

Proposed Government De-listing of Parts of the TWWHA

2013-14

In 2013, approximately 74,000 ha were added to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). This included areas that had been recommended for inclusion when the TWWHA was first listed, and areas subsequently found to have World Heritage value (i.e., 'outstanding universal value').

On coming into power in late 2013, the new Federal Liberal government lost no time in developing its proposal to have the 74,000 ha of recently added areas delisted, thus acting on an election promise. In this they were strongly supported by the Tasmanian Liberal Party.

The Federal government's request for de-listing was considered by the World Heritage Committee in Dohar in June 2014. **The Committee decisively rejected the proposed de-listing.**

The World Heritage Committee's decision was based on the fact that the Australian government had not provided adequate evidence to support their request.

The Federal Liberal government's proposal to de-list was based on the claim that the recently added areas includes logging coupes, therefore was degraded forest, hence not of World Heritage value. The government also claimed neighbour issues as a secondary reason for the proposed de-listing.

The proposal however failed to show how the situation had changed since the area was listed (in effect there had been no change); it failed to appreciate that the presence of logging coupes in the 2013 TWWHA additions had been clearly stated; and it failed to appreciate that many World Heritage properties have degraded or compromised areas. In recognition of this, the World Heritage Operational Guidelines include rehabilitation as a key obligation where appropriate.

Most important in the view of the World Heritage Committee was the Federal government's failure to appreciate that the areas proposed for revocation included other values of World Heritage significance (outstanding universal value).

Refer to the Reference 5: TNPA's 201 submission to the Senate Standing Enquiry