



Australian Government

STATE PARTY REPORT

ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION

OF THE

TASMANIAN WILDERNESS WORLD HERITAGE AREA

(AUSTRALIA)

PROPERTY ID 181bis

IN RESPONSE TO

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

DECISIONS WHC 34 COM 7B.38 and WHC 34 COM 8B.46

FOR SUBMISSION BY

1 FEBRUARY 2012

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WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE DECISIONS

Thirty-fourth Session – Brasilia, Brazil – July 2010 Tasmanian Wilderness (Australia) (C/N 181) –

Decision: 34 COM 7B.38

The World Heritage Committee;

1. Having examined Document WHC-10/34.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision 32 COM 7B.41, adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),
3. Recognizes the efforts made by the State Party to address the actions requested in Decision 32 COM 7B.41;
4. Welcomes the submission of a draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the property;
5. Thanks the State Party for proposing a minor modification to include 21 formal reserves within the property that are already covered by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan, also welcomes its commitment to add the Melaleuca–Cox Bight area to the property once mining licences have expired, and also recalls its request regarding the potential for further additional areas to be considered at the discretion of the State Party for eventual addition to the property;
6. Notes the potential for impact on the integrity of the existing World Heritage property from adjoining forestry operations, and requests the State Party to maintain rigorous assessment and management systems to ensure that no such impacts arise;
7. Also requests the State Party to finalize as soon as possible the creation of a mechanism involving all relevant stakeholders, to monitor, assess and manage the impact of forestry operations, road construction and regeneration on the integrity of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, and adjoining reserves, as previously requested by the Committee;
8. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2012, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property, especially on the outcomes of the monitoring arrangements focusing specifically on the impact of the logging operations and road construction on the Outstanding Universal Value of the existing property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012.

Decision: 34 COM 8B.46

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-10/34.COM/8B, WHC-10/34.COM/INF.8B1.Add 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 licences 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;
5. Recommends that the State Party 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, and considering the past decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the boundaries of the property in relation the natural and cultural values;
6. Also recommends that the State Party 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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Progress Report on the State of Conservation of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (the World Heritage property):

- responds to World Heritage Committee Decisions 34 COM 7B.38 and 34.COM -8B made in Brasilia (2010);
- provides an update to the 2007, 2008 and 2010 State of Conservation reports prepared in response to previous World Heritage Committee Decisions 30 COM 7B.32, 31 COM 7B.43 and 32 COM 7B.41 (the full text of these decisions is in Appendix 4.1).

Ensure protection and management of the Tasmanian Wilderness property within its revised boundaries

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments are committed to protecting the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area within its modified boundaries.

The adjacent 21 areas of national park and state reserve are now incorporated in the World Heritage Area (see map at Appendix 4.2) and are covered by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan.

National environmental law protects the values of the World Heritage property from threats originating both inside and outside its revised boundaries.

The Australian Government continues to provide significant financial support for the management of the World Heritage property. The Tasmanian Government is committed to at least matching this level of baseline funding.

Mineral exploration, exploitation and rehabilitation

Australia agrees that mining is not appropriate in the World Heritage property. The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have worked closely together to ensure an end to mineral exploration licensing in the Adamsfield Conservation Area within the World Heritage property.

Australia has committed \$A500,000 from the Caring for our Country (2010–2012) initiative to assist the Tasmanian Government to implement the World Heritage Committee decisions related to the cessation of mining.

Australia is pleased to report that mining issues have been resolved. The remaining leases have now been relinquished voluntarily and lessees appropriately compensated by the Tasmanian Government.

In response to the committee's Decision 34 COM 8B.46, paragraph 3, Australia is pleased to request minor modification of the boundaries of the Tasmanian Wilderness property to add the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight), an area of 3,810 hectares, to the World Heritage Area. This will complete the proposal for extension put forward in 2010. A map of the World Heritage property showing the proposed addition is provided at Appendix 4.2

Management of forestry in adjacent areas

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have entered into a new process to further protect Tasmania's public native forests while also ensuring a sustainable forestry industry.

The Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP, and the Tasmanian Premier, the Hon Lara Giddings MP, signed the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement on 7 August 2011. This delivers on the governments' commitment to provide certainty for Tasmania's forestry industry, for local jobs and communities, and further protection for the state's ancient forests.

Under the terms of the agreement, significant iconic areas adjacent to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area will be given interim protection from logging activities, including the Upper Florentine, and areas within the Styx, Huon, Picton and Counsel River Valleys, while an independent verification process to assess the values of these areas and available timber reserves is undertaken. Following conclusion of this verification process, the Tasmanian Government will provide legislative protection for those areas identified as being of high conservation value and compatible with wood supply guarantees to the forestry industry. This protection will be provided by the Tasmanian Government through appropriate forms of land tenure, and may include possible nomination of appropriate areas for inclusion in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

The Australian Government remains committed to the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement as an appropriate intergovernmental mechanism for conservation and sustainable management of Tasmania's public native forests. The Australian Government is also committed to working with the Tasmanian Government to improve the review, audit and monitoring arrangements for Regional Forest Agreements, including their timely completion, and to provide a clearer assessment of performance against environmental and forestry outcomes.

In the public native forests within the Regional Forest Agreement area that continue to be harvested and regenerated, Forestry Tasmania has a rigorous forest management system in place to ensure that there are no adverse impacts from forestry operations on outstanding universal value. Potential impacts on the ecological integrity and aesthetic values of the Tasmanian Wilderness property, as well as possible cultural sites and biodiversity values in adjacent areas, are taken into account through the application of the Tasmanian Forest Practices Code.

Stakeholder involvement and monitoring integrity of the World Heritage property

Issues related to the integrity of the World Heritage Area are currently reported through the *State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area* report. Integrity is also an element of the broader Parks and Wildlife Service Monitoring and Reporting System for Tasmania's national parks and reserves.

A second *State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area* report is planned which can take into account integrity issues both inside and outside the boundary. This will be done in consultation with all relevant agencies and is intended to feed into the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan review, which will be undertaken from March 2015. This timing will allow for finalisation of the implementation of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement. This mechanism will involve all stakeholders (including the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Consultative Committee).

Regional Forest Agreements are the primary intergovernmental mechanism for ensuring sustainable management of Australia's public forests and they cover economic, social and environmental values. As discussed above, the Tasmanian Regional Forests Agreement has a clause requiring five-yearly reviews that include public consultation.

The Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement responds to the community driven Statement of Principles process through which industry, community and union groups came together to seek a solution to end decades of conflict over native forestry in Tasmania. The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have agreed to help the forest industry to adapt to market changes, and protect the communities and families that rely on the sector to survive, while also protecting high conservation value forests – including in areas adjacent to the World Heritage property.

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have commenced implementation of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement, including providing assistance to displaced workers, establishing an independent verification process to assess timber supply requirements and the boundaries of proposed new conservation reserves, and retiring native forests contracts. As part of this process, an Independent Verification Group will consult with peak bodies, other representative organisations and the signatories to the Statement of Principles.

Resourcing for Aboriginal cultural heritage inside and outside the property

Australia continues to provide resources for Aboriginal cultural heritage within and around the property despite an overall climate of fiscal restraint.

The level of baseline funding directed to management of Aboriginal cultural values has been maintained and additional special project funds have been provided, for the completion of the Melaleuca Aboriginal Walk which interprets and celebrates the culture of the Needwonnee people and other people who have lived in the area, and for monitoring World Heritage cave art within the property.

1. RESPONSE FROM THE STATE PARTY TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS

This document includes the progress report requested in paragraph 8 of the World Heritage Committee's Decision 34 COM 7B.38.

The progress report responds to the World Heritage Committee Decisions 34 COM 7B.38 and 34 COM 8B.46. It provides an update on State of Conservation reports prepared in 2007, 2008 and 2010.

The updated report is provided for examination by the committee at its 36th session in 2012.

1.1. Decision 34 COM 8B.46 paragraph 4 Implement new boundaries and ensure protection and management takes into account past decisions of the World Heritage Committee

Decision 34 COM 8B.46: paragraph 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 conservation of existing property, including the management of threats in the areas adjoining its boundaries.

Noting that the World Heritage Committee's decision number 34 Com 8B.46 paragraph 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";

State Party's response

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments are committed to protecting the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area within its modified boundaries.

The adjacent 21 areas of national park and state reserve are now incorporated in the World Heritage Area (see map at Appendix 4.2) and are covered by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan.

National environmental law protects the values of the World Heritage property from threats originating both inside and outside its modified boundaries.

The Australian Government continues to provide significant financial support for the management of the World Heritage property. The Tasmanian Government is committed to at least matching this level of baseline funding.

Implementing the new boundaries

The minor modification of the boundaries of the property put forward in the last State of Conservation report, previously requested by the World Heritage Committee and now approved in World Heritage Committee Decision 34 COM 8B.46 paragraph 2, has been implemented. The adjacent 21 areas of national park and state reserve are now incorporated in the World Heritage Area (see map at Appendix 4.2)

As part of the current limited review and update of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999 (<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=702>), the management plan maps and text have been updated to show the 21 areas as being included within the World Heritage property. It is planned to complete the limited review and update in the near future and to publish the updated plan in the 2011/12 financial year. The next full review of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan is scheduled to commence in 2015. In terms of management objectives and prescriptions for the 21 areas, these did not require change as the areas were already covered under the 1999 management plan.

National environmental law protects the values of the World Heritage property from threats originating both inside and outside its modified boundaries.

The addition of the 21 adjacent formal reserves increases the representation of tall eucalypt forests and cultural sites of significance to the Aboriginal community within the property. At the request of the World Heritage Committee, Australia prepared a revised Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the property to include relevant recent natural and cultural knowledge regarding the site. This revised Statement was included, for the committee's consideration, in the State Party State of Conservation report of 1 February 2010. The values of the 21 formal reserves have been reflected in this document. A map of the revised boundary, showing the new additions is shown at Appendix 4.2.

Ensure protection and management that takes account of past decisions of the World Heritage Committee

The Australian Government continues to work with the Tasmanian Government to ensure protection of the values of the World Heritage property; including working towards implementation of the World Heritage Committee's requests. Australia has reviewed all past committee decisions. Where there is a direct link to the most recent decisions these past decisions are referenced throughout this report in footnotes and have been considered when preparing the response.

The State Party's strategy for management of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area may be found in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999 (<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=6158>). This management plan documents the management arrangements that are in place for the state managed World Heritage Area; and has been agreed between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments.

A full review of the management plan will be conducted in 2015. This will be a thorough review involving extensive community consultation. The review process will consider the adjoining area; including consideration of the issues raised in past decisions of the World Heritage Committee such as the management of threats in the areas adjoining the property's boundaries (e.g. logging roads and logging activities, possible damage to cultural sites or sensitive vegetation, threats to rare and endangered species, potential for fires to escape into the property etc).

Note also that a significant new process (the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement) has implications for management of forestry in state forest adjacent to the property (refer to sections 1.3 and 1.4 for more detail).

The Australian Government continues to provide significant financial support for the management of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Baseline funding of \$A3.4 million per annum continues to be provided from the Caring for our Country initiative for management of the World Heritage property. The Tasmanian Government is committed to at least matching this level of funding.

Additionally, the Australian Government has committed to a multi-year Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area biosecurity program and coastal weed program. These programs will deliver \$A681,615 of Australian Government funding over a three-year period with additional support from the Tasmanian Government.

The two year biosecurity program involves the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service and all surrounding land managers (including Forestry Tasmania and Hydro Tasmania) in improving and monitoring the biosecurity of the World Heritage property.

The program aims to minimise the spread of diseases and pests into the property including Chytrid (a disease that kills frogs) and plant dieback (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) amongst others.

The program takes an integrated approach that involves: establishing personal and vehicle washdown stations; training staff in biosecurity procedures; and an active public education campaign. It also incorporates extensive monitoring. Australian Government funds allocated for 2010–11 are \$A309,982.

The coastal weed program is a three year program aimed at eradicating ecosystem transforming weeds from Tasmania's Wilderness Coastline. This project has total Australian Government funding of \$A80,000 with \$A14,000 allocated in 2010/11. Similar levels of funding are being provided by the Tasmanian Government. The project is managed by Wildcare Incorporated and delivered through a volunteer group – Sea Spurge Remote Area Teams (SPRATS).

Additionally, approximately \$A40,000 from the Cradle Coast Authority Regional Base level funding in 2011–2012 to 2012–2013 is allocated for the eradication of sea spurge, marram grass and other weeds of national significance in the West Coast Council area in the vicinity of the World Heritage property.

These programs aim to eradicate sea spurge and marram grass from the entire wilderness coastline. These weeds have the potential to transform all sandy and boulder coastal systems in the World Heritage property. Millions of weed plants have been destroyed by volunteers in very remote locations under these very successful programs.

In 2011–12 additional funding of \$A500,000 has been provided from the Caring for our Country initiative: to support implementation of the World Heritage Committee's requests on mining; and to undertake other activities to prepare the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca to Cox Bight) for addition to the World Heritage property (refer to section 1.2 for more detail).

Refer to section 1.6 for details of funding provided for cultural resource management and to section 3.2 for progress on the special works that were reported in the 2010 State of Conservation report that were funded under the Australian Government Jobs Fund Stimulus package (totalling \$A1,692,500).

The risks of climate change to the values of the Tasmanian Wilderness property continue to be identified and assessed. This information is incorporated into an active monitoring program and risk management strategy for the property.

As part of this focus on climate change, a report on potential climate change impacts on geodiversity in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, has now been completed (Sharples, 2011). *Potential climate change impacts on geodiversity in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area: A management response position paper*. RMC, DPIPW, Hobart. Nature Conservation Report Series 11/02).

1.2. Decision 34 COM 7B.38 paragraph 5 and Decision 34 COM 8B.46 Paragraph 3 Resolve mining and exploration licences and consider inclusion of Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight) into property

Decision 34 COM 7B.38: paragraph 5: Thanks the State Party for proposing a minor modification to include 21 formal reserves within the property that are already covered by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan, also welcomes its commitment to add the Melaleuca–Cox Bight area to the property once mining licences have expired, and also recalls its request regarding the potential for further additional areas to be considered at the discretion of the State Party for eventual addition to the property;

Decision 34 COM 8B.46 paragraph 3¹: Welcomes the intention of the State Party to add the Southwest Conservation Area south of Melaleuca to Cox Bight to the property when mining licences have expired;

State Party's response

Australia agrees that mining is not appropriate in the World Heritage property. The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have worked closely together to ensure an end to mineral exploration licensing in the Adamsfield Conservation Area within the World Heritage property.

Australia has committed \$500,000 from the Caring for our Country (2010–2012) initiative to assist the Tasmanian Government to implement these World Heritage Committee Decisions.

Australia is pleased to report that mining issues have been resolved. The remaining leases have now been relinquished voluntarily and lessees appropriately compensated by the Tasmanian Government.

In response to the committee's request Decision 34 COM 8B.46, paragraph 3, Australia is pleased to request a minor modification of the boundaries of the Tasmanian Wilderness property to add the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight), an area of 3,810 hectares to the World Heritage Area. This will complete the proposal for extension put forward in 2010. A map of the World Heritage property showing the proposed addition is provided at Appendix 4.2

¹ Note the previous related WHC Decision 32 COM 7B.41 (3c) requested the State Party 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's Bight area), after their expiry and to rehabilitate the areas concerned and to add these to the World Heritage property. Further, no new mining licences should be granted within the property or in the areas which are being recommended for addition.

Cessation of mining

Australia agrees with the World Heritage Committee that mining is not appropriate in World Heritage Areas.

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have worked closely together to ensure the surrender of the exploration licence at Adamsfield. This was the last remaining area within the World Heritage property where mineral exploration was permitted under the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area management plan.

Exploration licence EL11/2006 held by Shree Pty Ltd (ABN 88 067 699 674) under the Tasmanian *Mineral Resources Development Act 1995*, over part of Adamsfield Conservation Area, expired on 13 June 2011, was not renewed, and was surrendered by Shree Pty Ltd. Appropriate compensation has been paid to Shree Pty Ltd.

In the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) refer to the map provided at Appendix 4.2, which was proposed in 2010 for addition to the World Heritage property pending an end to mining, Australia is pleased to report that the remaining small scale mining lease has also been surrendered.

Mining Lease 20M/1992 held by Rallinga Mine Pty Ltd (ACN 009 533 742) under the Tasmanian *Mineral Resources Development Act 1995*, within that part of the Southwest Conservation Area known as the Melaleuca–Cox Bight section – see map 4.2, was surrendered on 18 July 2011 and appropriate compensation has been paid to Rallinga Mine Pty Ltd.

Planning for rehabilitation of former mining sites in the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) has commenced.

The Australian Government provided funding of \$A500,000 from the Caring for our Country (2010–12) initiative to assist the Tasmanian Government to implement these World Heritage decisions; including to ensure that mechanisms are put in place that will prohibit mining and mineral exploration in these areas in perpetuity; and to prepare the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) for addition to the World Heritage property.

Following the extinguishment of these mining rights, Tasmania has also introduced administrative processes to ensure that land within the Adamsfield Conservation Area and the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) is not included in any future mineral tenement applications. Arrangements are being made to have these areas excluded from the operation of the Tasmanian *Mineral Resources Development Act 1995* which will formally preclude Tasmania from being able to issue any further mineral licences in these two areas.

It is also proposed that the tenure of Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) is to change from Southwest Conservation Area (which allows for mining), to Southwest National Park (which does not allow mining). Initial steps have been taken to achieve this legislative change and it is proposed the change will be completed by 30 September 2012.

Preparation of the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) for World Heritage status

In addition to the planned tenure change from Conservation Area to National Park, discussions regarding preliminary site and rehabilitation planning for the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) have been undertaken with key stakeholders. An initial historic heritage assessment has been undertaken. A preliminary contaminated site assessment has also been undertaken and follow-up mapping and sampling of hydrocarbon contamination areas is planned.

A detailed site and rehabilitation plan focusing on Melaleuca and the ex mining sites is in preparation. This will bring together the results of the historic heritage, contamination and rehabilitation assessments and set guidelines in relation to rehabilitation works, cultural heritage management and visitor access to the Melaleuca area within the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section). The plan will cover the whole visitor services area with a particular focus on appropriate remediation of the former mining sites.

In addition, a Management Statement for the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) which takes account of world heritage values is currently under development. This will provide protection and management direction until the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) is included in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan in the 2015 review of the plan. Both the site/rehabilitation plan and the Management Statement are scheduled to be completed before 30 June 2012. Appropriate rehabilitation of the mining area will follow.

Request for minor modification of the boundary

Given the intent of both Governments, the progress so far, and the commitments for future management, Australia is pleased to request a minor modification of the boundaries of the Tasmanian Wilderness property to add the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section), an area of 3,810 hectares to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, as shown in the map in Appendix 4.2.

1.3. Decision 34 COM 8B.46 paragraph 5 and Decision 34 COM 7B.38 paragraph 5 Consider further extension, at State Party discretion

Decision 34 COM 7B.38: paragraph 5: Thanks the State Party for proposing a minor modification to include 21 formal reserves within the property that are already covered by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan, also welcomes its commitment to add the Melaleuca–Cox Bight area to the property once mining licences have expired, and also recalls its request regarding the potential for further additional areas to be considered at the discretion of the State Party for eventual addition to the property.

Decision 34 COM 8B.46 paragraph 5²: Recommends that the State Party 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, and considering the past decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the boundaries of the property in relation to the natural and cultural values;

State Party's response

As stated in Section 1.2, Australia is pleased to request minor modification of the boundaries of the Tasmanian Wilderness property to add the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section), an area of 3,810 to the World Heritage Area. This will complete the proposal for extension put forward in 2010. A map of the proposal is provided at Appendix 4.2.

This area includes cultural sites which complement those already within the property. It includes coastal and other sites of importance to the Aboriginal community as well as the Needwonnee cultural walk, a joint project between the Aboriginal community and the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. This walk demonstrates how the Aboriginal community lived in and managed this area.

As noted in section 1.2 of this report, the tenure of this area will be changed from Conservation Area to National Park, this combined with the protection provided under national environment law and Tasmanian legislation that applies for World Heritage areas will ensure adequate protection and management when this area is added to the World Heritage property.

2 Reiterates a number of previous, similar, requests to consider eventual additions at the discretion of the State Party: 32 COM 7B.41 para 5 and 31 COM 7B.43 para 4 (which urged the State Party to consider including critical old growth forest to the east and north of the property).

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have entered into a new process to further protect high conservation value areas of Tasmania's public native forests for future generations. The Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP, and the Tasmanian Premier, the Hon Lara Giddings MP, signed the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement on 7 August 2011.

Under the terms of the Agreement, significant iconic areas adjacent to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area will be given interim protection from logging activities, including the Upper Florentine, and areas within the Styx, Huon, Picton and Counsel River Valleys, while an independent verification process to assess the values of these areas and available timber reserves is undertaken (refer to map in Appendix 4.3).

An Independent Verification Group will provide advice to Governments about conservation values, areas and boundaries of potential reserves from within 572,000 hectares of nominated native forest. The nominated areas include those identified by environment groups as having critical old growth forest contiguous with and providing connectivity to the World Heritage property.

Under the terms of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement the state will ensure legislative protection of those areas determined by the independent verification process as having high conservation value and compatible with guaranteed timber supply. This protection will be provided by the Tasmanian Government through appropriate forms of land tenure, and may include possible nomination of appropriate areas for inclusion in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (further information on the Intergovernmental Agreement is included in sections 1.4 and 1.5).

The proposed addition

Inclusion of the Southwest Conservation Area (Melaleuca–Cox Bight section) within the World Heritage property will protect additional coastal and inland sites of importance to the Aboriginal community. As well as its value to the Aboriginal community, this section includes threatened species such as the nationally listed critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot, geoheritage values (Cox Bight dunes, bogs and peat mounds), wilderness values and aesthetic values. Melaleuca has the last known breeding population in the wild for the Orange-bellied Parrot.

These values complement those of the existing World Heritage property and have been considered in the preparation of the draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the property that was provided with the 2010 State of Conservation report.

Further information regarding the values in the area, including its Aboriginal cultural values will be considered as the management statement for the area is produced (see section 1.2 above).

Within this area is the recently completed Needwonnee cultural walk allowing presentation of cultural values. This joint project was undertaken in partnership by the Aboriginal community and the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. The 1.2 km walk is within the homelands of the Needwonnee people who inhabited the area from Port Davey to New River Lagoon. The interpretation produced by the Aboriginal community is ephemeral and shows what a campsite, a traditional bark canoe and other aspects of Aboriginal life would have been like. The project allowed the community to practise their skills and traditions, and will allow them to renew these into the future. The area has importance as the landscape (at Cox Bight south of Melaleuca) that contains the creation story for Tasmanian Aborigines. This is an important project and partnership for both the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service and the Aboriginal community. The Australian Government provided funding assistance under the Jobs Fund Stimulus package (refer to section 3.2).

1.4. Decision 34 COM 7B.38 paragraph 6

Maintain rigorous assessment and management systems to ensure no impacts on the property arise from adjoining forestry operations.

Decision 34 COM 7B.38: paragraph 6: Notes the potential for impact on the integrity of the existing World Heritage property from adjoining forestry operations, and requests the State Party to maintain rigorous assessment and management systems to ensure that no such impacts arise;

State Party's response

As mentioned in section 1.3 above, the Australian and Tasmanian Governments have entered into a new process to further protect high conservation value areas of Tasmania's public native forests for future generations. The Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP, and the Tasmanian Premier, the Hon Lara Giddings MP, signed the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement on 7 August 2011.

Under the terms of the agreement, significant iconic areas adjacent to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area will be given interim protection from logging activities, including the Upper Florentine and areas within the Styx, Huon, Picton and Counsel River Valleys, while an independent verification process to assess the values of these areas and available timber reserves is undertaken (further information on the Intergovernmental Agreement is included in section 1.5).

The Australian Government remains committed to the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement as an appropriate intergovernmental mechanism for effective environmental protection, forest management and forest industry practices. The process for extending the Regional Forest Agreement for Tasmania is anticipated to commence in 2012.

In the public native forests within the Regional Forest Agreement area that continue to be harvested and regenerated, Forestry Tasmania has a rigorous forest management system in place to ensure that forestry operations do not give rise to adverse impacts on outstanding universal value.

Further information on monitoring the integrity of the property, including State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area reporting and the Parks and Wildlife Reserve Monitoring System is included in section 1.5.

Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement renewal process

The Australian Government remains committed to the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement as an appropriate intergovernmental mechanism for conservation and sustainable management of Tasmania's public native forests.

The Australian Government is committed to working with the Tasmanian Government to improve the review, audit and monitoring arrangements for Regional Forest Agreements, including their timely completion, and to provide a clearer assessment of performance against environmental and forestry outcomes. These improvements will be addressed in the Regional Forest Agreements renewal process, which is anticipated to commence in 2012 for Tasmania. Regional Forest Agreements contain a clause that stipulates "the process for extending the duration of this Agreement will be agreed by the Parties as part of the third 5 yearly review".

Forest management

In the public native forests within the Regional Forest Agreement area that continue to be harvested and regenerated, Forestry Tasmania has a rigorous forest management system in place to ensure that adverse impacts from forestry operations on outstanding universal values do not arise. Potential impacts on the ecological integrity and aesthetic values of the Tasmanian Wilderness property, as well as possible cultural sites and biodiversity values in adjacent areas, are taken into account through the application of the Tasmanian Forest Practices Code.

Forestry Tasmania manages most of the forests adjacent to the World Heritage property. These state forests are managed according to Forestry Tasmania's ten-year management plan, published in 2008 and known as the Sustainability Charter.
(<http://www.forestrytas.com.au/uploads/File/pdf/Charter.pdf>)

Over 53 per cent of the state forest estate is primarily managed for the protection of environmental values, including nearly 35 per cent within the comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system and another 19 per cent that lies outside areas identified for timber production.

Forestry Tasmania's sustainable forest management performance is independently audited against three certification standards: the Australian Forestry Standard (AS4708), the Environmental Management Standard (AS/NZS 14001) and the Occupational Health and Safety Standard (AS4801), as well as the Tasmanian Forest Practices Code.

Each year Forestry Tasmania reports its annual environment performance in its Stewardship Report: http://www.forestrytas.com.au/uploads/File/pdf/pdf2011/stewardship_report_2011.pdf

In 2010–11, independent auditing by the Forest Practices Authority of compliance with the Forest Practices Code indicated a performance rating score of 3.8 (out of a possible 4.0) for forestry operations in state forests, which is well above Forestry Tasmania's performance rating benchmark of 3.5.

In line with previous years, there have been no regeneration burn escapes from state forests into the World Heritage property since the last report to the World Heritage Committee.

In 2010–11 Forestry Tasmania conducted formal Aboriginal heritage surveys over an area of 756 hectares, which resulted in the discovery and protection of five new Aboriginal cultural heritage sites.

In 2009, Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens were listed as an endangered ecological community under the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This listing included the sphagnum peatland community on state forest. Accordingly, Forestry Tasmania reviewed and then rescinded the last remaining harvesting contract for sphagnum moss on state forest, at a location in the Central Highlands known as Bradys (Black Bobs) Bog. This measure was taken to assist protection of sphagnum bogs within the World Heritage property so that all sphagnum harvesting in the wild in Tasmania is now prohibited.

Setting a baseline: LIDAR imagery of boundary and other research

A contract has been let by the Tasmanian Government to take baseline LIDAR imagery of the major forest areas that occur along the south-eastern boundaries of the World Heritage property. Bad weather meant that it was not possible to undertake this work last summer, but the imagery will be collected when possible.

In 2001–02, a joint Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment/Forestry Tasmania research project assessing altitudinal change in biodiversity on the World Heritage property boundary at Warra–Mt. Weld was established. This monitoring program aims to record baseline inventory and distributional biodiversity data against which future changes in altitudinal distribution of flora and fauna can be measured in relation to climate change, succession due to fire or its absence, and other chance events. The flora and fauna of this altitudinal transect will be resurveyed in 2011–12.

1.5. Decision 34 COM 7B.38 paragraph 7

Create a mechanism involving stakeholders to monitor, assess and manage the impact of forestry in adjoining areas.

Decision 34 COM 7B.38: paragraph 7: Also requests the State Party to finalise as soon as possible the creation of a mechanism involving all relevant stakeholders, to monitor, assess and manage the impact of forestry operations, road construction and regeneration on the integrity of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, and adjoining reserves, as previously requested by the committee;

State Party's response

Issues related to the integrity of the World Heritage Area are currently reported through the *State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area* report. Integrity is also an element of the broader parks and wildlife service monitoring and reporting system for Tasmania's national parks and reserves.

A second *State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area* report is planned which will take into account integrity issues associated with the boundary. This will be done in consultation with all relevant agencies.

Both of the above reporting mechanisms will provide all stakeholders with information on the integrity of the World Heritage property leading into the consultation phase of the 2015 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan review. This timing will also allow for finalisation of the implementation of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement. In developing this agreement, the Australian and Tasmanian Governments have responded to the community driven statement of principles process through which industry, community and union groups came together to seek a solution to end decades of conflict over native forestry in Tasmania. The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have agreed to help the forest industry to adapt to market changes, and protect the communities and families that rely on the sector to survive, while also protecting high conservation value forests – including in areas adjacent to the World Heritage property.

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have commenced implementation of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement including providing assistance to displaced workers, establishing an independent verification process to assess timber supply requirements and the boundaries of proposed new conservation reserves, and retiring native forests contracts. As part of this process, the Independent Verification Group will consult with peak bodies, other representative organisations and the signatories to the statement of principles.

Parks and Wildlife Service monitoring and reporting system

Tasmania's terrestrial reserve estate covers over 3 million hectares of public and private land, about 45 per cent of Tasmania's land area. The reserve system is among the best in the world. The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service manages around 2.4 million hectares of public terrestrial reserves in around 470 national parks and other reserves, covering over 34 per cent of Tasmania's land area.

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service applies an adaptive management approach through monitoring and reporting on management effectiveness. Key features of the state-wide monitoring and reporting system are that it is evidence based, operationally practical, and provides public transparency and accountability in management.

The monitoring and reporting system is designed to be web-based and consists of three main reporting outputs:

1. Status and trends reports on key performance indicators and information;
2. Evaluated case study reports; and
3. Periodic evaluation reports (such as the *State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area* report).

Second State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area report

A second *State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area* report is planned to be produced in 2014. This will be done in consultation with all relevant agencies and is intended to feed into and inform the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan review which will commence in 2015.

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan review process will allow all stakeholders (including the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Consultative Committee and the general public) to provide informed input into integrity issues, which will assist in the new plan's development.

The use of these monitoring and reporting and plan review mechanisms engages all relevant stakeholders and the timing will allow for finalisation of the implementation of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement.

Forest management

As referred to in section 1.4, Regional Forest Agreements are the primary intergovernmental mechanism for ensuring sustainable management of Australia's public forests which balances outcomes covering economic, social and environmental (biodiversity and heritage) values.

The Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement has a clause requiring five-yearly reviews which includes public consultation on a report on progress, with implementation of the agreement with the next review planned for 2012.

The Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement

The Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement (refer also to sections 1.3 and 1.4), responds to the community driven statement of principles process through which industry, community and union groups came together to seek a solution to end decades of conflict over native forestry in Tasmania. The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have agreed to help the forest industry to adapt to market changes, and protect the communities and families that rely on the sector to survive, while also protecting high conservation value forests – including in areas adjacent to the World Heritage property.

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have commenced implementation of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement including providing assistance to displaced workers, establishing an independent verification process to assess timber supply requirements and the boundaries of proposed new conservation reserves, and retiring native forests contracts. As part of this process, the Independent Verification Group will consult with peak bodies, other representative organisations and the signatories to the Statement of Principles.

Under the agreement a total of \$A277 million, including \$A15 million from the Tasmanian Government, will be provided in the following key areas:

- Support for workers, contractors and their families affected by the downturn in the forest industry;
- Protecting high conservation value forests and ensuring sustainable wood supply; and
- Identifying and funding regional development and diversification projects.

Further information about the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement can be found online at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/land/forestpolicy/index.html>

Further background on the Australian Government's response to the statement of principles process is at: <http://www.daff.gov.au/forestry/national/aus-govt-tas-forests>

Review of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area consultative arrangements

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service has recently completed a review of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Consultative Committee. The current committee structure has remained virtually unchanged over its 26 year life, however, the nature of world heritage management has changed considerably over this time.

Most Australian World Heritage Area committees have either an interest or expertise base. Some have both in the one committee. The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Consultative Committee has often been cited as a particularly successful World Heritage committee for combining these areas and achieving cross fertilisation between these groups. The new structure keeps this joint approach but modernises and streamlines the committee.

Current membership includes a degree of duplication (e.g. two tourism, two conservation representatives); a number of positions with limited connection with current World Heritage property management issues (trade union); and some positions (forest management and local council) that don't provide the most efficient or effective way of engaging with these interests.

The committee is to be reduced in size from 16 to nine members. Core areas of expertise to be retained are those that provide advice on world heritage values (natural and cultural), that represent key interest areas (conservation, recreation and tourism) and a new social science / partnerships position that will assist with tracking current social trends.

The committee members will be appointed based on skill sets they bring to the committee rather than on representing particular organisations. The committee's terms of reference are currently being finalised, once these are completed the new positions will be advertised.

The committee will also have a change in name from Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Consultative Committee to Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Advisory Committee.

1.6. Decision 34 COM 8B.46 paragraph 6

Augment specialist capacity for management of cultural heritage both within the property and immediately outside the boundaries

Decision 34 COM 8B.46: paragraph 6: Also recommends that the State Party 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.

State Party's response

Australia continues to provide resources for Aboriginal cultural heritage within and around the property despite an overall climate of fiscal restraint.

The level of baseline funding directed to management of Aboriginal cultural values has been maintained and additional special project funds have been provided including for: the completion of the Melaleuca Aboriginal Walk which interprets and celebrates the culture of the Needwonnee people and other people who have lived in the area; and for monitoring of World Heritage cave art within the property.

An amount of \$A40,000 has been allocated annually from the Tasmanian Wilderness baseline funding agreement under the agreed annual work program to assist with management of Aboriginal cultural values. The baseline funds are provided by both the Australian and Tasmanian Governments.

The Australian Government's Jobs Fund stimulus package provided \$A382,500 for Aboriginal heritage protection and interpretation in the South Coast–Melaleuca area. The funding achieved the completion of the Melaleuca Aboriginal Walk which interprets and celebrates the culture of the Needwonnee people and other people who have lived in the area.

The Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative through the Working on Country Program also provided \$A1,309,562 over four years commencing 2009–10 for an Aboriginal trainee ranger program, providing for placement of five Aboriginal trainees in Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service field operations for four years.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Land & Sea Council (TALSC) received \$A33,300 from Working on Country Funds for 2010–11 toward visiting and monitoring important art in caves in the Tasmanian Wilderness property with World Heritage status: Ballawinne, Kuti Kina and Wargata Mina.

An \$A265,000 Jobs fund project has addressed high priority maintenance tasks including high priority track and toilet upgrades on the South Coast track. In addition, field aspects of laser scanning of Aboriginal art in a cave near the South Coast Track were completed in 2010–11. A final product is under development (though there have been technical difficulties). Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania have been working closely with the consultants, supplying additional material and being trained to operate the software. The project is ongoing.

1.7. Decision 34 COM 7B 38 paragraph 8 Updated report by 1 February 2012 on State of Conservation

Decision 34 COM 8B.46: paragraph 8:

Updated report by 1 February 2012 on state of conservation, especially on outcomes of monitoring arrangements on impact of logging operations and road construction on outstanding universal values of the property.

State Party's response

This document is the progress report requested in paragraph 6 of the committee's Decision 34 COM 8B.46. This updated report on the state of conservation of the property is provided for examination by the committee at its 36th session in 2012.

2. OTHER CURRENT CONSERVATION ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE PARTY

This section of the report provides an update of issues identified in the 2010 State of Conservation report.

This section of the report provides an update of issues identified in the 2010 State of Conservation report.

Potential threats are addressed through national and Tasmanian recovery programs and the adaptive management arrangements for the property.

Addressing identified key threats to the outstanding natural values of state-managed World Heritage areas and to achieve on-ground outcomes is a current target for World Heritage areas under business planning arrangements for the Australian Government Caring for our Country initiative. This initiative provides substantial additional funding support to the Tasmanian Government for management of this state managed World Heritage property.

As part of adaptive management of the property, a limited review of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan has been undertaken and will be completed during 2011–12, a full review of this management plan is scheduled for 2015.

2.1. Review of management plan

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service is finalising the limited review of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999. This review was designed to update under-performing aspects of the management plan and take on relevant emerging issues. While a technical legal issue has delayed completion of the plan this issue is close to resolution and the plan is expected to be completed this financial year (2011–12). The next review of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan is scheduled for 2015.

More information is available on the mid-term management plan review at:
<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=702>

2.2. Environmental impact assessment

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service continues to upgrade its impact assessment process – the reserve activity assessment system. The revised four level system is more thorough, has increased accountability, greater transparency and offers significantly improved assessment of environmental, social and economic impacts.

Since the 2010 State of Conservation report the first process audit of the reserve activity assessment system has been completed. Most parts of the system proved to be functioning well with a Tasmania wide overall compliance rating of 82.4 per cent. The audit report is available on request. An electronic register which allows all assessments to be tracked has been completed and staff trained in its use. The second audit of the system is currently underway. This continues the initial process audit approach, but also reviews projects as they are implemented on the ground (to see if controls were adequately enforced) and also examines the final outcome of projects, to see whether the project's objectives were achieved.

2.3. Lake Fidler

Lake Fidler is one of three meromictic lakes located in the Gordon River system, all of which are subject to disturbance related to the operation of the Middle Gordon Power Scheme which pre-dates the World Heritage listing of the property in 1982.

As reported during the 1989 renomination process, Lake Fidler was the only one of the three to retain its meromixis at the time of the extension. Following the loss of meromixis in Lake Fidler in 2003, Hydro Tasmania had partial success in restoring the meromixis through a saline recharge in 2004. The 2008 State of Conservation report noted that following that recharge, the meromictic state of Lake Fidler continued to decline gradually.

In April 2008, it appears recharge occurred, assisted by minimal power station discharge from mid-April, low tributary inflows and a series of high tides. This resulted in a wedge of salt water reaching far enough upstream to naturally recharge the meromixis of Lake Fidler. The meromixis continues to be monitored, but at a lower level.

2.4. Basslink

As reported in the 2008 State of Conservation report, the installation of the Basslink undersea power cable connecting Tasmania to mainland Australia resulted in a changed operational regime for the Gordon River Power Station. Prior to the commissioning of the cable, research during the assessment process indicated that the operation of Basslink could potentially cause changed conditions downstream along the Gordon River system in the south west of the World Heritage property.

Hydro Tasmania conducted monitoring for close to five years prior to Basslink commissioning in April 2006 and will continue to monitor the effects of Basslink operations on the middle Gordon River. Monitoring examines the following aspects:

- hydrology
- water quality
- fluvial geomorphology
- karst geomorphology
- riparian vegetation
- benthic macro-invertebrates
- benthic algae
- fish

Comparison of pre and post Basslink monitoring results has been confounded by operational differences unrelated to Basslink. Drought and the subsequent rebuilding of water storage has dominated the pattern of power station water release in recent years. That period has seen some improvement in bank vegetation cover and little geomorphic change. However an expected return to higher volume and more sustained discharge in 2011 is predicted to reverse those trends.

The environmental flow appears to be of benefit to the macro invertebrate communities. The ramp rule has been found ineffective in reducing seepage erosion and has been subject to detailed review. Hydro Tasmania proposed a revised rule in October 2011 and this is now being considered.

Further information on this issue including the latest Gordon River Basslink Monitoring Annual Report is available online at: <http://www.hydro.com.au/home/Our+Environment/Water/Basslink+Environmental+Studies/Gordon.htm>

2.5. Climate change

As noted in the 2010 State of Conservation report (page 22), addressing the committee's decision in relation to climate change risks to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, received a consultant's report entitled "Monitoring the impact of climate change on the flora and vegetation values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area: A Review". <http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Attachments/LJEM-8AE3AT?open>

Following on from this paper, and other studies, a 10-year program to monitor the impacts of climate change on flora values has been developed. The data from the ongoing monitoring will provide crucial information on the status of Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area flora

values, and will inform management actions that are needed to document and mitigate against the adverse effects of climate change on floral assets in the World Heritage property.

A workshop was held in October 2009 to develop priority projects. Discussions have also been held with universities to encourage research programs in identified priority areas. A Climate Watch citizen science collaboration has been established between the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology for king billy pine (*Athrotaxis selaginoides*), pencil pine (*Athrotaxis cupressoides*) and deciduous beech trees (*Nothofagus gunnii*). <http://www.climatewatch.org.au/species/search?speciestype=6®ion=30&period=All>

In 2011 a position paper on potential climate change impacts on geodiversity in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area was completed (Sharples, 2011). Potential climate change impacts on geodiversity in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area: A management response position paper. RMC, DPIPWE, Hobart. Nature Conservation Report Series 11/02). The report uses a risk management framework to prioritise consideration of potential impacts to geodiversity values.

Climate change risk assessments for fauna remain a priority to be undertaken.

2.6. Orange-bellied Parrot

The Orange-bellied Parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*) is a world heritage value of the property and is listed as critically endangered under Australian and Tasmanian threatened species legislation. The species is only known to breed at one site, Melaleuca, which is within the area proposed for inclusion in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (refer to sections 1.2 and 1.3).

A series of actions including habitat management, captive breeding, and monitoring have been established as part of the recovery plan for the species. These actions are adaptively managed by a recovery team.

In 2010 the Orange-bellied Parrot recovery team estimated that, based on the current population trajectory, and without successful intervention, the species would be extinct in the wild by 2015. The Action Plan for the Orange-bellied Parrot, prepared in March 2010, outlined a set of emergency actions to respond to this imminent risk. These included augmenting the captive population to improve its effectiveness as an insurance population, implementing key actions within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area; providing supplementary food during breeding, undertaking habitat management burns, improving the availability of nest boxes, and managing competitors.

It is hoped that these actions will slow the decline of the wild population and provide the best opportunity for the future recovery of the species.

In 2008, Australia reported that some birds held in captivity outside of the property, as part of this program, had contracted *Psittacine circoviral* disease. The disease is listed as a key threatening process under national legislation. It is unclear whether the disease occurs within wild populations of Orange-bellied Parrot.

Indications of the disease have been detected within captive populations of the Orange-bellied Parrot. The Recovery Team's Captive Management Group is adaptively managing the risks to both the captive population, the wild population, and to other species through disease-management protocols.

A volunteer group assisting with Orange-bellied Parrot conservation work is coordinated by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service with financial support from the Australian Government. Teams of two to four volunteers spent fortnightly shifts observing Orange-bellied Parrots at Birchs Inlet (inside the World Heritage property) and at Melaleuca (outside the World Heritage property in the area now proposed for addition – refer sections 1.2 and 1.3) between October 2008 and March 2011.

2.7. Biosecurity issues

As reported in 2008, and reiterated in 2010, a number of biosecurity issues have emerged in Tasmania, some of which may threaten world heritage values. These emerging issues have been acknowledged in the interim review of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan and are being addressed as priorities.

In partnership with Natural Resource Management South, the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment was successful in 2011 in procuring funds to establish the Caring for Our Country biosecurity program which aims to reduce the spread of chytrid fungus, mucor fungus, phytophthora, didymo and terrestrial weeds into and within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The first aim is to provide an education and biosecurity program targeting land management agencies and recreational park users. The second aim is to assess the effectiveness of biosecurity actions and monitor the impact of disease on the highly susceptible Tasmanian tree frog.

Specific biosecurity issues with updates since the last State of Conservation report are discussed further below.

Amphibian chytrid fungus

Chytridiomycosis is an infectious disease affecting amphibians worldwide. The disease has been recorded in other regions of mainland Australia and now Tasmania. Some species of endemic frogs are amongst the world heritage values of the property. As reported to the committee in 2008, a national threat abatement plan for this disease is in place. In August 2007, researchers reported to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Consultative Committee that the disease had been detected in frogs in many areas across Tasmania, including the margins of the property.

In conjunction with Natural Resource Management South, the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment has developed draft hygiene protocols for use by land management agencies and recreational park users. Existing biosecurity infrastructure will be augmented and accompanied by an education program. Research and management efforts continue in the development of effective biosecurity measures to contain the amphibian chytrid fungus, root-rot *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (another pathogen found in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area) and platypus mucor fungus.

No further spread of chytrid into the World Heritage property or loss of frog populations within the property has been detected since the last State of Conservation report in 2010.

More information on these issues is available at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/ktp/frog-fungus.html>

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/tap/phytophthora/index.html>

Devil facial tumour disease (DFTD)

The Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*) is considered a World Heritage value, and is one of the marsupial carnivores for which the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is a stronghold. The species is found across Tasmania. In 1996 a devastating disease, devil facial tumour disease (DFTD), was detected in Tasmanian devils and has spread rapidly through most of the devil population. The disease, always fatal, is passed from devil to devil through biting. To date no cure or vaccine has been found.

The species is now listed as 'endangered' under national environmental law. The Tasmanian devil has also been listed as 'endangered' on the Red List of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The disease, having been first detected in the northeast corner of the state, continues to spread west and south and now affects 75 per cent of the state. Sightings of devils in disease infected areas have generally declined by 84 per cent (2010–11) up from the 80 per cent reported in 2009–10. In the northeast sightings have declined by 97 per cent. However there have not been any local extinctions recorded with devil populations persisting at low densities in areas where

the disease is established. It appears that devils in the more remote areas of the World Heritage property remain free of the disease.

The Australian Government committed \$A10 million and the Tasmanian Government \$A15 million over five years, commencing in 2008–09, to the Save the Tasmanian Devil program. Through the implementation of a diverse range of research and management actions, considerable progress has been made towards the Program's overall objective of ensuring the long-term survival of devils in the wild in Tasmania. The program is monitoring the spread of the disease, undertaking research to better understand the nature of the disease, protecting and managing disease free devils in the wild and establishing a disease free, genetically robust captive insurance population. This insurance population, dispersed across a number of facilities across Australia and projected to exceed 500 animals by the end of 2011, will provide animals that can ultimately be reintroduced back into the wild once the disease is no longer a threat.

More information on the Save the Tasmanian Devil program is available at:
<http://www.tassiedevil.com.au>

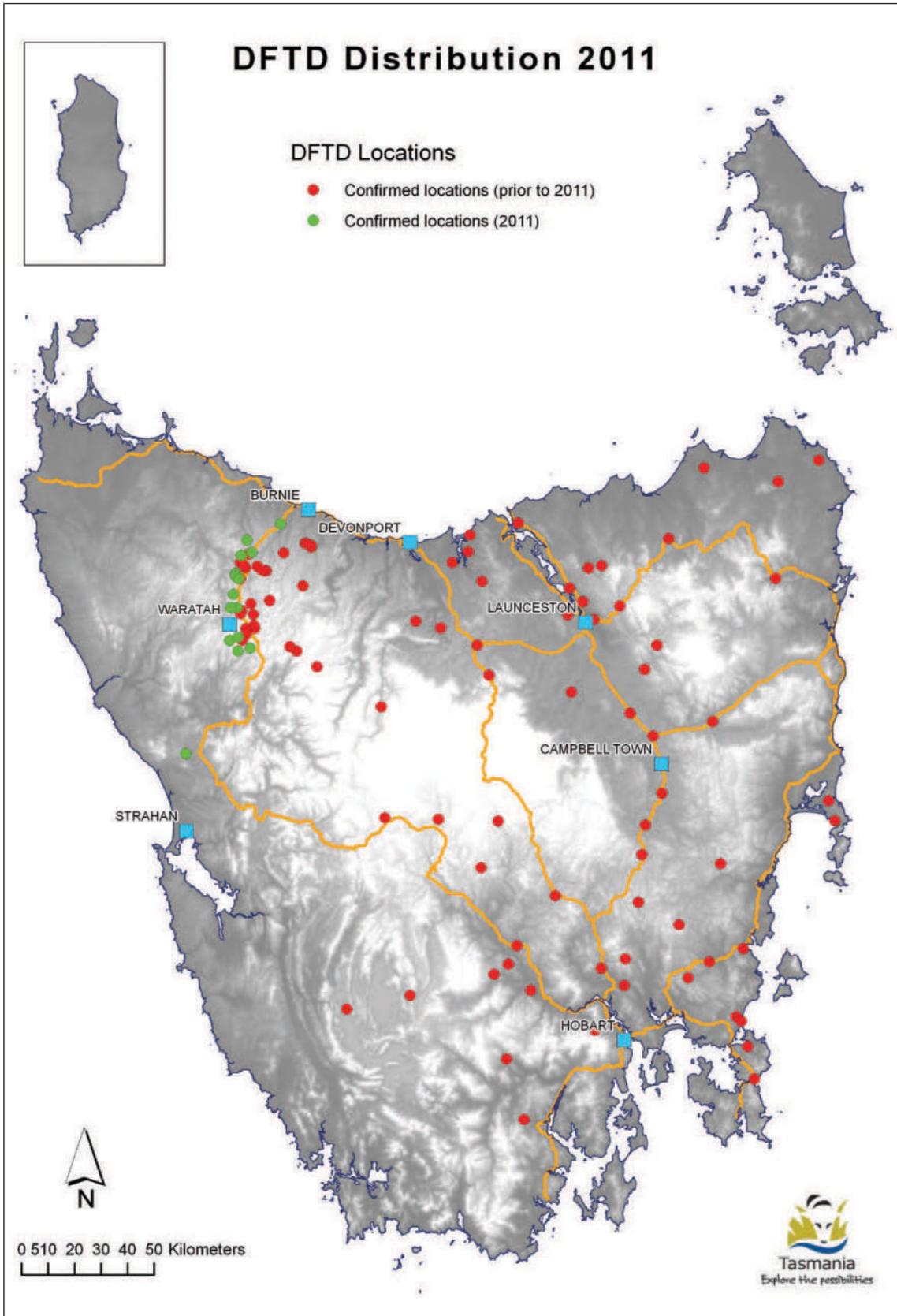
Phytophthora cinnamomi

Phytophthora cinnamomi is an introduced plant pathogen that can cause floristic and structural change in buttongrass communities below about 700m elevation in the World Heritage property. It is well established on many walking tracks in the south west and the road system within and adjacent to the property. A *Phytophthora cinnamomi* management plan is in place to mitigate the risk of further spread and management of the pathogen. This plan informs the current Australian Government Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage biosecurity program (refer to section 1.1 Implementing new boundaries). In 2010 a significant new infestation was detected on the Loddon Plains and trial stream monitoring was conducted on the boundary for *Phytophthora* species.

Myrtle rust

Myrtle rust, an introduced disease of the Myrtaceae plant family, was discovered on mainland Australia in 2010. It is not currently present in Tasmania. The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area does not fall within the current modelled climatically suitable areas for its establishment in Tasmania. The Tasmanian government is taking steps to mitigate the risk of myrtle rust establishing in Tasmania. The Tasmanian risks will be better understood as the disease takes its course on the mainland over the next few years.

Devil facial tumour disease front distribution 2011



Source: Save the Tasmanian Devil Program.

2.8. Introduced species

The Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment has reviewed introduced animal management in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The review documented all introduced animals known to occur in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and their impacts. A standard risk assessment was applied to introduced animals occurring inside and outside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area to determine priorities for management. This review will form the basis for the development of a strategy to better manage the impacts of introduced species in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The publication : 'Review, Risk Assessment and Management of Introduced animals in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area'. Nature Conservation Report 10/01 is available from: <http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Attachments/LJEM-86U4GW?open>

In March 2011, a survey of introduced marine pest in the outstanding Port Davey/Bathurst Harbour marine ecosystem was completed. This survey repeated the one conducted in 2003 when a small number of New Zealand Screw Shells were found and removed. No New Zealand Screw Shells or other target invasive species was detected during the 2011 survey.

More information on introduced animals is available from:
<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/ThemeNodes/LJEM-6PX4TJ?open>

3. POTENTIAL MAJOR RESTORATIONS, ALTERATIONS AND/OR NEW CONSTRUCTION(S) WITHIN THE PROTECTED AREA

The following section provides an update on current and potential redevelopments within the protected area covered by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan.

The majority of visitor facilities are provided in visitor services sites or zones. These are the locations where most visitors experience the property.

The global financial crisis and continuing financial uncertainty has impacted on tourism to Australia and to Tasmania in particular, which has resulted in some planned tourism ventures not proceeding.

3.1. Tourism redevelopment at Lake St Clair

Lake St Clair, at the edge of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, is a Visitor Services Zone provided for in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan. Since the 1930s there has been visitor accommodation at Lake St Clair.

In recent years, various redevelopment projects have been proposed, in accordance with the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan, at this location. Proposals reported in 2008 are updated below:

- **Redevelopment of tourist facilities at Cynthia Bay**

In 2009, Eco-Geo International Pty Ltd bought the lease and now manages the facilities. The lessee has commenced construction, in accordance with the approved development plan and environmental management plan, of a small number of the total approved cabins this financial year, these are likely to be operational next financial year.

- **Adaptive re-use of Pumphouse Point for tourist facility**

The proposal reported in the 2008 Update Report has been granted approval, with conditions. However no further progress has been made by the developer thus far.

3.2. Australian Government Jobs Fund Projects

Since the 2010 State of Conservation report the Australian Government has completed a number of projects mentioned in this report that both protect values and present the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. These include projects at the following locations and gateways:

- **South Coast Track & Melaleuca – \$A265,000**

This project addressed the highest priority maintenance tasks and upgrades, primarily track and toilet infrastructure – completed.

- **Sarah Island – \$A355,000**

A redesign of the walking track infrastructure on Sarah Island to facilitate access by mobility impaired visitors as well as allowing large groups from the cruise vessels to access the island – completed.

- **Cradle Mountain – \$A491,000**

Track repairs and maintenance, mostly day walks from Cradle Mountain. Conservation, repairs and maintenance to and around the historic Waldheim chalet – completed.

- **Mt Field – \$A194,000**

Track repairs and maintenance – completed.

- **Aboriginal heritage – \$A387,500**

To record, protect and interpret Aboriginal heritage in the area of the South Coast Track and Melaleuca (including joint partnership with the Aboriginal community to create the Needwonnee interpreted walk, incorporating Aboriginal interpretation) – completed.