



Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area— Frequently asked questions

This fact sheet provides private landholders whose properties are part of, adjoin or are near to, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area information about what this means for them.

What has happened so far?

The Tasmanian Wilderness was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1982 and extended in 1989, June 2010, June 2012, and again in June 2013.

Following a review of the 2013 extension to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, the Australian Government requested that UNESCO's World Heritage Committee approve a minor boundary modification to remove some 72,000 hectares from the property.

The World Heritage Committee did not support the request at its meeting in June 2014. As a signatory to the World Heritage Convention, Australia has accepted the decision of the World Heritage Committee. Therefore, the boundary of the Tasmanian Wilderness approved in 2013 remains in place and is protected under national environment law.

What is national environmental law?

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is the Australian Government's primary piece of environmental legislation.

It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places—defined in the EPBC Act as 'matters of national environmental significance'. World Heritage values are a 'matter of national environmental significance'.

What does this mean for me?

Proposed actions

As a private landowner within, adjoining, or near to, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area you are unlikely to be impacted as a result of the changes to the boundary. However, you should be aware that the EPBC Act regulates actions occurring within or outside a declared World Heritage property that are likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a World Heritage property. Information about the values of the property may be obtained by following the web link at the end of this fact sheet.

An action that is likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a declared World Heritage property is subject to environmental assessment and approval under the EPBC Act.

The normal activities of individual landholders and residents typically will not be affected by the boundary change. Routine property maintenance, land management and other established practices are unlikely to have a significant impact and may not require referral under national environment law. For instance, the following actions are very unlikely to require assessment under the EPBC Act:

- ongoing grazing, dairy, horticultural or cropping activities, including continuing approved irrigation activities or installing new irrigation technology
- maintaining existing fences, roads, internal access tracks and firebreaks

- maintaining existing farm dams, water storages, pumps and drainage lines
- replacing and maintaining sheds, yards and other farm buildings
- controlling weeds and spraying for pests on individual properties or roadside verges
- management and harvesting of private timber reserves.

Management requirements

Australia has obligations under the World Heritage Convention to ensure effective protection of World Heritage properties for present and future generations. The Australian Government will use its best endeavours to work with property managers within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area to ensure that plans for managing World Heritage Properties are not inconsistent with the World Heritage Convention.

The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention includes guidance on developing a management system for World Heritage properties (refer Section II.F Protection and Management—<http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>).

The EPBC Regulations (Schedule 5) provide assistance to private land holders who wish to develop management plans for World Heritage properties and National Heritage places.

Conservation covenants on private land within the property may be a useful tool for the protection and management of your property. More information on conservation covenants is available at <http://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/conservation/conservation-on-private-land/private-land-conservation-program>.

The management plan for the Tasmanian Wilderness is available at <http://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/conservation/tasmanian-wilderness-world-heritage-area/new-tasmanian-wilderness-world-heritage-area-management-plan>.

What is an action?

An ‘action’ is defined broadly in the EPBC Act and includes: a project, a development, an undertaking, an activity or a series of activities, or an alteration of any of these things.

Actions include, but are not limited to: construction, expansion, alteration or demolition of buildings, structures, infrastructure or facilities; industrial processes; mineral and petroleum resource exploration and extraction; storage or transport of hazardous materials; waste disposal; earthworks; impoundment, extraction and diversion of water; agricultural activities; aquaculture; research activities; vegetation clearance; and culling of animals¹.

What about a significant impact on the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area?

An action is likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a declared World Heritage property if there is a real chance or possibility that it will cause:

- one or more of the World Heritage values to be lost
- one or more of the World Heritage values to be degraded or damaged, or
- one or more of the World Heritage values to be notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished.

What do I do if I think my action will be significant?

If you believe your action is likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage Area you should refer the action to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy. You can refer an action or contact the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy for advice by emailing epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au or calling 1800 803 772.

Where you have limited information available on which to make an assessment of the impacts of a particular action, the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy recommends referring the action on a precautionary basis so potential issues can be addressed if necessary through the EPBC Act referral process.

¹ Significant impact guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance

What are the values of the extended Tasmanian Wilderness Area?

The values² of the extended areas adjacent to landholders are outlined below.

Dove River

The vegetation of the Dove River changes from dense rainforest in steep valleys, to eucalypt forests on the slopes, to sparsely vegetated landscapes high above the tree line. The remote environments of Dove River also contain habitat for threatened species of conservation and scientific value such as the Tasmanian devil and spotted-tailed quoll.

Upper Mersey

The forested areas of Upper Mersey have important aesthetic and wilderness values. The geology of the Walls of Jerusalem and the Central Plateau show how the landscape has evolved over millions of years. Some examples of tall *Eucalyptus delegatensis* forest (over 41 metres high) are scattered throughout eucalypt forest and rainforests with smaller trees.

Mole Creek Karst

The majority of the Mole Creek cave system is vegetated with tall *Eucalyptus delegatensis* forests and contains some of Australia's most spectacular caves. It includes the magnificent Kubla Khan and Croesus Caves that are rich in rare species that are local to the area and show how species have evolved over time.

Great Western Tiers

The forested slopes of the northern section of the Great Western Tiers have high scenic values. The escarpment was formed when large sheets of ice moved slowly across the environment, creating the distinctive glaciated alpine dolerite terrain of central Tasmania. Extensive sandstone caves and shelters are present.

Upper Derwent

Upper Derwent has important areas of forest including old-growth tall eucalypt forest with very high aesthetic qualities. The button grass moorland community provides habitat for species such as burrowing crayfish. This area also provides critical evidence of where and when glacial deposits occurred in the upper Derwent Valley.

Mt Field

Mt Field contains areas of tall eucalypt forest, glacial and karst landforms, alpine environments, tall trees, a complex and extensive system of limestone caves and species that have existed in the area for a very long time. Mount Field has a diverse range of habitats supporting a wide range of rare plants and animals, such as the mountain shrimp, the Tasmanian redspot and the Tasmanian spotwing.

What exemptions are there?

Certain actions are exempt from the requirement for assessment and approval under the EPBC Act. These include lawful continuations of a use of land that started before 16 July 2000 and actions that were legally authorised before 16 July 2000.

Where can I find more information?

Information on the Tasmanian Wilderness is available on the Departments website at www.environment.gov.au/node/19816 and the Tasmanian Governments website at www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspX?base=391

Guidance on developing management plans is available in Schedule 5 of *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000* at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2000B00190>.

General guidance on whether an activity is likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance is available at www.environment.gov.au/resource/significant-impact-guidelines-11-matters-national-environmental-significance

Information on the values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is available at www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/tasmanian-wilderness/values

Information on exemptions under the EPBC Act is available at www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/exemptions.html



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² The Tasmanian Wilderness has natural and cultural heritage values. The identification of cultural values requires further evaluation in consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.