

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 27

**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates

**Outcome:** Outcome 5

**Programme:** Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division

**Topic:** Tasmania Wilderness World Heritage Area

**Hansard Page:** 28

**Question Date:** 18 November 2013

**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Thorp asked:**

Senator THORP: Have you been given any idea when you may get further direction from the government about this?

Ms Rankin: I cannot speculate on that.

Senator BILYK: Speculation? Have you or haven't you?

Ms Rankin: I do not have any information about when a decision might be made.

Senator THORP: You have gone back and said this is the information, but you have not been asked to get more information?

Ms Rankin: No. as I said, the government, having received that information, is considering what process it wants to take forward in considering how it wants to approach its election.

Senator THORP: Was that information given in writing?

Ms Rankin: I would have to check on that.

Senator THORP: If so, is that available?

Ms Rankin: Again, I would have to check whether we did provide it in writing, what form that was in, and whether we could make it available.

Senator THORP: It would be of great interest, of course, to anyone interested in wilderness areas but also interested specifically in Tasmania to know what process there is, going forward, to potentially reduce the size of that World Heritage area. When did those conversations with UNESCO occur?

Ms Rankin: I think we had some preliminary conversations with them immediately following the election, as part of preparing for briefing our new minister.

Senator THORP: And you are undertaking to give us a copy of any advice that you gave to the current government about the process of changing?

Ms Rankin: I will take that on notice and check whether we can.

**Answer:**

Decisions to modify or remove a property (or parts of it) from the World Heritage List can only be made by the World Heritage Committee.

The operational guidelines for implementation of the World Heritage Convention set out the steps that state parties need to follow to seek changes to listed properties.

The Department of the Environment has had informal discussions with the World Heritage Centre to confirm the procedural requirements set out in the operational guidelines regarding the process for reducing a World Heritage property boundary.

A summary of this advice is provided below:

- There are two options for seeking to delist part of a property or modify a boundary.
  1. Submit a minor boundary modification nomination that seeks the Committee's agreement to a reduced boundary for the property.
    - A minor modification is one which does not have a significant impact on the extent of the property nor affect its outstanding universal value.
    - Requests for minor boundary modifications need to be accompanied by maps showing the proposed change; a description of the modification and justification for the modification; advice on how the change will contribute to the maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value; and an overview of implications for legal protection and management arrangements.
    - Reductions in a property can be considered by the World Heritage Committee as minor modifications only under exceptional circumstances.
  2. Submit a new nomination for the entire property with a reduced boundary.
    - The requirements for a new nomination are extensive and include detailed descriptions and analysis of the property; its threats, protection and management arrangements; contributions to Outstanding Universal Value; staffing and financial support; and supporting scientific evidence and reference materials.
- Requests for minor boundary modifications and new nominations are reviewed by IUCN and/or ICOMOS before being considered and voted on by the World Heritage Committee.