

World heritage bid on track

DAVID KILLICK | June 19, 2013 12.01am

THE federal Environment Minister has rejected claims the United Nations World Heritage Committee is set to knock back a bid to extend the Tasmanian World Heritage Area.

A draft decision of the committee, which is meeting in Phnom Penh, has recommended further consultation with the state's Aboriginal community about the proposal.

The state and federal governments and conservation groups backed the bid to add 170,000ha to the WHA and delegates are conducting last-minute lobbying at the meeting ahead of Sunday's decision.

Environment Minister Tony Burke says the draft is nothing new and reflects an earlier recommendation of the advisory International Council on Monuments and Sites.

"That's the draft that came out back in May before the World Heritage Committee was aware of the work that we were already doing with Aboriginal communities to make sure that cultural values were able to be later added with traditional owner consent," he said.

State Liberal Lyons candidate Guy Barnett said he hoped the final decision next week would back the draft.

"Both the Convention and the guidelines require consultation and this simply has not occurred and as a result the rushed and flawed nomination looks set to be rejected by the WHC," he said.

Aspects of the bid have concerned landholders, particularly around the Great Western Tiers.