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# Heritage area hydro plan

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Nick McKim

THE approval of a mini hydro scheme proposed for inside Tasmania's World Heritage Area has prompted Tasmanian Senator Nick McKim to call for intervention from the federal government.

Senator McKim has written to Environment Minister Greg Hunt arguing that the proposal was likely to impact on matters protected under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and would be a controlled action requiring federal government attention.

The Fish River development was approved by the Meander Valley Council in July this year, after councillors were provided with a Development Application using

documents from 2012 – a year before the area was given World Heritage listing.

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Included in the DA was an EPBC protected matters report which stated there were no World Heritage properties on the land to be used for the development.

The report did find one threatened ecological community, 10 threatened species and nine migratory species in the area.

Senator McKim said it was his understanding that councillors were unaware of the World Heritage status of the site before approving the application.

“Regardless of how the decision was reached, Mr Hunt must now intervene to properly assess the proposal and protect the precious World Heritage values of the area,” he said.

The scheme has been proposed by G7 Generation, a company which claims to be “a leading small renewable developer operating in Africa and Australia”. The company did not respond to requests for comment this week.

One resident has appealed against the Meander Valley Council’s approval of the scheme, and it will go to a tribunal hearing in October.

## Hydro plan for heritage area slammed



THE Wilderness Society has called for developers of the proposed Fish River Hydro Scheme to abandon their plans.  News  Business

The Wilderness Society's state campaign manager Vica Bayley said the proposed development was inappropriate for any protected area, let alone inside a World Heritage area.

"The information that has been presented for approval is demonstrably outdated, it's a very questionable project at the best of times, but located inside a protected area adjacent to the iconic Walls of Jerusalem walking track it just seems entirely out of place and unnecessary," he said.

"We'll be watching it very closely, but would hope that a project like this is simply abandoned because it doesn't appear to be a credible, a viable, or a sensible part of Tasmania's energy mix into the future."

The land was leased to developers G7 Generation by Forestry Tasmania in 2012.

Management of the area has since been placed under Crown Land Services following the 2013 addition of the land to the World Heritage Area.

A Tasmanian government spokesman said the lease remained in place.

"[The lease] includes conditions requiring the proponent to obtain all necessary approvals required under state and Commonwealth legislation prior to any construction activities occurring on the land," he said.

Tasmanian Labor leader Bryan Green said he believed the footprint of a mini hydro scheme in the area would be negligible.

"From my point of view mini hydro development and that sort of development is completely in keeping with what we expected to be allowed to continue as part of the adherence of the 137,000 hectares to the world heritage area," he said.

"Existing developments, certainly I believe, could continue.

"We made sure, for example, that dolomite quarries and etcetera in the area were allowed to continue so on that basis there's absolutely no reason why a small mini hydro system should not be developed."

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