
Tasmanian Wilderness (Australia)

No 181ter

1 Basic data

State Party

Australia

Name of property

Tasmanian Wilderness

Location

State of Tasmania

Inscription

1989

Brief description

In a region that has been subjected to severe glaciation, these parks and reserves, with their steep gorges, covering an area of over 1 million ha, constitute one of the last expanses of temperate rainforest in the world. Remains found in limestone caves in the interior attest to the human occupation of the area from the Pleistocene to the end of the Ice Age and near the coast there is evidence of more recent pre-European settlements.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

14 March 2012

2 Issues raised

Background

In 1982 and 1989, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) was inscribed on the World Heritage List as a mixed property under cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi), and under all four natural criteria (vii), (viii), (ix) and (x). In 1989 there was an extension of the property, mainly to the north and east. The property then covered 1.38 million hectares, or 20% of the State of Tasmania. There is no buffer zone.

In 2010, an extension to the property covering 21 small areas around the eastern and southern boundaries that are part of national parks or state reserves was approved by the World Heritage Committee (Decision 34 COM 8B.46). At the same time the Committee welcomed the intention of the State Party to add the Southwest Conservation Area south of Melaleuca to Cox Bight to the property when mining licenses have expired, and requested the State Party to ensure that the protection and management of the property within its modified boundaries takes account of past decisions of the World Heritage Committee regarding the state of conservation of the existing property, including the management of threats in the areas adjoining its boundaries.

In its State of Conservation report 2011, the State Party advised that the 21 areas of national park and state reserve approved for addition to the property by the Committee at its 34th session in 2010 are now incorporated in the World Heritage Area and are covered by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan (TWWHAMP). National environmental law protects the values of the World Heritage property from threats originating both inside and outside its modified boundaries.

Modification

The proposed modification is to add the Southwest Conservation Area south of Melaleuca to Cox Bight, an area of 3,810 hectares surrounded by the existing property on all sides except the south, where its boundary is the sea, thus completing the proposal for extension put forward in 2010.

The State Party advises that mining issues have been resolved for the proposed addition as well as for the Adamsfield Conservation Area, which was the last remaining area within the World Heritage property where mineral exploration was permitted under the TWWHAMP. The remaining leases have now been relinquished voluntarily and lessees appropriately compensated by the Tasmanian Government. Tasmania has also introduced administrative processes to ensure that these lands are not included in any future mineral tenement applications and they will be excluded from the operation of the Tasmanian Mineral Resources Development Act 1995 which will formally prevent issue any further mineral licences in these two areas.

The tenure of the area proposed for addition will be changed by legislation from Conservation Area to National Park, to further ensure prohibition of mining and provide protection under the National Parks Act. This legislative change is expected to be in effect by 30 September 2012. A Management Statement for the proposed addition which takes account of World Heritage values is expected to be complete by 30 June 2012, pending its incorporation in the TWWHAMP during review in 2015.

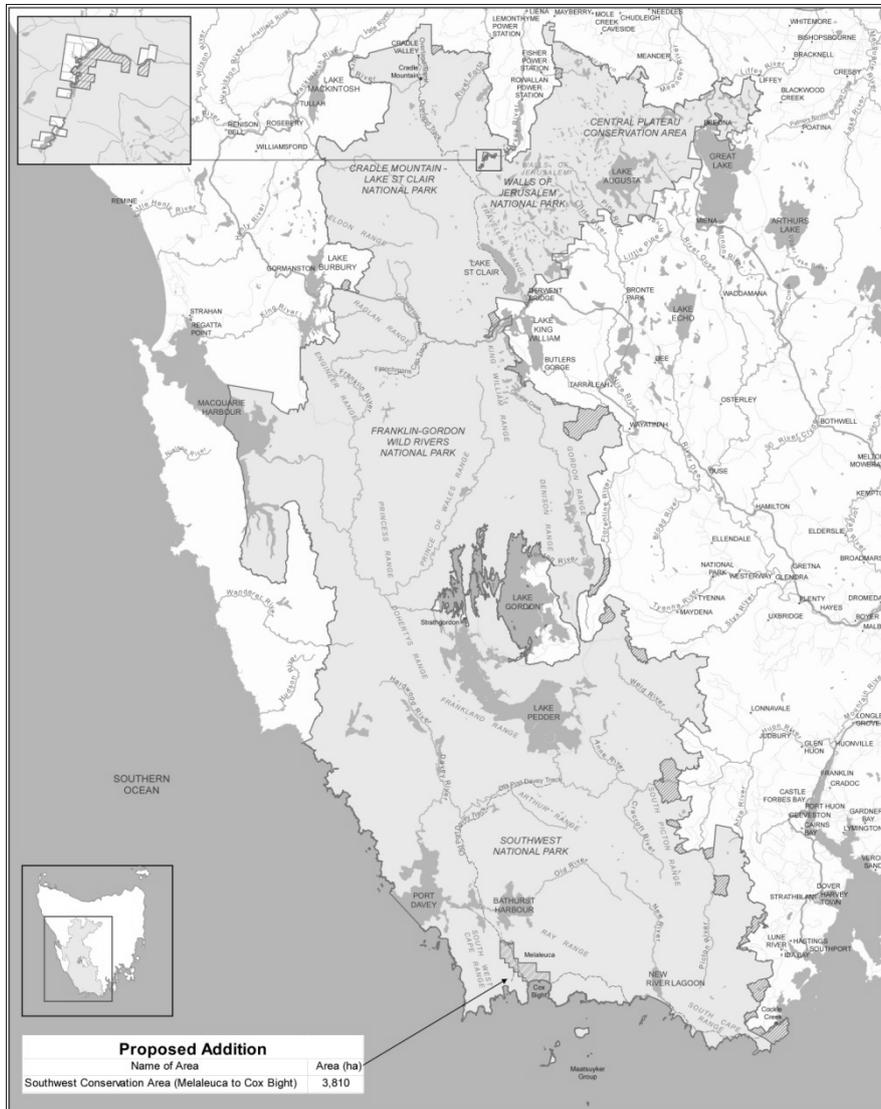
The area now proposed for addition to the property includes cultural sites which complement those already within the property. It includes coastal and other sites of importance to the Aboriginal community as well as the Needwonnee cultural walk, a joint project between the Aboriginal community and the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. This interpretative walk demonstrates how the Aboriginal community lived in and managed this area, which has importance as the landscape (at Cox Bight south of Melaleuca) that contains the creation story for Tasmanian Aborigines.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed addition is appropriate; supporting and contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

3 ICOMOS Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of Tasmanian Wilderness, Australia, be **approved**.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property