



## CHRISTINE MILNE

**Australian Greens Senator for Tasmania**

24 January 2014

H.E. Sheika Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Al-Thani  
World Heritage Committee Chairperson  
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### Attempts to undermine Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

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Dear Mr Al-Thani

Further to our letters of 23 October and 5 November 2013 and the Committee's subsequent reply, we understand that the Australian Government intends to move ahead with plans to revoke the minor boundary adjustment to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA), as approved by the Committee in June 2013.

As you know, the minor boundary adjustment was supported by the Tasmanian and Australian governments. These high conservation value forests have been the subject of many reviews and assessments over the years with the IUCN recognising their world heritage values more than two decades ago.

We have included a transcript of the comments of the Australian environment minister on 23 January 2014 in which he announces the Abbott government's intention to notify the Committee of a submission to revoke the boundary adjustment.

The Australian and Tasmanian Greens have the utmost respect for the Committee and the complexity of its work. We understand decisions are not made lightly and are extremely concerned that the Australian Government would attempt to overturn the minor boundary adjustment in a complete about-face and denial of the environmental significance of Tasmania's magnificent and pristine old-growth forests.

We urge the World Heritage Committee to reject any attempt by the State Party to revoke the minor boundary adjustment approved in 2013. The forests are areas of outstanding universal value and are critical to the integrity of the entire TWWHA. They should be strongly defended by the World Heritage Committee. The Australian Greens and Tasmanian Greens will advocate strongly that the 2013 decision of the World Heritage Committee should stand and will expose the Abbott government's irresponsible actions in Australia and around the world.

Yours sincerely

Senator Christine Milne  
Australian Greens Leader

Nick McKim MP  
Tasmanian Greens Leader

Cc: World Heritage Centre; committee members

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Hunt: We said before the election that we would take steps and we have written to UNESCO indicating that we would come forward to them with a variation. We're committed to the existing 1.4 m ha and we will maintain all of the previously listed national parks which were included in the extension. So it was 1.4 million, then another 170,000 was added. We were critical of the process for adding that and we were critical of the content of much of it. I saw photos this morning of areas that were included in world heritage which were very heavily logged, which were logged, which had been clear-felled, which clearly had no environmental values and which degrade the overall concept.

But we're committed to the 1.4 million ha. we are committed to all of the national parks and reserves which had previously been declared, and which were then added as part of the 170,000, and then we'll make a final proposal to the world heritage authorities in the coming weeks.

Q: So will you meet the February 1 deadline for changes to next World Heritage Committee meeting?

H: Correct.

Q: Will you release detail of the changes?

H: We will release detail when we submit it to the world heritage authorities.

Q: Does it include contentious areas like the Styx and the Florentine?

H: I think it's important to recognise there are degraded areas which should never have been included. and I think everybody understands that. It's quite bizarre that you have heavily logged and destroyed areas which simply weren't up to standard included. And then you have very high conservation areas which were included in the national parks. And all of those pre-existing national parks will be maintained, and I think that's a pretty good outcome.

Q: So the Styx and the Florentine will remain open to logging?

H: Well no, let's just wait a bit. I think you'll find the national park areas and reserve areas which were previously declared will be maintained in the WHA. So that's a very good balance.

Eric Hutchinson: what we don't want to do is diminish the existing WHA and the values that it holds.

Q: Won't the World Heritage Committee be surprised to see this coming back to them?

H: I will let the committee speak for itself, but there was a minor boundary adjustment of 170,000 ha using the terms of the WH process over the last year or so. There is a significantly smaller minor boundary adjustment which will go now. I think that the committee would be surprised that they received a nomination that didn't set out that there were areas which had been clearfelled, which had been logged, which had been subject to destruction, which completely failed to meet the global standards of a world heritage wilderness area. I'll let Lara Giddings explain how a clearfelled area adds to the integrity of a magnificent world heritage area.