



Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo
Director
World Heritage Centre
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP
FRANCE

Dear Mr Eloundou Assomo

As requested in your 31 January 2023 communication to States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, I wish to provide an update to the *State Party Report on the state of conservation of the Tasmanian Wilderness*.

This letter outlines significant progress against eight sections of the February 2022 State Party Report which demonstrate Australia's ongoing commitment to maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the Tasmanian Wilderness. Key developments include:

- The highest ever recorded number of migratory Orange-bellied parrots returning in a season
- The release of a comprehensive fire management plan
- Commitment by the Australian Government to strong environmental law reform
- Support to managers of World Heritage properties – including the Tasmanian Wilderness – to undertake comprehensive climate adaptation planning.

Section 1.3 Strong Legislative Protection (page 8)

The Australian Government's formal response to an independent review of Australia's key piece of environmental legislation, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, was published in December 2022. The [Nature Positive Plan: better for the environment, better for business](#) identifies the priorities that will guide Australia's environmental reform agenda. The reforms will be guided by three essential principles:

- Delivering better environmental protection and laws that are nature positive; that is, they result in nature—species, habitats and ecosystems—being repaired and regenerating rather than in decline.
- Speeding up decisions and making it easier for companies to do the right thing.
- Restoring integrity and trust to systems and environmental laws.

Under the plan, the Australian Government has committed to protect 30% of Australia's land and seas by 2030, create a nature repair market, establish an independent Environment Protection Agency and work in partnership with First Nations people, including to develop standalone cultural heritage legislation. Australia is also working towards zero new extinctions.

Section 1.5 Effective Management and Planning (pages 8 and 9)

To respond to the challenge of the impacts of a changing climate, the Australian Government commissioned the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation to provide an [updated climate vulnerability assessment of Australia's World Heritage properties and a climate change toolkit](#) for Australia's World Heritage property managers. The assessment and toolkit will assist managers of the Tasmanian Wilderness to undertake comprehensive adaptation planning. Australia is also looking to work with others in the World Heritage system to develop and share knowledge on ways to identify and plan for climate risks for World Heritage sites globally.

Section 2.1.1 Recommendations of the 2015 joint ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission – Recommendation 11 (page 12)

The process for proclamation of Future Potential Production Forest Land within the Tasmanian Wilderness as reserves is now in the final stages of the required statutory process and has passed both Tasmanian Houses of Parliament. This will result in a 2,850 hectares expansion of the existing Mole Creek Karst National Park, with a further 22,550 hectares of Future Potential Production Forest Land to be reserved as either conservation area or regional reserve.

Section 2.1.4 A comprehensive Fire Management Plan (page 20)

In June 2022, the Tasmanian Government released the Fire Management Plan for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. This document provides a strategic framework for fire management and mitigation for the World Heritage property.

The Tasmanian Department of Natural Resources and Environment has conducted rehabilitation trials in fire-sensitive pencil pine *Athrotaxis cupressoides* and *Sphagnum* vegetation, which was affected by bushfire in the north of the property in 2016. The trial resulted in identified successful rehabilitation techniques for these species, a toolkit of methods for rehabilitation and decision support tools.

Section 2.1.5 Implementation of the Detailed Plan for a Comprehensive Cultural Assessment and impact assessments (page 21)

As noted in the State Party Report, Tasmania has developed a Healthy Country Plan for Recherche Bay. Healthy Country Plans recognise and incorporate Aboriginal people's perspectives in land management and provide collaborative opportunities for the protection of Aboriginal cultural values and general land management in the property (see [Healthy Country Plans | Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania](#)). Healthy Country Plans are yet to be implemented on the reserve estate (including the Tasmanian Wilderness). Twenty-two Aboriginal people have now received training in the Healthy Country Planning process.

Section 3.1 Orange-bellied parrot (page 23)

The Australian and Tasmanian governments continue to be committed to the survival of the critically endangered, migratory Orange-bellied parrot. Eighty birds returned to the Tasmanian Wilderness from their migration to the mainland in the 2022-23 season – the highest ever recorded number of birds returning in a season. Of the 80 confirmed returns, 35 birds were female and 45 male. Thirty-four of the 80 returns are captive-bred birds released in previous seasons, with the remaining 46 having been born within the property at Melaleuca, the species' only known breeding site. Twenty-four captive-bred juveniles have recently been released at Melaleuca to further boost the wild population.

3.2 Maugean Skate, Macquarie Harbour (page 24)

In September 2022, the Environment Protection Authority Tasmania introduced a new regulatory mechanism to cap fin-fish production in Macquarie Harbour, to reduce environmental impacts of salmon farming industry on the Macquarie Harbour ecosystem, including the only known population of the Maugean Skate. This endangered, cartilaginous fish occurs in Macquarie Harbour, a third of which is protected in the property. The new regulatory mechanism provides for a [Total Permissible Dissolved Nitrogen Output](#) which reduces dissolved nitrogen outputs by approximately 10% compared with 2021 levels.

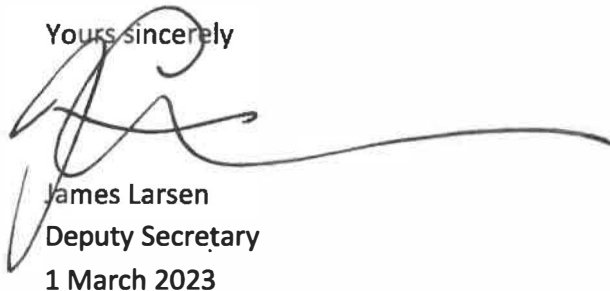
As foreshadowed in the State Party Report, the Australian Government has funded eDNA research to determine the presence or absence of the Maugean skate in Bathurst Harbour to the south of Macquarie Harbour (and also within the Tasmanian Wilderness). Results of the research indicate that the vast majority, if not all, of the species are located in Macquarie Harbour. Further information is available at [Project 1.33 Final report | Marine and Coastal \(nespmarinecoastal.edu.au\)](#).

4.3 Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Master Plan (page 25)

The [Dove Lake Viewing Shelter](#), located within the Visitor Services Zone of the Tasmanian Wilderness, was officially opened in January 2023. The accessible, all-weather protected shelter will significantly improve visitor experience when viewing the iconic Cradle Mountain.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this update.

Yours sincerely



James Larsen
Deputy Secretary
1 March 2023

Enc: State Party Report on the State of Conservation Report for the Tasmanian Wilderness