



Via email to Minister.Plibersek@dcceew.gov.au

25 September 2023

Dear Minister Plibersek,

We welcome the adoption of the new retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (**rSOUV**) for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (**TWWHA**), which has been approved by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th session in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

We would like to extend our thanks to you and those within your office and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, who have supported the Statement.

The recognition of the TWWHA, as the Statement says, as “one of the world’s largest and most spectacular temperate wilderness areas and a precious cultural landscape for Tasmanian Aboriginal people” is no understatement. There is no place like it on Earth and no place that comes close to satisfying so many - and its unique combination of - World Heritage criteria.

Wilderness is fundamental to the identity of Lutruwita/Tasmania and its brand, and its protection is part of Australia’s World Heritage obligations. With this in mind, it’s important to highlight that the new retrospective Statement now makes the Tasmanian government’s ‘parks privatisation’ policy of facilitating private commercial tourism developments throughout the TWWHA even more contrary to World Heritage values.

The proposal for helicopter-serviced luxury accommodation at the stunningly beautiful Lake Malbena is one of the starkest of cases in point. A proposal that has seen enormous opposition from the public and would, if it were to proceed, by the assessment of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, degrade the integrity of several thousand hectares of World Heritage wilderness.

The Lake Malbena proposal is currently being assessed under the EPBC Act (referral 2018/8177). Any helicopter-accessed development in such a remote location should be rejected to protect the wilderness character which the **rSOUV** acknowledges as fundamental to the integrity of the area.

In light of this new Statement, we do not believe it is possible to honour the integrity of the world’s highest-rated World Heritage wilderness and, at the same time, approve this proposal. We request that you reject this proposal and rule out similar developments in the TWWHA.

Of course, the TWWHA is recognised globally as a living and historical cultural landscape and satisfies several criteria for World Heritage listing on those values. The new Statement reads, “The property is one of the world’s great archaeological ‘provinces’, with many important sites, and a landscape shaped by Aboriginal fire management practices over millennia.”

Many of these important sites are adjacent to other proposed tourism developments in the TWWHA, including several in southwest Tasmania at places like Cox Bight, Purrar Point, Louisa

River and South Cape Bay. The federal government needs to intervene and request the Tasmanian government halt these development proposals - they simply provide too great a threat to the cultural values outlined in the rSOUV.

The Statement also reads *“The property demonstrates the interaction between people and the landscape over millennia and has an exceptional degree of intactness and high degree of naturalness. Its large extent, remoteness, and quality of wilderness is the foundation for the integrity of its natural and cultural values.”*

As well as your support for the retrospective Statement, we welcome your previous commitments to “protect and conserve 30 per cent of our land by 2030” and to use “every tool in the box to protect our precious environment for our kids and grandkids”.

Now with UNESCO’s endorsement that Aboriginal cultural and historical values and wilderness values are fundamental to the world’s highest-rated World Heritage wilderness, we trust that you will do everything in your power to protect the integrity of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Kind Regards,

Campaign Manager for Fishers and Walkers Tasmania, Dan Broun

President of the Tasmanian National Parks Association, Nick Sawyer

Campaign Manager for Wilderness Society Tasmania, Tom Allen

Ends.