



**Australian Government**

Australian Government response to the  
Senate Environment and Communications References  
Committee report:

Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

October 2014

## **Government response to the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee inquiry into the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area**

### **Introduction**

On 13 February 2014, the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Environment and Communications Committees for inquiry and report:

- a. the natural world heritage values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area minor boundary extension passed by the World Heritage Committee in June 2013;
- b. the interaction between the Department of the Environment and the Prime Minister and other ministers' offices, and the process followed in the department's review of the 2013 extension that led to a lesser minor boundary extension being submitted for consideration at the 2014 World Heritage Committee meeting;
- c. any action the Department of the Environment has funded, directed and overseen to rehabilitate any degraded areas within the World Heritage Area identified in the department's 2013 review, as per the requirements of the World Heritage Convention;
- d. the extent and description of any areas of degraded forest included in the 2013 boundary adjustment and the World Heritage Committee's rationale for including them;
- e. implications for the World Heritage status of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area of the Government's request to withdraw the 74,000 hectares for logging; and
- f. any related matter.

On 15 May 2014 the Senate Inquiry tabled its report into the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area which included two recommendations.

The Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to respond to this report.

### **Responses**

#### Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Government's proposal to the World Heritage Committee to remove 74 000 hectares from the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area be withdrawn.

#### **Government response: Not agreed**

The Government did not withdraw its proposal to the World Heritage Committee for a minor boundary modification to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The Government presented its case for the proposed minor boundary modification to members of the World Heritage Committee. The proposal, if accepted, would have resulted in the removal of about 4.7 percent of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The area proposed to be removed was part of the 172,000 extension to the World Heritage Area made in 2013 and included areas (such as plantations and previously harvested areas) that detract from the overall integrity and Outstanding Universal Value of the Tasmanian Wilderness.

The Government was concerned that the World Heritage Committee was not fully aware of the number of communities and landholders adjoining the 2013 extended boundary that did not support the extension and were not given the opportunity to comment.

Given that the Government made an election commitment to request the minor boundary modification, it was not prepared to withdraw the proposal.

On 23 June 2014 the World Heritage Committee did not approve the Government's proposal for a minor boundary modification to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

The Government has accepted the decision of the World Heritage Committee.

### Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the study of the cultural heritage values of the extended Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area be commenced and completed in collaboration with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and submitted to the World Heritage Committee by February 2015.

### **Government response: Agreed in part**

In its next report to the World Heritage Committee (January 2015), the Government will report on its progress in responding to the Committee's request that the State Party undertake further study and consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community in order to provide more detailed information on cultural values and how these relate to the property's Outstanding Universal Value. That report will address any future work needed in relation to this request.

