

AUSTRALIA'S WORLD HERITAGE PLACES

THE TASMANIAN WILDERNESS WORLD HERITAGE AREA INFORMATION SHEET



Quick Facts

- The Tasmanian Wilderness is one of the largest conservation reserves in Australia, covering about 20 percent of the island of Tasmania.
- It is an important safe haven for many plants and animals that have become extinct on mainland Australia.
- Indigenous rock art and artefacts found in caves date back to the last Ice Age
- Each of Australia's 17 World Heritage Places are also on Australia's National Heritage List.

Why is the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area of World Heritage value?

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1982 for its natural values (including geoheritage, flora and fauna) and its cultural values, related to Aboriginal occupation. In 1989 it was greatly expanded to cover approximately 20 percent of Tasmania.

Natural values:

- **Helps us understand how the earth was formed**
The spectacular wilderness contains rocks from almost every geological period, the oldest being formed about 1,100 million years ago.
- **Helps us understand the history of the earth as recorded through rocks, living organisms and how man interacts with the environment**
The area contains plants and animals of global importance because of their links to the ancient supercontinent Gondwana.
- **Contains beautiful and amazing natural wonders, formations and features**
There is an impressive variety of plants, from open and closed forests through to buttongrass moorland and alpine communities. Some of the world's longest-lived trees and tallest flowering plants and most spectacular caves are found here.
- **Contains important habitats where endangered animals and plants live**
The Tasmanian Wilderness provides a safe place for some unique animals found nowhere else in the world such as the Tasmanian Devil.

Cultural values:

- **Contains evidence of a unique civilisation**
Archaeological surveys have revealed an extremely important collection of Aboriginal sites dating to the last Ice Age. These sites show us the distinctive ways Tasmanian Aboriginal people lived, hunted, gathered and adapted to changing climates during the last ice age. They are extremely important to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.



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- **Is an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement representing a culture threatened by change**
Tasmanian Aboriginals were isolated from the mainland for 8,000 years and developed a unique culture.
- **Is linked with events, ideas or beliefs that are extremely important to the whole world**
During the earliest occupation, Tasmanian Aboriginals are believed to have been the most southerly people on earth. The Tasmanian Wilderness contains one of the richest and best preserved collections of Ice Age sites in the world. These represent a unique Tasmanian adaptation to an inhospitable environment based on hunting Bennett's wallabies.

Challenges and Management

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is managed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

Challenges	Management
Wildfires	Wildfires pose a major threat to the area. Research is being carried out to determine the negative and positive effects of fire and appropriate fire management strategies are being developed. Most of the TWWHA is a 'Fuel Stove Only Area' to reduce the risk of escaped campfires.
Diseases	<i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> causes root rot disease in some plants. Devil Facial Tumour disease poses a high risk to the Tasmanian Devil and researchers are working to control the spread of the disease. Both are spread by water and human activity. Human activity, such as vehicle use and walking, moves infected soil and water. Visitors are asked to wash their footwear and equipment before entering the area.
Introduced animals and weeds	Introduced species can affect native plants and animals. Once introduced animals are established, they are very difficult to remove or control and constant monitoring is required. Weed eradication and management strategies are being developed, especially for high-risk weeds such as seaspurge and marram grass. Monitoring and mapping are used to detect new weeds and to track the success of management strategies.



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Increased tourism and human impacts

The number of visitors and tourists to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area has grown, helping raise money to help manage the area. However, tourist activities such as camping, four-wheel driving, quad bike riding, hiking or lighting fires can lead to track erosion, vegetation damage and overcrowding. Popular walking tracks have been upgraded to support greater numbers of people. Tourists are encouraged to 'leave no trace' and minimise their impact on the environment. Park rangers and field staff have operations in place to monitor and report illegal activities such as arson and the theft of Huon pine trees. Community programs help to raise awareness of illegal activities, their impacts and the penalties.

Read more

www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/tasmanian-wilderness/index.html



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