

# Australia rejects heritage listing for Tasmanian rainforest

February 8 2013

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A Tasmanian devil is held by wildlife personnel at Martin Place public square in Sydney on September 7, 2012. Australia Friday rejected a bid for blanket heritage listing of Tasmania's Tarkine rainforest, angering environmentalists who said it would allow mining and could threaten the Tasmanian devil.

Australia Friday rejected a bid for blanket heritage listing of Tasmania's Tarkine rainforest, angering environmentalists who said it would allow mining and could threaten the Tasmanian devil.

Environment Minister Tony Burke said Aboriginal sites in the pristine Tarkine in the island state's remote northwest would be included on the National Heritage List, but he would not extend it beyond this.

He said he knew the decision would upset [conservationists](#), but he had been unable to incorporate the natural values of the landscape in the listing without delivering unacceptable social and [economic outcomes](#).

"Tasmania has the highest unemployment rate in Australia and this region has the highest unemployment rate in Tasmania," he said in a statement.



Tony Burke, Australian Environment Minister, speaks to the media at the Sea Life Sydney Aquarium on November 16, 2012. He said Friday that Aboriginal sites in Tasmania's Tarkine rainforest would be included on the National Heritage List, but he would not extend it beyond this.

"I simply haven't been able to find a way to recognise the [natural heritage](#) values with a boundary that will find a balance."

Conservationists had called for the listing of more than 400,000 hectares of the Tarkine, which boasts wild windswept beaches, extensive button grass plains and one of the world's greatest remaining tracts of cool temperate rainforest.

The Tarkine also contains rare magnesite karst systems and significant Aboriginal sites, with Burke saying the latter would be given heritage listing.

"Aboriginal hut depressions and middens on the west coast are exceptional, as they represent an unusual, specialised and more sedentary Aboriginal way of life based on the hunting of seals and [land mammals](#) and the gathering of shellfish," he said.

Greens Senator Christine Milne attacked the decision.

"What possible justification can an environment minister have for abandoning the environment to the [mining industry](#)?" she said.

The Wilderness Society accused Burke of failing in his duty to protect the natural values of the region, which is one of the last refuges for healthy Tasmanian devils.

"The [Tasmanian devil](#) is already at risk of extinction from the facial tumour disease. It doesn't need any more stress put on one of its last disease-free strongholds," Wilderness Society Tarkine Campaigner Liz Johnstone said.

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