



*Albert*

*tabled by  
Hon. L. Hiscutt MC  
6/9/19*

*PET 19/3/LC  
25-6-19*

Petition No:

<number> of 2019



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

### TITLE OF PETITION: Tasmanian World Heritage Area Listing

The petition of the undersigned Citizens of Tasmania draw to the attention of the House:

1. The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) covers approximately 1,584,000 hectares and represents about 24% of the area of the State of Tasmania.
2. A hectare is 10,000 square metres or 100 metres by 100 metres.
3. The TWWHA was first inscribed in 1982 as an area encompassing the vast majority of Tasmania's wilderness of 769,355 ha in size. To justify its inclusion on the World Heritage list the Tasmanian Government and Australian Heritage Commission stated this area contains 83% of Tasmania's wilderness area.
4. In 1989 an extension 261,960 ha was initially proposed to the area, which was extended to an approved addition of 604,645 ha, ie, a 78% increase.
5. In 2010 a further 20,096 ha was added, in 2012 an additional 3,823 ha and in 2013 a further 172,276 ha added as a 'minor' boundary extension.
6. Activists associated with the green political party are now demanding a further 495,000 hectare region in north western Tasmania be added to the TWWHA.
7. This would mean a total area of 2,079,000 ha or 31% of the State.

Your Petitioners request that the Legislative Council reject any Bill or any proposal to increase the size of the World Heritage Area and instead conduct an inquiry into the validity of calling the current or proposed area 'wilderness', when in 1981 environmental and heritage experts identified only 926,934 ha of the State as wilderness.

### GOVERNMENT POSITION:

The Tasmanian Wilderness' World Heritage Area (TWWHA) covers approximately 1,584,160 hectares and contains natural and cultural heritage of outstanding universal value. It is one of only two World Heritage properties to meet several of the listing criteria.

The TWWHA property was first inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1982. The 'Western Tasmania Wilderness National Parks' nomination (as the area was known then) covered the Southwest National Park, the Franklin-Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park and the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park; a total area of 769,355 hectares<sup>1</sup>. The justification for inclusion in the World Heritage List included

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<sup>1</sup> Tasmanian Government, Australian Heritage Commission (1981). Nomination of Western Tasmania Wilderness National Parks by the Commonwealth of Australia for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

descriptions of both cultural and natural heritage values of outstanding significance. The size, geology and climate of the area were identified as key factors in the maintenance of the wilderness of the property – the nomination contextualising the wilderness values within the property and identifying their relative value globally. At that time it was estimated that the three national parks included in the nomination encompassed 83% of Tasmania's wilderness area. The TWWHA, as it now stands, contains one of the Southern Hemisphere's largest temperate wilderness areas<sup>2</sup>.

The World Heritage Area has been expanded several times since 1982. An expansion occurred in 1989 and, more recently, 'minor' boundary modifications occurred in 2010, 2012 and 2013. The 1989 extension saw an additional area of 604,645 ha added to the site, consolidating and greatly enhancing the values listed, and their protection. The property name was also changed to 'Tasmanian Wilderness' World Heritage Area (or TWWHA). Boundary adjustments in 2010 included the extension of the TWWHA to cover parts of the then Southwest Conservation Area (20,096 ha).

The related World Heritage Committee recommendation included a request for further minor modifications to boundaries to allow for inclusion of high value cultural sites and further management of natural values. This resulted in the 2012 minor boundary modifications which added 3,823 ha to the property. The 2013 'minor' boundary modification saw the World Heritage Committee approve a minor boundary modification of 172,000 ha.

The impetus for the 2013 nomination was the *Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement 2013* (TFA)<sup>3</sup>. The TFA set out a progressive transition to a more sustainable and diversified forest industry within the State. The agreement included a commitment to achieve further protection (through the expansion of the National Reserve System and World Heritage listing) of native forest with high conservation values. During the development of the TFA, 572,000 ha of additional areas for protection that had been nominated by environmental non-government organisations were independently assessed for their suitability to contribute to the State's reserve system. Of that area, 172,000 ha were nominated for addition to the TWWHA by the Australian Government. The TFA included a commitment that the State legislatively protect areas of the reserves identified through the TFA process in appropriate land tenures; the dedication process for areas added to the TWWHA as a result of this extension is underway.

There are no current plans to propose any further extension or modification to the TWWHA boundary and none are under consideration by the Australian Government.

The importance of managing all values within the TWWHA has been acknowledged in the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan 2016* (TWWHA Plan). The property has been inextricably associated with the concept of wilderness values since its original inscription and this issue was a key consideration in the recent development of the TWWHA Plan by the Tasmanian Government. Within the TWWHA Plan, wilderness areas are defined as areas of sufficient size, remoteness and naturalness to enable

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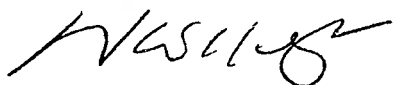
<sup>2</sup> *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 2016*

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.environment.gov.au/land/forests/intergovernmental-agreement>

the long-term integrity of natural systems, diversity and processes, the maintenance of cultural landscapes and the provision of a wilderness recreational experience. Environmental assessment processes delivered through the Parks and Wildlife Service's Reserve Activity Assessment system ensure the values of the TWWHA are appropriately considered prior to activities occurring within it. This framework of identification and management ensures the values of the TWWHA are maintained.

**In response to the Petitioners' specific requests:**

- There are no current extensions or modifications to the TWWHA boundary being prepared or planned by the Tasmanian Government, nor are any being considered by the Australian Government.
- The Government would not support an inquiry into "the validity of calling the current or proposed area 'wilderness'" as, during the development of the TWWHA Plan, there was extensive discussion in relation to the perceptions of wilderness values in the TWWHA and it was determined that technically, administratively, regulatory and legislatively, wilderness values apply across the entire TWWHA property.



Hon William Hodgman MP  
Minister for Parks

Date:

14 JUN 2019