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Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

*Submission with regard to Senate Committee enquiry:  
An inquiry into the natural world heritage values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World  
Heritage Area minor boundary extension and related matters.*

Dear Senator Thorp and committee members,

In the first instance I would like to apologise for my tardy response to your inquiry, and hope that you will accept my late submission.

It is by nature brief, and is principally focused on the Great Western Tiers.

In essence, my main contention is with failure to follow due process as it relates to the "minor boundary shift" of the World Heritage Area in Tasmania and in particular, as it relates to my electorate of the Western Tiers.

The boundary adjustment has significant ramifications, in that there is approximately a 100 kilometre interface with private land in the electorate. This process was progressed without any consideration being given to the ramifications of abutting a World Heritage Area onto private property, with regards to setbacks and potential impact of usage on private land.

In fact there is no buffer between now WHA's and freehold land.

There was no consultation with those private land owners, nor indeed wider stakeholder groups

- nothing at the time that this proposal was under consideration
- and nothing since the approval of this extension of the TWWHA in the Western Tiers.

I am aware that information has been requested, to provide all those landowners with property adjoining the TWWHA extension with a detailed map, at an appropriate scale, that shows full details of the extension as it relates to the landowner's title.

The fact that detailed and workable maps are yet to be provided, to affected landowners, underlines the continuation of a flawed process with regard to the pushing of this TWWHA extension through by the then Federal Government for its own purposes.

- In a meeting, (phone hook-up) between members of the Legislative Council (during the TFA process) and the then Minister Tony Burke – the Minister clearly stated that he did not know what would happen with regard to making a submission to lobby for adjustments to the Tasmanian World Heritage Area, no final decision had been made.

Some 30 minutes after this conversation concluded, the Minister announced via the media that the Federal Government was in fact proceeding with the submission for an extension of the TWWHA.

As you can imagine, this was seen as a duplicitous action by the Minister, and upset many members of the Legislative Council.

- The whole exercise smacked of a political construct.
- There was a total lack of consultation with stakeholders during the process of Minister Burkes application and I am aware that there have been many submissions to the committee with regard to disenfranchised stakeholders and damaged business so I will not attempt to repeat an argument already well addressed.

However, my particular focus relates to a far more personal and long standing relationship with this area.

I have over many decades been a keen bushwalker and resident of the Western Tiers region. I have extensively walked the tracks that criss-cross this wonderful landscape. Many of those tracks were cut by local bushmen and their ancestors, to gain access to the hinterland that is their back yard.

I appreciate the many existing reserves across the face of the Tiers, and also the fact that timber harvesting is not permitted above the 800 metre level.

I also appreciate the fact that from the rim of the Tiers southward, is an already existing very large world heritage listed area.

What I don't appreciate are the many fallacious claims that the extension meets the criteria for proclamation of a World Heritage Area. Indeed, virtually all of this area has seen timber production in one form or another and recreational use since white settlement.

The Western Tiers have seen multi use activities for generations, and it is that active management that has maintained the current landscape in excellent condition.



In fact it is rather incongruous, that a few short years ago, Bass Greens MHA Kim Booth claimed in an article in the Launceston Examiner Newspaper – that a particular area of forest had been “trashed and destroyed forever” by forestry operations.

- This area is now included in the WHA
- That and other similar areas now included, would indicate that hypocrisy is alive and well!

Through generations the “locals” have had a strong emotional attachment to this multi-use areas and have done a fine job of maintaining a low impact presence whilst offering access and a unique experience to lovers of the mountain.

It is my strong belief that “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” should be applied here as a matter of common sense and respect to the custodial families who have put so much of their lives into this region.

The fact that the slopes of the Western Tiers are coveted by environmentalists is testament to a job well done and the active management by aboriginal people, local people, recreational users, The Mountain Hut Preservation Society and the list goes on.

It is my strong belief that interfering with that process, of local custodial management, will give rise to concerns about on-going management of the region, increased vermin numbers and escalating fire risk.

I would conclude by saying that my constituents appreciate the need to preserve natural values.

But in this instance, the great majority are totally perplexed and have no respect for this autocratic and arbitrary decision!

It is simply deemed totally unacceptable by the wider community.

Yours sincerely,

***Greg Hall, MLC***  
**Legislative Council**  
**Member for Western Tiers**