressources nécessaires au soutien efficace du bien afin de garantir le maintien de sa Valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

L'Australie continuera de travailler avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial afin de fournir toutes les informations complémentaires nécessaires en vue de la 40<sup>e</sup> séance du Comité du patrimoine mondial à la mi-2016.

# THE REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION

As requested by the World Heritage Committee, a reactive monitoring mission to the property was held from 23 to 29 November 2015. The mission provided an opportunity for experts from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee, to see first-hand how the property is managed. **The mission's conclusion was that the property is in an overall good state of conservation in regard to its natural values, but notes that the property faces a number of threats likely to be aggravated by climate change.** The mission had the opportunity to hear the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including the tourism and special species timbers sectors and environmental non-government organisations. The mission engaged with cultural heritage experts and members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to discuss the cultural values of the property.

**The Australian and Tasmanian governments support all 20 recommendations set out in the mission report.** The recommendations will be given effect through the new management plan for the property and through other statutory measures.

The two governments confirm that, consistent with the 2015 decision of the World Heritage Committee (Decision 39 COM 7B.35), and as affirmed by the mission, **no mining or commercial logging will occur in the whole of the property.**

An important obligation under the World Heritage Convention is for a State Party to present the natural and cultural heritage of its listed sites. Appropriate and sensitive tourism is important for the Tasmanian economy and is an appropriate way of presenting the property. **All development proposals, including for tourism, will be assessed against strict criteria to ensure that they do not compromise the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.**

Australia acknowledges the requests of the World Heritage Committee for better identification of the cultural values of the property. While progress has taken longer than anticipated, the mission has assisted in laying a strong foundation for this work. With funding from the Australian Government, and with support from Tasmanian officials, the **Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Council is developing and overseeing a study of Aboriginal cultural values of the property.** This work is a positive step in further recognising the integral role of Tasmania's Aboriginal community in protecting and managing the property for future generations and when completed will enable a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the property to be finalised.

The following table outlines how the findings and recommendations of the mission will be given effect.

Table 1: State Party Response to the recommendations of the reactive monitoring mission

Reference	Recommendation	State Party Response
Rec 1	The Tasmanian Government should consider options to take full advantage of National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, in line with the provisions of the National Parks and Reserves Management Act (2002), and a consolidated National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council should include adequate involvement of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community.	Support The Tasmanian Government fully supports the role of National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council as it is set out in the <i>National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002 (Tas)</i> and has ensured that its membership includes representatives from the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.
Rec 2	The State Party should confirm an unambiguous commitment that the property is off-limits to commercial logging in its entirety, and fully reflect this commitment in the Management Plan for the whole of the property.	Support The Tasmanian Government has ruled out commercial logging, including harvesting of special species timbers, in the whole of the property. This commitment will be given effect through the new management plan for the property. Further information is available in section 1.3.
Rec 3	The State Party should confirm an unambiguous commitment that the property is off-limits to mineral exploration and extraction in its entirety and fully reflect this commitment in the Management Plan for the whole of the property.	Support The Tasmanian Government has ruled out mining in the whole of the property. This commitment will be given effect through the new management plan for the property. Further information is available in section 1.3.
Rec 4	Gravel use derived from borrow pits for maintenance needs within the property should be minimised. The State Party should conduct a comprehensive review of the road network with the objective to close and rehabilitate non-essential roads so as to reduce the future demand for gravel among other benefits.	Support A review of the road network is underway. One of the priorities of the review is to identify roads that can be closed and rehabilitated to reduce the demand for gravel required for maintenance. Further information is available in section 1.3.



Reference	Recommendation	State Party Response
Rec 5	<p>Essential existing gravel extraction for ongoing local maintenance in the property should be guided by the following principles across the property, including the excisions within it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No import of gravel to the property should be permitted, in order to minimize biosecurity risks;</li> <li>• No export of gravel from the property should be permitted, and uses should be restricted to the maintenance of existing infrastructure</li> <li>• New borrow pits should not be permitted;</li> <li>• Any significant change to current practice in relation to increased gravel need with potential to impact the property, to be notified to the World Heritage Committee prior to any decisions being taken on how to address this by the State Party.</li> </ul>	<p>Support</p> <p>These principles will guide the management of gravel extraction and use in the property.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.3.</p>
Rec 6	<p>In line with a recent Committee request (Decision 39 COM 7B.35), the Management Plan should establish strict criteria for new tourism development within the property, which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's Outstanding Universal Value, including its wilderness character and cultural attributes.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Additional criteria will be included in the new management plan to apply to the assessment of commercial tourism proposals in the property. These criteria will ensure protection of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.</p> <p>Appropriate and sensitive tourism is an important way of presenting the property, as required under the World Heritage Convention, and is important for the Tasmanian economy.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.2.3.</p>
Rec 7	<p>The comprehensive Tourism Master Plan details should refine the balance between legitimate tourism development and the management and conservation of the cultural and natural values of the TWWHA based on further consultation and negotiation of competing interests.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>The intent of this recommendation will be achieved primarily through the regulation of land use in the new management plan for the property.</p> <p>The Tourism Master Plan will provide additional guidance, context and policy direction for decision making under the new management plan. In particular the Tourism Master Plan will include consideration of issues, including protection and presentation of values, sustainable use, future visitor trends and expectations.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.2.3.</p>

Reference	Recommendation	State Party Response
Rec 8	The term “wilderness” should be retained in the property name, while future dual naming is strongly encouraged to reflect both the Aboriginal heritage and the relationship of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community with the property.	<p>Support</p> <p>The term “wilderness” will be retained in the property’s name.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government is exploring the potential for dual naming of the property in consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.</p>
Rec 9	The “Wilderness Zone”, as currently used and interpreted, should be retained in the zonation of the TWWHA, while explicitly providing for Aboriginal access for cultural practices as an integral part of the management of the zone.	<p>Support</p> <p>A ‘wilderness zone’ will be retained in the property and Aboriginal access for cultural practices will be an integral part of the management of that zone.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.2.1.</p>
Rec 10	All land in the property should be managed in a way that is consistent with World Heritage status, and the recommended means to ensure such a consistent approach is to grant reserve status wherever possible. As long as there will be areas within the TWWHA not subject to Management Plans, adequate management of the property in its entirety should be ensured by an overarching Strategic Management Statement in line with obligations under the EPBC Act.	<p>Support</p> <p>The EPBC Act provides a high level of protection for the World Heritage values of the whole property. The EPBC Act provides legal protection for World Heritage values by regulating actions occurring within or outside a property that have, will have or are likely to have a significant impact on the values of the property.</p> <p>The new management plan will include a ‘Strategic Management Statement’ which will detail the management arrangements for areas of the property not subject to the new statutory management plan.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government will seek to give public lands in the property reserve status under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i> (Tas), noting the role of the Tasmanian Parliament and the need to undertake broad community consultation.</p> <p>Further information is available in sections 1.1 and 1.3.</p>

Reference	Recommendation	State Party Response
Rec 11	Future Potential Production Forest Land (FPPFL) within the property should not be convertible to Permanent Timber Production Zone Land (PTPZL) and should be granted status as national park.	<p>Support</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government has ruled out all commercial logging in the whole of the property and will not seek to convert FPPFL to PTPZL.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government will seek to give public lands in the property reserve status under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i> (Tas), noting the role of the Tasmanian Parliament and the need to undertake broad community consultation.</p> <p>The new management plan will include a 'Strategic Management Statement' which will detail the management arrangements for areas of the property not subject to the new statutory management plan.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.3.</p>
Rec 12	A systematic stock-taking exercise should serve to compile all available information about cultural sites within the TWWHA in a synthesis report according to conditions and terms agreed by the diverse Tasmanian Aboriginal Community for submission to the World Heritage Centre by mid-2017.	<p>Support</p> <p>The Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Council has approved a project plan for the cultural heritage study which, with financial support from the Australian Government, will include the preparation of a synthesis report of all available information on cultural sites in the property. The report will be provided to the World Heritage Centre by mid-2017.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.1.</p>
Rec 13	A detailed proposal for a comprehensive cultural survey, a longer term initiative requiring adequate resources and full aboriginal endorsement and involvement, should be elaborated for submission to the World Heritage Centre by mid-2017 for review by ICOMOS, in consultation with IUCN. The proposal should include a calendar on survey stages over a multi-year period.	<p>Support</p> <p>The project plan approved by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Council includes provision for comprehensive on-ground surveys and extensive community involvement staged over several years.</p> <p>A detailed plan for this comprehensive cultural survey will be provided to the World Heritage Centre by mid-2017 for review by ICOMOS, in consultation with IUCN. The plan will include a calendar of survey stages over a multi-year period.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.1.</p>

Reference	Recommendation	State Party Response
Rec 14	The State Party and the Tasmanian Government should jointly ensure an equal and integrated consideration of the cultural and the natural heritage of the mixed property.	<p>Support</p> <p>The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the property's cultural and natural heritage values are equally considered and is working closely with the Tasmanian Government to achieve this shared objective.</p> <p>The new management plan for the property will integrate the management of natural and cultural values. The Tasmanian Government's commitment to develop joint management arrangements with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community will strengthen this integrated approach.</p> <p>On completion, the cultural heritage study will provide more detailed information on the cultural heritage values of the property. This will provide a strong basis on which to ensure a more equal and integrated approach to the management of the property's cultural and natural heritage values.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.1.</p>
Rec 15	The State Party and the Tasmanian Government should provide and secure an adequate long-term allocation of financial and human resources to allow for proper consideration of cultural heritage.	<p>Support</p> <p>The cultural heritage study will be led by the Aboriginal Heritage Council. The Australian and Tasmanian governments are supporting this work.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government will provide additional resources for cultural heritage management. These commitments will be included in the new management plan for the property.</p> <p>The Australian and Tasmanian governments will continue to commit resources to improving the understanding of the property's cultural heritage.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.4.</p>
Rec 16	The State Party should improve the property's current draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SoOUV) upon completion of the cultural sites synthesis report expected by mid-2017 and provide it to the World Heritage Centre at the earliest possible date after mid-2017 for review by the Advisory Bodies, and consideration by the World Heritage Committee. The SoOUV should explicitly make reference to the pending comprehensive cultural survey and the possible need to update the SoOUV upon completion of the survey.	<p>Support</p> <p>The Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Council will develop and oversee the cultural heritage study of the property requested by the World Heritage Committee. This work will assist in the production of a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value at the earliest possible date after mid-2017.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.5.</p>

Reference	Recommendation	State Party Response
Rec 17	The State Party should ensure adequate resources for fire research and management, so as to better understand the role of fire and to optimize its management.	<p>Support</p> <p>On 9 March 2016 the Tasmanian Government announced that it will invest \$250 000 in a research project that will examine the impact of climate change in the property and strengthen fire-fighting techniques specific to managing wilderness areas. This project will be completed in consultation with the Australian Government.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service has a recurrent fire management budget of \$1.8 million with \$650,000 allocated for ongoing fire management planning in the property. Additional expenditure for fire suppression is directly funded by the Tasmanian Government.</p> <p>Australia is a world leader in fire management and fighting techniques. Both Governments are committed to ongoing maintenance of this capability and continual improvement through review and evaluation.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 2.4.</p>
Rec 18	The State Party should fully reflect biosecurity as a cross-cutting and permanent management priority in the Management Plan and ensure and, as required, step up financial and human capacity to monitor, prevent and manage biosecurity risks.	<p>Support</p> <p>The new management plan will ensure that biosecurity continues to be managed as a high priority.</p> <p>The Australian and Tasmanian governments are committed to providing adequate resources to monitor, prevent and manage biosecurity risks as a high priority.</p> <p>Significant resources are dedicated to managing biosecurity issues in Australia, both federally and at the state level.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 2.3.</p>

Reference	Recommendation	State Party Response
Rec 19	The State Party should fully consider the linkages between the property and adjacent lands, including the increased length of boundaries shared with private land as a result of the 2013 Minor Boundary Modification.	<p>Support</p> <p>In Australia, most World Heritage properties, including the Tasmanian Wilderness, do not have a formal buffer zone. This is because the EPBC Act provides legal protection for World Heritage values by regulating actions occurring within or outside a property that have, will have or are likely to have a significant impact on the values of the property.</p> <p>In relation to forestry actions outside the property, operational separation zones between the property and adjoining wood production coupes provide protection from the impacts of forestry.</p> <p>The Australian Government provided \$680 000 to the Tasmanian Government to work collaboratively with adjacent land holders to address boundary management issues and implement on-ground works, following the 2013 minor boundary modification.</p> <p>Fact sheets have been developed for landholders whose properties are part of, or adjacent to the property providing information about what this means for them.</p> <p>The new management plan will provide a range of measures to facilitate cooperative approaches along the property boundary, particularly in relation to private land, and across tenure types.</p>
Rec 20	The State Party should support and consolidate the emerging joint management of the TWWHA with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community.	<p>Support</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government is committed to progressing opportunities for joint management with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.</p> <p>Further information is available in section 1.1.</p>

# RESPONSE FROM THE STATE PARTY TO DECISIONS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

## 1.1. Identification, management and protection of cultural heritage values

**Decision 39 COM 7B.35 Paragraph 3:** *Expresses its concern that substantial progress has not yet been made on the survey of cultural attributes requested since 2013, and that its completion is not foreseen until 2018, and urges the State Party to ensure this work is undertaken as soon as possible, and submitted to the World Heritage Centre, for review by ICOMOS;*

**Decision 39 COM 7B.35 Paragraph 4:** *Reiterates its request to the State Party to:*

- a) *Undertake further study and consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community in order to provide more detailed information on the cultural value of the property and how these relate to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV),*
- b) *Provide detailed information on the legal provisions for the protection of cultural heritage in the extended property,*
- c) *Provide detailed information on the management arrangements for cultural heritage and, in particular, for the control of access to archaeological sites and sites of cultural significance;*

### **State Party's response**

#### ***Cultural heritage study***

While Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania and other sources hold extensive data and information regarding the property's cultural heritage values, Australia recognises that the Aboriginal cultural heritage of this mixed property is insufficiently known and documented. **The Australian and Tasmanian governments support the practical step by step approach to preparing the cultural heritage study** recommended by the reactive monitoring mission. In particular, the mission recommended that all available information on the property's cultural sites be compiled in a synthesis report and that following this, a comprehensive cultural survey be completed.

Australia supports the mission's recommendations, which provide sound direction on how to proceed with the cultural heritage study requested by the Committee and will ensure that more detailed information is provided on the cultural values of the property and how these relate to its Outstanding Universal Value.

The cultural heritage study is being managed through the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, under the leadership of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Council, with financial support from the Australian Government. The Aboriginal Heritage Council consists of members of Tasmanian Aboriginal communities and provides a broad representation of those communities. It was established in 2012 as an interim body, as part of a suite of changes to the administration of the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. In late 2015, the Tasmanian Government gave the

Aboriginal Heritage Council ongoing status, broader terms of reference and expanded membership.

The Aboriginal Heritage Council is responsible for the design and delivery of the cultural heritage study. The first stage of the study will produce a synthesis report that (1) refers to the cultural heritage attributes of the property and (2) demonstrates how these attributes relate to its Outstanding Universal Value. The synthesis report will cover the entire property, recognising that some areas and sites have been more intensively surveyed and documented than others. The preparation of the synthesis report will be primarily a desktop study, recognising that Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania and other sources hold extensive data and information, including from published and unpublished sources, regarding the property's cultural heritage values. The first stage of the study is scheduled for completion in mid-2017.

The second stage of the study will be to conduct broader cultural assessments, which will be informed by the synthesis report. This stage will include extensive consultation with the Aboriginal community and field survey work over several years. The development of detailed plans for implementing this stage will be undertaken in consultation with ICOMOS.

### ***Protection of cultural heritage***

Since 2010 three minor boundary modifications have added 196 195 hectares to the property. The areas added include 136 known Aboriginal cultural sites which include a number of cave sites, such as Riveaux Cave, that are likely to contribute to the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

### **Protection of these and other cultural sites located in the property is provided under Australian and Tasmanian law.**

The relevant Australian law is the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The EPBC Act includes provisions that protect and manage the World Heritage values of the property as matters of national environmental significance. The property's World Heritage values are its natural and cultural heritage attributes that contribute to its Outstanding Universal Value. They include the archaeological sites for which the property was inscribed in the World Heritage List. These values are protected across the whole of the property, regardless of tenure. The EPBC Act protects the World Heritage values of the property from significant impacts, including the impacts of actions that take place outside the property.

The relevant Tasmanian laws are the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*, the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* and the *National Parks and Reserved Land Regulations 2009*. The *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975* applies throughout the property, while the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* and the *National Parks and Reserved Land Regulations 2009* apply to reserved land within the property.

Both Tasmanian Acts provide protection to all Aboriginal cultural sites in the property, from an isolated stone artefact to Pleistocene cave sites by prohibiting disturbance, destruction, interference, defacement or removal of any Aboriginal relic or any object of archaeological interest. Importantly, these laws also apply to newly discovered cultural heritage sites to ensure they can be assessed and protected. The *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* and the *National Parks and Reserved Land Regulations 2009* also contain provisions to exclude public access to sites of cultural significance and to prohibit, restrict and regulate activities that may impact on cultural heritage.



## ***Management of cultural heritage***

**Management arrangements for the Tasmanian Wilderness address the property's natural and cultural heritage.** A series of Australian World Heritage Management Principles are set out in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000* (Schedules 5, 5A and 5B) and establish a framework for the management of the property. The principles indicate that management should be in accordance with Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention and that a management plan be prepared to include the participation of Aboriginal people and the integrated management of all heritage values (including in the case of the Tasmanian Wilderness, the property's cultural values).

The *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* (Tas) provides the statutory basis for the development of management plans for reserves in Tasmania, governing their content, formulation, review and process for approval. The Tasmanian Government released a draft management plan for the property for public comment from 19 January 2015 to 22 March 2015. The management plan provides management arrangements for all areas of the property reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (Tas) and for which the Director of National Parks and Wildlife (the Director) is designated as the managing authority.

Management arrangements for land not reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (Tas) are covered by other mechanisms that include the statutory protection of the cultural heritage of the property under Australian and Tasmanian laws. In addition, **the new management plan will include a 'Strategic Management Statement'. This statement will detail the policy and legislative mechanisms for managing areas not reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (Tas), including the control of access to archaeological sites and sites of cultural significance.**

Until a new management plan is approved, management arrangements for cultural heritage and, in particular, for the control of access to archaeological sites and sites of cultural significance, will continue to be effected through the property's 1999 management plan.

The 1999 management plan includes measures to identify, protect, conserve and, as necessary, rehabilitate the natural and cultural heritage values of the property including:

- protecting cultural heritage places, landscapes and values, and stabilising this heritage
- conserving cultural heritage places, landscape and values
- protecting, conserving and, where appropriate, presenting Aboriginal values
- increasing Aboriginal management of Aboriginal values
- restricting access to caves through a cave classification system
- managing threats to cultural heritage sites, such as uncontrolled visitor use, inappropriately sited infrastructure and coastal erosion due to sea level rise.

Examples of how the 1999 management plan objectives and prescriptions are implemented to control access to sites include:

- provision of a zoning scheme that preserves the remoteness of caves from walking tracks and roads and controls air access, such as by helicopters
- re-routing walking tracks so that they avoid cultural heritage sites. For instance, at the request of the Aboriginal community, Federation Peak bushwalking track was re-routed well away from the Wargata Mina Cave thereby also avoiding impacts from walkers camping near the cave
- discouraging the use of walking tracks that provide access to sites by classifying them at levels that deter visitors
- visits to sites of special significance (for example archaeological and Aboriginal sites) for management or research purposes is controlled to avoid unnecessary disturbance and risk of damage
- restricting or prohibiting access to caves where unacceptable damage has occurred, or is likely to occur
- investigating factors affecting cultural sites and implementing appropriate protection mechanisms.

In addition, the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* sets management objectives for all reserve classes including to “encourage cooperative management programmes with Aboriginal people in areas of significance to them in a manner consistent with the purposes of reservation and the other management objectives.” Reserves within the property are managed with regard to this objective.

### **The Tasmanian Government is committed to progressing joint management with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.**

The Tasmanian Government does not generally make the locations of Aboriginal heritage sites available to the public. However, site specific information is provided on request to land owners and managers so they can avoid impacting heritage or, if impacts to Aboriginal heritage cannot be avoided, by applying for a permit under the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. While there is a broad consensus among relevant stakeholders that the *Aboriginal Relics Act (1975)* requires revision, in the context of the property in particular, it nonetheless continues to provide a significant component of the suite of legislative mechanisms that provide protection to Aboriginal heritage.

The Tasmanian Government’s Cave Access Policy (2014) establishes protocols and procedures for respecting Aboriginal heritage in caves in National Parks and reserves declared under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*. In addition, regulation 17 of the *National Parks and Reserved Land Regulations 2009* provides a mechanism to limit access to sensitive sites, such as caves, by sign or public notice.

Further information on management arrangements for cultural heritage and control of access to archaeological sites and sites of cultural significance for land not reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* is at Appendix 5.2.

## 1.2. New management plan

**Decision 39 COM 7B.35 Paragraph 5:** *Also urges the State Party to review the proposed new management plan for the property to ensure that it provides adequate protection for its OUV, including:*

- a) *Recognition of wilderness character of the property as one of its key values and as being fundamental for its management,*
- b) *Recognition of the cultural attributes of OUV, as also fundamental for its management,*
- c) *Establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, including its wilderness character and cultural attributes;*

### **State Party's response**

Australia welcomed the reactive monitoring mission report, which noted that the quality and level of participation in the Tasmanian Government's management planning process appeared to be high by global standards.

**A new management plan for the property is being prepared** in accordance with the statutory process set out in the Tasmanian *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*. This legislation provides for an open and transparent management planning process, involving public consultation and reporting.

It should be noted that the property's 1999 management plan applies to all land within the property that was reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970* (the forerunner to the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*). Areas added after 1999 and reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* are managed in accordance with the principles of the 1999 management plan, relevant Australian and Tasmanian government legislation and the Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice. The 1999 management plan does not apply to unreserved land, including privately owned land.

The new management plan will provide statutory management arrangements for all areas of the property reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (Tas) where the National Parks and Wildlife Director (the Director) is the managing authority. It will not apply to unreserved land, including privately owned land. Management arrangements for areas in the property not subject to the new statutory management plan will be included in a Strategic Management Statement which will detail the legislative mechanisms and policy commitments for these areas. This will ensure that there are management arrangements for the whole of the property.

### **Process for completing the new management plan**

The Tasmanian Government released a draft management plan for the property for public representations from 19 January 2015 to 22 March 2015. To provide for transparency and accountability in finalising management plans the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* establishes a process for review of public representations involving the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC), an independent statutory body. The Director is required to review all

representations received during public consultation and prepare a report (the Director's report) which includes a summary of all representations, the Director's opinion on the merit of each representation and whether modification of the new management plan is required.

The *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* requires that the Director must forward copies of all representations received, together with the Director's report, to the TPC which will advertise the representations and the Director's report for public viewing. The TPC may conduct public hearings. The TPC will review any representations received on the Director's report and will prepare a report to the Tasmanian Environment Minister. In determining the content of the new management plan, the Minister will consider the public representations, the Director's Report, the TPC report and any representation provided to the Tasmanian Environment Minister by the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council.

The Tasmanian Environment Minister will make any alterations to the draft management plan considered appropriate and recommend a new management plan to the Governor of Tasmania for approval. In making that determination the Tasmanian Environment Minister will consider the recommendations and advice of the mission and the World Heritage Committee.

#### **1.2.1 Wilderness character**

**The Wilderness Zone will be retained in the new management plan and will encompass the majority of the property.** The new management plan will have an associated set of prescriptions regulating use to ensure that the property's wilderness character is retained and protected as a key value.

The new management plan will provide a clear commitment that Aboriginal access in the property for cultural practice would not be restricted through the application of the zoning system. Aboriginal people will be able to access the property and use plant, animal and mineral resources for cultural practices as an integral part of the management of that zone.

#### **1.2.2 Management of cultural attributes of Outstanding Universal Value**

Many cultural attributes which contribute to the property's Outstanding Universal Value and are essential for management of the property have been identified. Refer to sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.6 for more information on identification, protection and management of cultural heritage.

Once the cultural heritage study is complete the draft retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value will be updated to more comprehensively address the cultural heritage attributes of the property. The new management plan will ensure that the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is a key basis for management.

The draft management plan identified many aspects of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural values as being of importance and strongly articulated the need for increased involvement by Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the management of the property. **The approach to the management of cultural values outlined in the new management plan will reflect both the aspirations of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and recognise the Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural values in the cultural criteria for which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List.**

### **1.2.3 Criteria for tourism development to protect Outstanding Universal Value**

The EPBC Act includes provisions that protect and manage the World Heritage values of the property as matters of national environmental significance. The EPBC Act protects the World Heritage values of a declared World Heritage property from significant impacts, including the impacts of actions that take place outside the property.

**The new management plan will include criteria for new tourism development to protect the property's Outstanding Universal Value, including wilderness character and cultural attributes.**

The assessment process for proposed activities on reserved land will require an assessment of the following criteria:

- identify the World Heritage values likely to be affected by the proposal
- identify how those values might be affected
- consider direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on World Heritage values
- consider the social and environmental benefits and impacts of the proposal
- consider appropriate monitoring and compliance measures
- consider provision of public consultation based on the scale and nature of the proposal.

Commercial tourism proposals will also be required to address the following criteria:

- describe how the experience is based on the values and features of the property
- submit a case for situating the proposal on reserved land and address compatibility with existing services and infrastructure
- describe how the proposal will contribute to the guiding vision and management objectives for the property as articulated in the new management plan
- describe how potential impacts on the legitimate enjoyment and experience by others of property's features and values will be managed
- describe how construction and operations will be compatible with the protection and conservation of World Heritage and other values
- incorporate environmentally sustainable operational practices and the use of environmentally 'best practice' goods and technologies
- detail any external costs resulting from the proposal including ongoing monitoring and compliance
- demonstrate economic viability.

The Tourism Master Plan will provide additional guidance, context and policy direction for decision making under the new management plan.

Wilderness will be an explicit consideration of the assessment process. Infrastructure or commercial aircraft landings will not be permitted in this zone. This will support the protection of cultural attributes.

The assessment process for unreserved land would be through the Tasmanian Government's *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*. The assessment process set out in the new management plan will apply to Crown Land. Activities likely to have a significant impact on the property's World Heritage values would be subject to assessment under the national EPBC Act.

### 1.3 Commercial logging and mining; public lands status

**Decision 39 COM 7B.35 Paragraph 6:** *Further urges the State Party to ensure that commercial logging and mining are not permitted within the entire property, and that all areas of public lands within the property's boundaries, including Regional Reserves, Conservation Areas and Future Potential Production Forest Lands, have a status that ensures adequate protection of the OUV of the property;*

#### **State Party's response**

##### *Commercial logging*

**The Tasmanian Government has ruled out all forms of commercial logging, including harvesting of special species timbers, in the whole of the property.** This will be achieved through the new management plan and other legislation. The new management plan will include a Strategic Management Statement which will outline management arrangements for areas not covered by the plan.

There is a long standing agreement for salvage of previously cut Huon pine from selected parts of the shoreline of Macquarie Harbour (permitted under the 1999 management plan and proposed to continue under the new management plan). The State Party considers that this practice does not have an impact on Outstanding Universal Value of the property and it will continue.

##### *Mining*

**The Tasmanian Government has confirmed that mining will not be permitted in the whole of the property.**

Small quantities of gravel for management purposes, in particular for the maintenance of the road network, will be required. The use of material sourced from gravel pits within the property is preferable due to increased biosecurity risks and cost associated with transporting materials from outside the property. This reduces the risk of introducing pathogens (such as chytrid fungus and *Phytophthora*) and weeds (such as blackberry) which are found in areas outside the property. A review of the road network is underway. One of the priorities of the review is to identify roads that can be closed and rehabilitated to reduce the demand for gravel required for maintenance. However, circumstances may arise where new gravel pits need to be established inside the property. The mission contemplates this possibility where it says that new borrow pits should not be permitted "to the degree possible".

As discussed in section 1.3.1 the prohibition on mining will not have any impact on Tasmanian Aboriginal people seeking to access small quantities of material for the purposes of cultural practice.

*Status of public land that ensures adequate protection of the OUV of the property*

**The Tasmanian Government will seek to give public land in the property reserve status under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002 (Tas)* to ensure adequate protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.**

Areas not reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* will be assessed and assigned an appropriate reserve class for consideration by the Tasmanian Parliament. This process will include broad community consultation. Once reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* these areas will be subject to the new management plan.

**The Tasmanian Government has ruled out all commercial logging in the whole of the property and will not seek to convert Future Potential Production Forest Land to Permanent Timber Production Zone Land.**

The new management plan will nominate proposed management zones for the unreserved public land that will apply once the land is reserved. Prior to reservation this land will be managed in accordance with the provisions of the new management plan, including relevant principles and policy intent in relation to the nominated management zone. This will be achieved through the Strategic Management Statement.

## 1.4 Funding

**Decision 39 COM 7B.35 Paragraph 7:** *Requests the State Party to secure adequate funding for the management of the property, taking into consideration the extension of the property as approved by the Committee at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013);*

### **State Party's response**

**The Australian and Tasmanian governments** have contributed jointly to the cost of management of the property since 1983 and **will continue to provide the resources necessary to support the effective management of the Tasmanian Wilderness so as to ensure its Outstanding Universal Value is maintained.**

The governments periodically review the adequacy of funding available for the management of the property in light of identified threats to its Outstanding Universal Value.

In 2015 the Australian Government committed to supporting Tasmania to strengthen its management of the Tasmanian Wilderness by providing an additional \$10.2 million for its protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation. The funding, over four years from 2015, includes:

- An annual payment of \$1.5 million per year, indexed to inflation, to support the Tasmanian Government's management responsibilities in the area added to the property in 2013. This funding is matched by the Tasmania Government;
- A one-off payment of \$3.2 million in 2015-16 to address high priority road safety issues and biosecurity concerns relating to the spread of invasive species, pests and pathogens in the area added to the property in 2013; and
- \$575,000 to progress the work being undertaken by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Council with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to provide more detailed information on the cultural heritage of the property and how this relates to its Outstanding Universal Value.

This funding is in addition to the \$3.4 million per year baseline funding that the Australian Government provides to assist with the management of the property. This funding is at least matched by the Tasmanian Government which in many years has contributed more than \$3.4 million.

The Australian Government provided \$3.3 million from 2014-15 over 3 years to the Tasmanian Government for the conservation of the Tasmanian devil, a value of the World Heritage Area.

The Australian Government also provided a one off payment of \$1.5 million in 2012-13 to the Tasmanian Government to support the development of a new management plan for the property.



## 1.5 Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

**Decision 39 COM 7B.35 Paragraph 8:** *Takes note of the proposed retrospective Statement of OUV (SOUV) that has been submitted by the State Party, and also requests the State Party to include additional information in the Statement, to ensure that it reflects accurately the cultural attributes of the property, and further requests the State Party to resubmit a revised draft of the retrospective SOUV to the World Heritage Centre for review, as soon as possible;*

### **State Party's response**

Over recent years the Australian Government has been working with the Tasmanian Government, the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and ICOMOS to finalise a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the property. The report of the November 2015 reactive monitoring mission recommends a practical step by step approach to the preparation of the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

### **Work is already underway to:**

- compile and submit a systematic stock-take of all available information about cultural sites within the property by mid-2017;
- provide a significantly improved retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value to the World Heritage Centre for review by the advisory bodies and consideration by the World Heritage Committee, at the earliest possible date after mid-2017, noting that it can be further updated in future years; and
- prepare and submit a detailed proposal for a comprehensive cultural study (with a calendar on survey stages over a multi-year period) by mid-2017, for submission to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS, in consultation with IUCN.

In the absence of a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, examples of attributes that contribute to the property's Outstanding Universal Value are identified on the Department of the Environment's website at <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/tasmanian-wilderness/values>. These examples are illustrative of the attributes of the property, but do not constitute a comprehensive list. Until the adoption of a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value this list will be used as a guide on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

## 1.6 Reactive Monitoring Mission

**Decision 39 COM 7B.35 Paragraph 9:** *Requests furthermore the State Party to invite a joint IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property in order to review and provide advice for the revision of the management plan, prior to any decision to finalise the plan, on the survey of cultural attributes and on the re-drafting of the retrospective SOUV, and also to assess the state of conservation of the property as a whole;*

### **State Party's response**

As requested by the World Heritage Committee, a reactive monitoring mission to the property was held from 23 to 29 November 2015. The mission was undertaken by Mr Tilman Jaeger (representing IUCN) and Dr Christophe Sand (representing ICOMOS). The Terms of Reference of the mission are at Appendix 5.3.

The mission provided an opportunity for these experts to see first-hand how the property is managed. The mission heard the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including the tourism and special species timbers sectors and environmental non-government organisations. The mission engaged with cultural heritage experts and the Aboriginal communities of Tasmania to discuss the cultural values of the property. The mission's conclusion was that the property is in an overall good state of conservation in regard to its natural values, but notes that the property faces a number of threats likely to be aggravated by climate change.

The responses of the Australian and Tasmanian governments to the mission recommendations are in Table 1 on page 2 of this report. As requested by the World Heritage Committee, **the new management plan for the property has not been finalised so that the advice of the mission can be taken into account.**

## 1.7 State Party Report and revised draft management plan

**Decision 39 COM 7B.35 Paragraph 10:** *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2016, an updated report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, and including an electronic and three printed copies of a revised draft management plan that is considered to adequately protect the OUV of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.*

### **State Party's response**

#### *Updated State Party Report*

This State Party Report on the state of conservation of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area addresses this request of the World Heritage Committee.

#### *Copies of a revised draft management plan*

The Tasmanian Government must follow the statutory process set out in the Tasmanian *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* for developing management plans. The steps to finalising the new management plan are:

1. The Tasmanian Director of National Parks and Wildlife reviews all representations and prepares a report which includes a summary of them, the Director's opinion on the merit of each representation and whether modification of the new management plan is required.
2. The Director's report and comments are sent to the Tasmanian Planning Commission which makes the report and comments available for public viewing. Public hearings may be held.
3. The Tasmanian Planning Commission reviews the report, comments and results of any public hearings it conducts and prepares a public report to the Tasmanian Environment Minister.
4. The Tasmanian Environment Minister must consider the representations, the Director's report, the Tasmanian Planning Commission's review and any representation made by the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Committee. The Tasmanian Environment Minister will make any alterations to the draft management plan he considers appropriate and recommend the new management plan to the Governor for approval.

The key policy issues identified by the World Heritage Committee and considered and reported on by the mission have been addressed and results are presented in this report. There is a strong correlation between these issues and those raised by stakeholders directly with the mission and in public representations made on the new management plan. In this context, the mission report provided a valuable source of advice for the Tasmanian Environment Minister in finalising the new management plan for the property.

The Australian Government will ensure that the World Heritage Centre is kept informed of the statutory process as it progresses.

## 2. OTHER CURRENT CONSERVATION ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE PARTY WHICH MAY HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE PROPERTY'S OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

### 2.1 State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Report

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service is preparing the second State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Report.

The purpose of the report is to provide all interested parties with a summary (including links to supporting evidence) of management achievements, progress, trends, and challenges over the term of the property's statutory management plan from 1999 to the present. The second report will focus on the decade since the first State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Report was completed in 2004. The report will be published on the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service's website at <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=5756>.

The report will include information on: the condition of the property's natural and cultural values; management of threats, risks, tourism and recreation; community engagement; and actions to improve ongoing management to better protect and manage the property's Outstanding Universal Value. The report is due to be completed by June 2016 and will be updated over time.

### 2.2 Orange-bellied parrot

The Orange-bellied parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*) is an attribute of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and is listed as critically endangered under the national *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) and endangered under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*. There are thought to be fewer than 70 birds in the wild and the species is only known to breed at Melaleuca in the property. Breeding occurs in the summer months between October and April, after which the birds migrate to the southern coastline of mainland Australia.

The Australian Government is committed to the long term conservation of the orange-bellied parrot, which is a listed threatened species under the EPBC Act. As one of two bird species identified for emergency intervention in the Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy, the Australian Government is working collaboratively with researchers, community groups and other governments to undertake emergency actions to protect the species. Along with investment from state governments, \$525 000 is being provided to help rebuild the number of species in the wild which are critically low.

A National Recovery Plan (the Plan) for the Orange-bellied parrot was revised in 2014. This Plan provides a national approach to ensure the long-term survival of the species in the wild. Management actions include: habitat management burns to provide suitable foraging habitat, provision of artificial nest boxes, supplementary feeding and mitigation of threats posed by disease, competitors and predators.

Following an outbreak of beak and feather disease in the wild population during the 2014-15 breeding season, additional strategies and actions have been implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of the disease. These actions include the formation of an expert Veterinary Technical Reference Group to provide advice relating to Orange-bellied parrot health, disease and biosecurity.

A captive insurance population is a vital element in the recovery program. As well as providing an insurance population, releases of captive bred birds into the wild are critical actions that promote long-term survival in the wild. Following a successful release of 24 captive bred birds into the wild in the 2013-14 breeding season, 27 birds were released at the start of the 2014-15 breeding season. Some of these birds were successful in breeding and most birds survived to migrate to mainland Australia at the end of the season. In the 2015-16 breeding season, 13 captive bred birds were released at the Melaleuca breeding site.

A number of captive-bred and released adults and their wild-fledged offspring have returned to the Melaleuca breeding site, increasing the numbers of Orange-bellied parrots returning to Melaleuca to breed.

## 2.3 Biosecurity

All landowners and managers are continually working to manage biosecurity issues that may impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. This includes Tasmanian devil facial tumour disease, myrtle rust disease, *Mucor amphibiorum* (platypus Mucor disease); weeds such as blackberry, foxglove, Himalayan honeysuckle and spear thistle; pests including fallow deer, rabbits and feral cats and waterbased pests and pathogens such as *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (root rot), *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (amphibian chytrid fungus), the freshwater algal pest *Didymosphenia geminata* (Didymo) and redfin perch.

**These issues are generally localised in their impact and as such are not considered likely to diminish the Outstanding Universal Value of the property** in light of the significant focus on biosecurity in the management of the property.

Biosecurity will be addressed comprehensively in the new management plan.

## 2.4 Fire

Australia has a high level of experience and capability in managing and combating fire.

Fire has been a natural and persistent phenomenon in the property for millions of years. Human use of fire over thousands of years has also played a role in shaping the present-day vegetation. Fire in the landscape can be a healthy and positive factor provided it occurs at the right frequency, intensity, places and times; otherwise it can be a destructive force.

The Tasmanian Government recently published an evaluation of fire management in the property<sup>1</sup> which highlighted the risk of landscape scale fires from lightning strike and the threat to natural values, particularly fire sensitive vegetation.

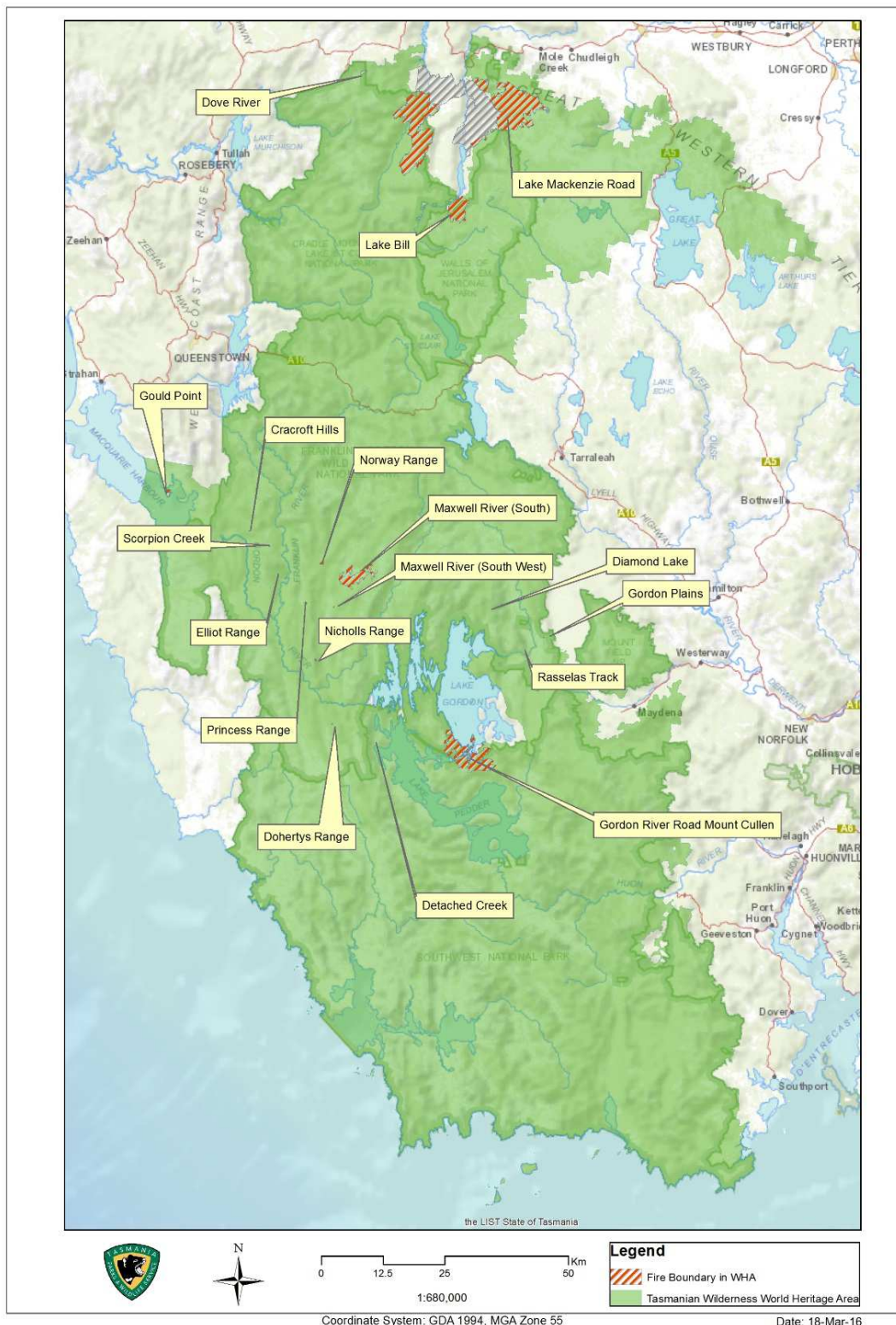
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<sup>1</sup> *Evaluation report: Fire management in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area* (Nov. 2015) is <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/file.aspx?id=41886>

Tasmania experienced an extremely dry winter, spring and summer in 2015-16 due to the combination of a very strong El Niño event and positive Indian Ocean Dipole. This resulted in extremely dry conditions across Tasmania.

On 13 January 2016 a dry lightning storm crossed Tasmania in the late afternoon igniting numerous fires. There were over 300 fires across Tasmania of which 15 were in the property (refer to Map 1 for location of fires in the property).

Map 1: Location of fires in the property



The majority of the fires in the property were in remote areas and required extensive use of specialist remote area trained firefighters and aircraft support for water bombing and transporting firefighters.

More than 5 600 Tasmanian volunteer and career firefighters, 1 000 firefighters from Queensland, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, South Australia and New Zealand and up to 40 aircraft were involved in fire fighting efforts. The Australian Government directly supported the firefighting effort through its \$14.8 million annual contribution to the national aerial firefighting capability. It also deployed a portable base camp for firefighters in remote areas.

Approximately 20 100 hectares, or 1.3 per cent, of the property has been affected by fire. The majority of the area impacted in the property is at Lake Mackenzie (13 822 ha), Mt Cullen or Gordon River Road (3 520 ha) and Maxwell River South (1 389 ha).

The majority of the area burnt comprised vegetation types and associated fauna that are adapted or resilient to fire or are likely to recover to something similar to their original state in the short, medium or long term. Approximately 2 700 hectares of fire sensitive vegetation communities with high ecological value were affected. The fires have also impacted organic soils and mineral soils, karst and fluvial systems, wetland peats, cushion moors and sphagnum bogs.

Some fire sensitive species affected by the fire are World Heritage values of the property. The overall impact has been low with less than two per cent of pencil pine areas affected, while the impact on Huon pine, King Billy pine and deciduous beech is limited in extent and considered to be low.

Planning for recovery and rehabilitation has begun in consultation with fauna, flora and geomorphology specialists.

In 2015 the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment's Natural Values Branch reviewed the present knowledge of fire impacts on natural values, and created a comprehensive set of fire regime guidelines for the maintenance of natural values in the property.

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service uses a strategic risk management approach to manage bushfire. This strategic, cross jurisdictional, approach utilises an adaptive risk model which allows development and implementation of fire management zone protocols which provide direction for assessing, actioning and prioritising bushfire response within each zone. Many fires over the last decade have been successfully suppressed as a result of this approach. Outcomes from the review of the 2015-16 fire season will be incorporated into future fire planning under this approach.

The Tasmanian Government has allocated \$250,000 for a research project to examine the impact of climate change in the World Heritage Area and strengthen fire-fighting techniques to protect the property. This project will be completed in consultation with the Australian Government and will focus on prevention, improving predictive modelling, fuel reduction and retardant use. The eminent researcher, Dr Tony Press, Adjunct Professor of the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperatives Research Centre, will oversee this work. It is expected that the research project will be completed by the end of 2016.

The Tasmanian Fire Service has initiated an independent inquiry which will be conducted by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council. This inquiry will examine the day-by-day management of the fire, including the protection of sensitive and important wilderness areas.

The Australian Government provided reports on the fires to the Director of the World Heritage Centre on 1 February and 4 March 2016. Further reports will be provided with updated information on the completion of these inquiries.



### 3. POTENTIAL MAJOR RESTORATIONS, ALTERATIONS AND/OR NEW CONSTRUCTIONS INTENDED WITHIN THE PROPERTY, THE BUFFER ZONES AND/OR CORRIDORS OR OTHER AREAS, WHERE SUCH DEVELOPMENTS MAY AFFECT THE OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE OF THE PROPERTY, INCLUDING AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY

#### 3.1. Quarterly reporting

In 2011 Australia formalised a procedure for providing quarterly notification reports to the World Heritage Centre of proposed developments within or outside a property that may impact a property's Outstanding Universal Value. Notification reports and a full list of proposed, approved and withdrawn actions relating to the property that require consideration under the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) are available at: [www.environment.gov.au/heritage/about/world/notification-development-proposals](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/about/world/notification-development-proposals).

No proposals have been approved under the EPBC Act for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area since the 2015 State Party Report on the state of conservation of the property was submitted on 1 February 2015 (39 COM 7B.35).

#### 3.2. Tourism in the Tasmanian Wilderness

The World Heritage Convention states that the duty of each State Party is to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value (Article 4). On 21 June 2014 the Tasmanian Government commenced an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for tourism investment opportunities in Tasmanian National Parks and Reserves, including the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The EOI process aims to develop sensitive and appropriate tourism offerings that enhance the presentation of the property for tourists while maintaining the integrity of the natural and cultural values of the property. The EOI is specifically looking for developments which broaden the range of exciting and unique experiences on offer in Tasmania.

All proposals are required to obtain the necessary State and Commonwealth approvals and demonstrate under the EPBC Act, that the activity would not have a significant impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The EOI process is in two stages. Stage one was a call for proposed developments to be submitted for initial assessment by 21 November 2014. Thirty-seven expressions of interest were received. In order to meet EOI criteria, each proposal was required to:

- be compatible with and sensitive to the cultural and natural values, character and setting of the reserve and should aim to enhance broader visitor enjoyment of the State's reserve estate
- offer unique, innovative and enhanced visitor experiences and provide a net public benefit

- offer environmental tourism experiences that involve or benefit local communities (including the Aboriginal community)
- be established and managed in an ecologically sustainable manner, and should be designed to minimise the footprint on the site
- be compatible with the statutory management objectives and purpose of the reserves in the relevant legislation (although proposed developments were not excluded from the process if they didn't comply with the relevant statutory plans)
- take account of associated risks relating to natural events for the proposed settings, for example, bushfires or flooding.

In March 2015, the Tasmanian Environment Minister invited 25 proposals to progress to Stage Two. Thirteen proposals are located within the property. For up-to-date information on the progress on these proposals please refer to the following website:

[http://www.cg.tas.gov.au/home/investment\\_attraction/tourism\\_eio/eoi\\_project\\_table](http://www.cg.tas.gov.au/home/investment_attraction/tourism_eio/eoi_project_table).

## 4. CONCLUSION

The Australian and Tasmanian governments are fully committed to protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and ensuring its integrity is maintained. The Australian and Tasmanian governments support all 20 recommendations of the reactive monitoring mission which took place, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, from 23 to 29 November 2015. The new management plan for the property, which will be completed in 2016, will reflect the recommendations of the mission.

The mission concluded that the property is in an overall good state of conservation in regard to its natural values, but notes that the property faces a number of threats likely to be aggravated by climate change.

The Tasmanian Government has tasked its Aboriginal Heritage Council to develop and oversee the cultural heritage study of the property requested by the World Heritage Committee. Australia will use this work to deliver a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value at the earliest possible date after mid-2017.

The Tasmanian Government has publicly ruled out all forms of commercial logging and mining within the property, including special species timber harvesting. Tourism development in the property will continue to be strictly regulated and assessment criteria adopted that ensure commercial tourism proposals do not impact negatively on the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

The Australian and Tasmanian governments will continue to provide the resources necessary to support the effective management of the property to ensure its Outstanding Universal Value is maintained.

## 5. APPENDICES

### 5.1 World Heritage Committee Decision 39 COM 7B.35

#### **Thirty-ninth session – Bonn, Germany – 28 June to 8 July 2015 Tasmanian Wilderness (Australia) (C/N 181)**

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The World Heritage Committee;

1. Having examined Document WHC-15/39.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions 36 COM 7B.36, 37 COM 8B.44, and 38 COM 8B.47, adopted at its 36th (Saint Petersburg, 2012), 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013) and 38th (Doha, 2014) sessions respectively;
3. Expresses its concern that substantial progress has not yet been made on the survey of cultural attributes requested since 2013, and that its completion is not foreseen until 2018, and urges the State Party to ensure this work is undertaken as soon as possible, and submitted to the World Heritage Centre, for review by ICOMOS;
4. Reiterates its request to the State Party to:
  - a) Undertake further study and consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community in order to provide more detailed information on the cultural value of the property and how these relate to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV),
  - b) Provide detailed information on the legal provisions for the protection of cultural heritage in the extended property,
  - c) Provide detailed information on the management arrangements for cultural heritage and, in particular, for the control of access to archaeological sites and sites of cultural significance;
5. Also urges the State Party to review the proposed new management plan for the property to ensure that it provides adequate protection for its OUV, including:
  - a) Recognition of wilderness character of the property as one of its key values and as being fundamental for its management,
  - b) Recognition of the cultural attributes of OUV, as also fundamental for its management,
  - c) Establishment of strict criteria for new tourism development within the property which would be in line with the primary goal of protecting the property's OUV, including its wilderness character and cultural attributes;
6. Further urges the State Party to ensure that commercial logging and mining are not permitted within the entire property, and that all areas of public lands within the property's boundaries, including Regional Reserves, Conservation Areas and Future Potential Production Forest Lands, have a status that ensures adequate protection of the OUV of the property;
7. Requests the State Party to secure adequate funding for the management of the property, taking into consideration the extension of the property as approved by the Committee at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013);

8. Takes note of the proposed retrospective Statement of OUV (SOUV) that has been submitted by the State Party, and also requests the State Party to include additional information in the Statement, to ensure that it reflects accurately the cultural attributes of the property, and further requests the State Party to resubmit a revised draft of the retrospective SOUV to the World Heritage Centre for review, as soon as possible;
9. Requests furthermore the State Party to invite a joint IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property in order to review and provide advice for the revision of the management plan, prior to any decision to finalise the plan, on the survey of cultural attributes and on the re-drafting of the retrospective SOUV, and also to assess the state of conservation of the property as a whole;
10. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2016, an updated report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, and including an electronic and three printed copies of a revised draft management plan that is considered to adequately protect the OUV of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.

## 5.2 Management arrangements for cultural heritage not subject to the management plan

### *Crown Land*

Future Potential Production Forest Land comprises approximately 26 300 hectares and is a category of Crown land administered by Crown Land Services within the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment with on-ground management by the Parks and Wildlife Service under the *Crown Lands Act 1976* (Tas) with additional restrictions as outlined in the *Forest (Rebuilding the Forest Industry) Act 2014* (Tas).

The management objectives for Future Potential Production Forest Land are outlined in Schedule 3 of the *Forest (Rebuilding the Forest Industry) Act 2014*, these management objectives are similar to those for conservation areas under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* and include: "to conserve sites or areas of cultural significance" and "to encourage cooperative management programs with Aboriginal people in areas of significance to them in a manner consistent with the other management objectives".

The Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice applies to this land. Land management practices, including arrangements for cultural heritage (in particular for the control of access to archaeological sites and sites of cultural significance) have regard to the World Heritage status of the property. A priority for management is investigation of existing uses, threats and risks to values.

New activities on Crown Land require approval under the *Crown Lands Act 1976*

### *Tasmanian Land Conservancy*

Comprising 1 742 hectares, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) owns and manages the Skullbone Plains Reserve, Gordonvale Reserve and Liffey Reserve, within the property.

Management of Skullbone Plains Reserve and Liffey Reserve is in accord with their statutory conservation covenants registered on the property title under Tasmania's *Nature Conservation Act 2002*. Skullbone Plains Reserve has been partly surveyed for its cultural heritage values. Aboriginal sites, including artefact scatters and usage, and several European cultural heritage sites, especially hut remains, are recorded on the TLC's GIS database. Their importance and protection has been identified in the reserve management plan. Access to the Skullbone Plains Reserve is controlled via a series of locked gates and other deterrents to illegal access, thus the property has a low level of unregulated access. General public access is controlled by the TLC and visitors are required to comply with the conditions of access. Those seeking access for other purposes are required to sign a waiver of liability and an access licence agreement.

A conservation covenant for Gordonvale Reserve is being progressed to protect the natural and cultural values of this property. A management plan has been prepared for Gordonvale Reserve and approved by Tasmanian Land Conservancy's Science Council and awaiting Tasmanian Land Conservancy Board endorsement.

There are no known cultural heritage sites on the Liffey Reserve however no formal surveys have been undertaken. The existence of sites with local heritage value remains a possibility as the Liffey area has a long history of European and Aboriginal use.

### *Bush Heritage Australia*

Bush Heritage Australia (BHA) owns and manages two reserves within the property, Liffey River Reserve and Coal Mine Creek Reserve, comprising 125.5 hectares. These reserves are protected under conservation covenants under *Tasmania's Nature Conservation Act 2002*, with the purpose of protecting in perpetuity the flora and fauna, water quality and the natural diversity of the land.

In March 2015, a small and targeted Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment of the northern slopes and outcrops of Liffey River Reserve was conducted by members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community through the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. The assessment captured a range of values that Tasmanian Aboriginal people hold important: the historical context, community associations, oral histories, traditional use of the area, cultural materials, sites and places of significance, physical links back to their ancestors. Numerous medicinal, food and resources plants were identified, ranging from fungus, roots, tubers, herbs through to the cedar gums were recorded. Six sandstone rock shelters were surveyed some containing stone tools visible on the surface of the floor.

In acknowledgement of the importance of understanding cultural values and their management within a landscape context, assessments extended to culturally significant areas identified by local knowledge but unrecorded yet in the World Heritage Area. Two additional large sandstone shelters, the second with numerous stone artefacts on the soil surface were identified.

Opportunities exist for continued collaboration in further survey and management of identified cultural heritage values. These may include: examination and more detailed assessment of this reserve, continued engagement in the management of cultural heritage values, promotion of the range of Aboriginal community values, and capacity development.

A cultural heritage assessment for Coal Mine Creek is planned for 2016.

### *Hydro Tasmania*

Hydro Tasmania owns and manages approximately 13 500 hectares of land within the property. This area includes 1 720 hectares of water storage or lake area. A number of Hydro Tasmania assets, such as dams, water conveyances and tunnels are also located on public land within the property.

Section 19(7) of the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002 (Tas)* requires that a management plan for conservation areas vested in public authorities can only be approved with the agreement of that authority. Hydro Tasmania has exercised its right to withhold that agreement and, therefore, the new management plan does not apply to reserved land vested in Hydro Tasmania. This includes Lake Mackenzie and Lake Augusta. Hydro Tasmania manages those areas in accordance with the purposes of reservation set out in the *Nature Conservation Act 2002 (Tas)* and the management objectives of the reserve class set out in the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002 (Tas)*.

Until the new management plan is approved management of these assets is regulated under the 1999 management plan and in accordance with an Electricity Entities Operations Plan that is implemented by way of a Memoranda of Understanding between Hydro Tasmania and Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service.

### *Tas Networks*

Tas Networks has a Memorandum of Understanding with Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service which provides high level guidance on how to manage activities within the property and establishes expectations for routine maintenance activities associated with their assets within the property.

An Environment Handbook utilised by Tas Networks aims to increase environmental awareness and encourage better environmental management. The Environment Handbook is a practical reference tool on how to ensure that maintenance, inspection and construction activities do not impact various aspects of the environment including Aboriginal heritage values.

If new capital works projects are deemed to have a higher risk to Aboriginal heritage values an archaeologist and Aboriginal Heritage Officer will be engaged to survey the site. If Aboriginal heritage sites are located within the proximity of activities, exclusion zones will be established and site details will be provided to Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania.

### *Aboriginal Land*

Aboriginal land is land that has been vested in the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania in trust for Aboriginal persons in perpetuity under the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1995* (Tas).

The Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania owns approximately 730 hectares of land within the property, including the significant cave sites at Ballawinne, Kutikina and Wargata Mina. The Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania controls access to this land.

Each of these cave sites has significant Aboriginal cultural and historical values and contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Access and control is managed by the land council to ensure minimal disturbance at each site given the delicate nature of the art contained within the caves. The remoteness of these areas and the undisturbed nature of the surrounding area are integral to the protection of these values.



## 5.3 Reactive Monitoring Mission Terms of Reference

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### Joint IUCN – ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission

#### Tasmanian Wilderness (Australia)

23 – 29 November 2015

At its 39th session, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party of Australia to invite a joint IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage property to review and provide advice for the revision of the management plan, prior to any decision to finalise the plan, on the survey of cultural attributes and on the re-drafting of the retrospective Statement of OUV, and to assess the state of conservation of the property as a whole (Decision **39 COM 7B.35**). The Australian authorities confirmed its invitation for the joint IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission in August 2015. The mission team will be composed of Mr Tilman Jaeger, representing IUCN, and Mr Christophe Sand, representing ICOMOS.

In particular, the mission should address the following points, and make recommendations as relevant to each:

1. Review the draft Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan (2014) and discuss the current draft with a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community, NGOs and representatives of tourism and timber industries;
2. Discuss the organisation for the survey of cultural attributes of the property and review progress achieved and overall timescale envisaged for completion;
3. Discuss and review management provisions for those parts of the property which are not managed under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* and therefore would not be subject to the new Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan;
4. Review the most recent draft of the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and discuss incorporation of the outcome of the survey of cultural attributes;
5. In line with paragraph 173 of the Operational Guidelines, assess any other relevant conservation issues that may negatively impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property

The mission should be assisted to conduct the necessary field visits to key locations, and to meet all of the relevant stakeholders concerned. The following items should be provided to the World Heritage Centre (copied to IUCN/ICOMOS) as soon as possible; preferably no later than end-October 2015 to enable preparation for the mission:

- a) The results of the public consultation process on the draft Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan;
- b) Progress report on the survey of cultural attributes;

- c) Results of the Expression of Interest process for the development of tourism infrastructure within the property;

The mission team should hold consultation with the Australian authorities at both the federal and state level, in particular Department of the Environment, the Commonwealth Government, and Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, the Government of Tasmania; additional consultations should be held with the range of other relevant stakeholders, including: i) representatives of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community; ii) NGOs; iii) staff members of Parks & Wildlife Service Tasmania and representatives of the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council (NPWAC); iv) researchers, including forest ecologists; v) representatives of timber industry; vi) representatives of tourism industry and Tourism Tasmania Corporate.

Based on the results of the above-mentioned assessment and discussions with the State Party representatives and stakeholders, the mission team will develop recommendations for the Government of Australia and the World Heritage Committee to further ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and improve its management. It should be noted that recommendations are made within the mission report (see below), and not while the mission is still on-going.

The mission will prepare a concise joint ICOMOS/IUCN mission report on the findings and recommendations of this Reactive Monitoring mission no later than 6 weeks after the end of the field visit, following the annexed standard format.