
Tasmanian Wilderness (Australia) No 181bis

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: 17 March 2010

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..

State of Conservation (SOC) reports of the property were presented to the World Heritage Committee in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995.

The State Party prepared a management plan for the property and it was presented to the World Heritage Committee as well as SOC reports in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2003.

During its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006), the World Heritage Committee (Decision 30COM 7B.32) requested, among others, the State Party to: "*submit a revised map of the World Heritage property, showing the areas of extended buffer zone and identifying other use zones directly adjacent to the boundary*".

A State of Conservation report was presented in January 2008.

A Reactive Monitoring Mission for Tasmanian Wilderness took place from 15 to 20 March 2008. It was made up of representatives from the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and ICOMOS. The mission report was reviewed at the 32nd session of the World Heritage Committee (Quebec City, 2008).

In its decision 32 COM 7B.41, the World Heritage Committee adopted the following recommendations:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-08/32.COM/7B.Add,*

2. *Recalling Decision 31 COM 7B.43, adopted at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007),*

3. *Takes note of the findings of the recent World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS / IUCN monitoring mission to the property, and requests the State Party to:*

a) *institute a mechanism through the future Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) management plan reviews, and involving all relevant stakeholders, to monitor, assess and manage the ecological integrity of the TWWHA and adjoining reserves by considering activities related to forestry operations, road construction and regeneration fires in the areas adjacent to the property;*

b) *submit a proposal for modifying the boundaries of the TWWHA to include the adjacent 21 areas of national parks and state reserves, which are currently not a part of the inscribed World Heritage property but are covered by its management plan;*

c) *not to renew the existing leases for mineral exploration and exploitation within the property and immediately adjacent to it (such as in the Melaleuca Cox Bight area), after their expiry and to rehabilitate the areas concerned and to incorporate them into the World Heritage property. Further, no new mining licenses should be granted within the property or in the areas which are being recommended for addition;*

d) *maintain and improve the resourcing for the research, documentation, protection, monitoring and effective management for archaeological and Aboriginal cultural sites both those within the TWWHA and those in the adjacent forestry areas that reflect the wider context of Aboriginal land-use practices and are of potential Outstanding Universal Value;*

e) *manage the forestry areas outside the inscribed property in order to protect cultural sites of potential Outstanding Universal Value;*

f) ensure logging roads in areas adjacent to the TWWHA consider the ecological integrity, possible cultural sites and aesthetic values of the property, and reclaim roads no longer required;

g) prepare and implement a vegetation management plan covering the TWWHA and the adjoining forest reserves jointly by national parks and the forestry authorities, to address representativity of vegetation types and to reduce risks, particularly from fires and climate change;

h) implement the recommendations emanating from the recently completed 2008 review of the Tasmania Regional Forest Agreement;

i) establish an active programme for monitoring the impacts of climate change on the property and incorporate this programme into a risk-reduction strategy and action plan;

4. Also requests the State Party to revise the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the property to include relevant recent natural and cultural knowledge available regarding the site, for approval by the World Heritage Committee;

5. Reiterates its request to the State Party to consider, at its own discretion, extension of the property to include appropriate areas of tall eucalyptus forest, having regard to the advice of IUCN; and also further requests the State Party to consider, at its own discretion, extension of the property to include appropriate cultural sites reflecting the wider context of Aboriginal land-use practices, and the possibility of re-nominating the property as a cultural landscape;

6. Requests moreover the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2010, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property, including a revised Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and progress related to the above mentioned issues, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010.

Modification:

In February 2010, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre a report entitled: "State party report on the State of Conservation of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (Australia) in response to World Heritage committee Decision WHC 32COM 7B.41".

This report included a request for a minor boundary modification.

The State Party's proposal is to extend the boundaries of the TWWHA by an additional 23,873 hectares. The existing property extends to 1.38 million hectares, or 20% of the State of Tasmania. The proposed extension thus represents a small proportional increase to the property of 0.0172%.

The proposed additions are 21 small areas around the eastern and southern boundaries that are part of national parks or state reserves and the Southwest Conservation Area south of Melaleuca to Cox Bight. The State Party considers that the addition of these adjacent formal reserves will increase the representation of tall eucalypt forests and cultural sites of significance to the Aboriginal community in the property. The areas have been chosen to reflect their significant eucalyptus stands as recommended by IUCN.

No information has been provided by the State Party as to the inclusion within these areas of cultural attributes of Aboriginal importance, not have the boundaries been justified in relation to cultural attributes.

The State Party has provided information on additional resources that are to be made available for the identification and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage sources for the whole of the TWWHA and for Aboriginal capacity building.

The State Party has also endorsed the recommendations of the mission for enhanced protection measures for archaeological and Aboriginal sites within and adjacent to the TWWHA which they say are in line with Forestry Tasmania's Sustainability Charter. This includes measures to identify, protect and maintain Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage values in State forests and seek active consultation with the Aboriginal community to develop opportunities for collaborative management of Aboriginal sites and values.

The State Party report also gives reassurance that cultural sites adjacent to the property will be respected in the planning and management of forest harvesting operations, including logging roads.

The State Party has submitted a retrospective Statement of outstanding universal value for the Committee's consideration and this will be assessed by ICOMOS and IUCN.

Apart from the addition of the 21 adjacent formal reserves and the Southwest Conservation Area south of Melaleuca to Cox Bight, Australia restates that it does not propose to extend the boundary of the TWWHA further.

3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS considers that the proposed additions to the TWWHA property rationalise the boundary and are in line with the mission recommendations.

ICOMOS notes that the proposed modification to the boundary of the property includes only one significant Aboriginal site, Warragarra Cave (Mersey Block 1 or 2) and thus cannot be said to significantly improve coverage of Aboriginal sites.

ICOMOS is also aware that potentially significant sites lie outside the extended area and there thus seems to be some illogicality of the boundaries in relation to cultural sites. Pleistocene cave sites outside the boundaries, some of which are protected, should have been considered.

ICOMOS also considers that although a commitment has been given to increase resources for cultural heritage management the resources are small in relation to the size of the property and there is still a need to ensure that cultural heritage specialists are involved in the management of the property.

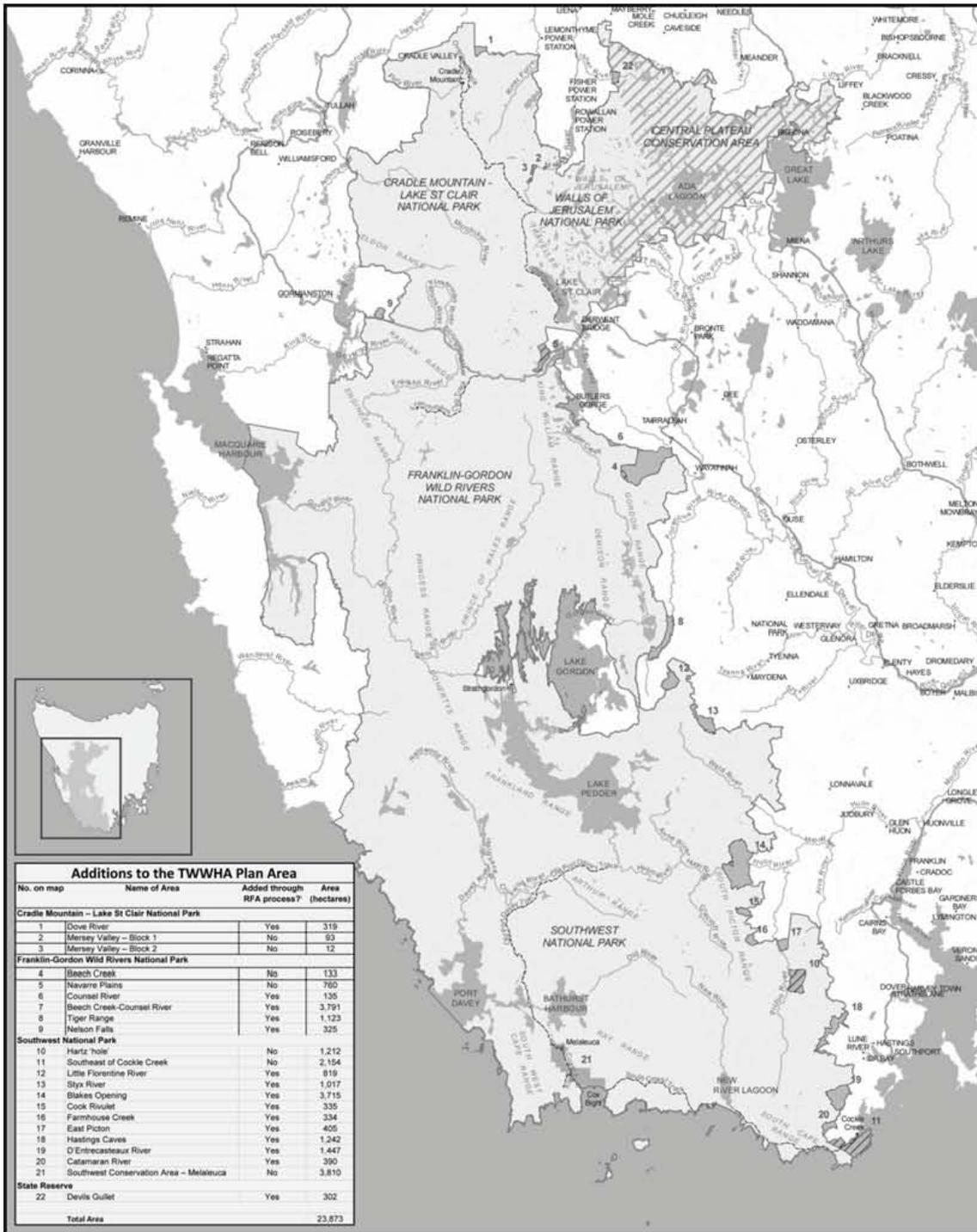
While ICOMOS is not against the extension of the property it considers that the proposal has been drafted from a natural perspective only. With a little more research and documentation and consideration of the disposition of cultural sites, ICOMOS considers that more satisfactory boundaries could have been drawn that would have respected both cultural and natural attributes and the mixed nature of the property.

Recommendation with respect to inscription

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

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party be requested to consider further minor modifications to the boundaries to allow for inclusion of appropriate cultural sites, related to and complementing those within the property, with appropriate protection being put in place.

ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party be requested to augment its staff with cultural heritage specialists in order to ensure the adequate protection and management of cultural sites both within the property and immediately outside the boundaries.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property