

ASIA / PACIFIC

TASMANIAN WILDERNESS

AUSTRALIA



WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

TASMANIAN WILDERNESS (AUSTRALIA) - ID N° 181 Bis

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Tasmanian Wilderness, Australia, is a mixed property. Initially inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1982, the property was subsequently extended in 1989 to its current extent of 1,383,640 ha. The Committee approved the extension and noted that there were some small enclaves of publicly-owned land with World Heritage values currently excluded from the nomination and expressed the hope that these could be added in the future.

In 2008, a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the property and noted that there are currently 21 formal reserves, mainly to the north and east of the property, which are adjacent to the property and covered by its management plan. It recommended that these areas be added to the property as a boundary modification. In decision 32 COM 7B.41, the Committee subsequently requested Australia, inter alia, to: "Submit a proposal for modifying the boundaries of the Tasmanian Wilderness 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."

2. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BOUNDARY MODIFICATION

In response to the Committee's request, Australia provided a proposal for modifying the boundaries of the Tasmanian Wilderness which adds a total of 23,873 ha. A map of the proposal is provided which, whilst of small scale shows clearly the areas to be added. The 21 areas include two small areas that were added to the Southwest National Park (south of Hartz Mountains [the 'Hartz hole'] and south-east of Cackle Creek) in June 1991. Another two small areas were included in the Franklin–Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, one in the vicinity of the Navarre Plains, the other in the Beech Creek area in January 1992 and August 1991 respectively. Two further small areas at Lees Paddocks in the Mersey Valley were added in 1991. In December 1998 the Regional Forest Agreement (Land Classification) Act 1998 received Royal Assent. On commencement of the Act a further 15 areas (one area of State Reserve and 14 National Park additions) were declared to be reserved land. All 21 areas are within the area covered by the Tasmanian Wilderness Management Plan 1999 and are managed in accordance with this plan.

Natural values of the Tasmanian Wilderness that are considered by the State Party to be expressed in these 21 areas include: temperate rainforests, alpine and subalpine flora and buttongrass moorland, habitat for threatened flora and fauna species, such as the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle, geological values, particularly karst landscapes, and aesthetic values.

The 2008 mission also visited the Southwest Conservation Area south of Melaleuca to Cox

Bight. The mission recommended that this area should be incorporated into the World Heritage property as soon as the existing leases expire and that renewal or granting of any new leases should not be considered. This recommendation was also adopted by the World Heritage Committee in Quebec City, in Decision 32COM 7B.41, as noted above. Australia considers it appropriate to resolve the existing mining lease (Rallinga 20M/1992) before the Southwest Conservation Area south of Melaleuca to Cox Bight is incorporated into the property.

3. IMPACT ON OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

IUCN has evaluated the impact of the proposed minor modification in relation to natural values. As Tasmanian Wilderness is a mixed property, an evaluation in relation to cultural values will be carried out by ICOMOS. IUCN notes that the areas proposed for inclusion in the Tasmanian Wilderness add to the integrity of the property and the representation of existing values. The proposal has been clearly requested by the World Heritage Committee. The areas are small reserves that are all adjacent to the western boundaries of the property. The changes are minor in relation to the overall size of the property and are appropriate for consideration as a minor boundary modification. The additions appear to rationalize slightly the boundary in some areas, by filling in some small gaps created by the current configuration of the boundary.

The 21 formal reserves outside the Tasmanian Wilderness but covered by the Tasmanian

Wilderness Management Plan (20,063 hectares) also are accommodated within the same protection and management regime as the inscribed property. They are covered by the same management plan as the existing property. IUCN notes that the existing property has been subject to a number of decisions related to its State of Conservation, which include concerns regarding the management of threats to the property from adjacent forestry areas. Management of these issues in the area surrounding the property should also therefore take account of these decisions, which are equally relevant to the modified boundary of the property.

IUCN considers that the State Party proposal related to the Conservation Area south of Melaleuca to Cox Bight is reasonable, and looks forward to this area being proposed for addition to the property when the mining leases have been resolved.

4. OTHER COMMENTS

IUCN notes that there are additional boundary issues regarding this property, which have been discussed in previous State of Conservation reports and related decisions. IUCN noted its position at the 32nd Session of the Committee that the current eastern boundary of the property is not ecologically based and represents a past compromise between different opinions and views. In the opinion of IUCN the boundary as currently established, whilst functional to date, is not ideal or consistent with current best practice for boundary demarcation for World Heritage properties.

IUCN has consistently noted that there are areas of Old Growth Eucalyptus Forest adjoining the existing World Heritage property which have potential as to be added to the property. The 2008 mission received new information on the values of these adjoining areas adjacent to the property in a detailed report from Environmental NGOs, which suggested the ecological diversity of the tall eucalypt ecosystem is incompletely represented in the World Heritage area, and, in particular, that only 29% of tall eucalypt forest is included within the property. It has also been suggested that the values outside the property are different and complementary to those of the tall eucalypt forest included in the property. Areas of high potential value as World Heritage have consistently been identified, including tall eucalypt forests in the Styx Valley and the Upper Florentine. In this context, IUCN considers the proposed extension involving the 21 new additions may not necessarily reflect the most important areas of tall eucalypt forest outside of the existing boundary of the property, and thus the potential for consideration of the addition of further areas remains. IUCN notes that this issue has been considered in previous decisions of the Committee and the matter is one for the continued

consideration of the State Party, considering the guidance that has been given by the Committee in decision 32COM 7B.41.

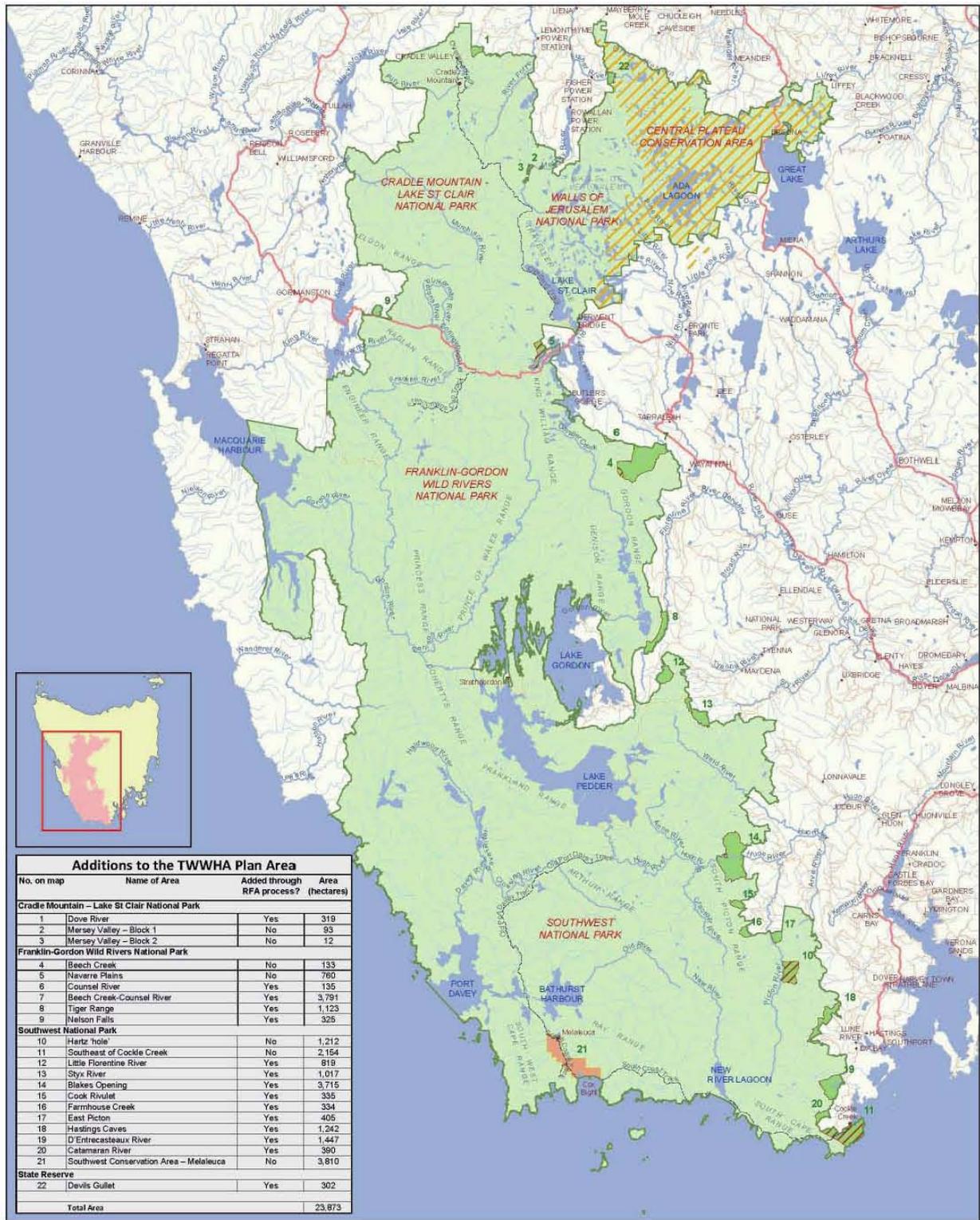
5. RECOMMENDATION

IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopt the following decision:

The World Heritage Committee,

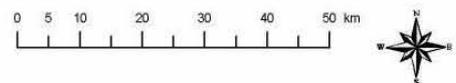
1. Having examined Documents **WHC-10/34.COM/8B** and **WHC-10/34.COM/INF 8B2**,
2. Approves the minor modification of the boundaries of the property **Tasmanian Wilderness, Australia**, in line with the proposals of the State Party, and as previously requested by the World Heritage Committee;
3. Welcomes 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;
4. Requests 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.

Map 1: Boundaries of the property and proposed modification



Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area - proposal for boundary modification

- World Heritage Area boundary (inc additions)
- World Heritage Area (land area)
- Central Plateau Conservation Area
- Formerly part of SWCA (Melaleuca to Cox Bight)
- Additional reserve areas inside the TWWHA plan area:
- Added through the RFA process
- Added through non RFA process
- Waterbodies
- Major rivers
- Minor rivers
- Principal Road
- Minor Road
- Walking Tracks



Map produced by:
 Australian Government Department of the Environment,
 Water, Heritage and the Arts (2010)
 Projection: WGS84 MGA Zone 55S Scale: 1:700,000
 Data:
 World Heritage Area; Protected Areas - Tasmanian Government
 Waterbodies, Waterways - Geodata Topo 250K, Geoscience Australia