

# Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional: The Future of World Heritage in Australia

Editors: Penelope Figgis, Andrea Leverington,  
Richard Mackay, Andrew Maclean, Peter Valentine



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**Cover photo:** Two great iconic Australian World Heritage Areas - The Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef meet in the Daintree region of North Queensland © Photo: K. Trapnell

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# Acknowledgements

## In tribute

Our publication celebrates the lands and seas of Australia, the beauty and wonder of this great southern continent whose unique plants, animals and geology are the product of evolution over billions of years.

We pay respect to elders past and present who, through their reverence for the land and sea and its wealth of living things, have shaped and nurtured the places we now honour with the global recognition of World Heritage.

We also honour and thank the thousands of peoples from all backgrounds who have valued, championed and defended the rich heritage of Australia, its ancient land forms, its 'jewel seas', its distinctive rich wildlife and plants and the culture and rights of the world's oldest continuing people.

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Regina Woola from Aurukun at the Laura Dance festival.  
Photo © Kerry Trapnell

Will we pass on to future generations the ancient cultural and natural heritage of Australia?

# Contents

## Foreword

Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister for Sustainability Environment, Water, Population and Communities	6
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## World Heritage Leadership

Hon. Tony Burke MP, <i>Australia's World Heritage - Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional</i>	8
Hon. Andrew Powell MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage, Queensland <i>Queensland's Commitment to the World Heritage Convention</i>	14
Chrissy Grant, <i>Indigenous people and World Heritage: the Benefits, Opportunities and Challenges</i>	20
Don Henry and Denise Boyd, <i>Celebrating the role of World Heritage in Australia's environmental and cultural history</i>	30
Paul Murphy, <i>Australia's achievements and legacy on the World Heritage Committee</i>	36
Prof. Richard Mackay AM, <i>Setting Best Practice Standards for World Heritage Management</i>	42

## International Perspectives on the Convention

Kristal Buckley AM, <i>International and Regional Perspective on the State of World Heritage</i>	48
Peter Shadie, <i>Strategic Issues for World Heritage: some IUCN and personal perspectives</i>	54

## Maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value of Australia's World Heritage Areas: The Manager's Perspective

Hala Razian and Kathy Zischka, <i>Managing World Heritage in Australia: trends, issues and achievements</i>	60
Peter Cochrane, <i>Managing Australia's World Heritage in Kakadu National Park and Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park</i>	66
Tony Fleming and Sandra Potter, <i>Protecting Icy Islands – The Territory of Heard and McDonald Islands World Heritage Area</i>	72
Andrew Maclean, <i>Managing the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area</i>	76
Angie Stringer, <i>Managing Fraser Island World Heritage Area</i>	82
Jess Mann, <i>World Heritage in Western Australia</i>	88
Jacqueline Reid, <i>Managing Australia's World Heritage in the Greater Blue Mountains</i>	96
Richard Minter, <i>Managing Australia's World Heritage in the Willandra Lakes Region</i>	102
Tricia Waters, <i>Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area – remnants of our primeval past</i>	108
Deborah Craven-Carden and Angie Stringer, <i>The Australian Fossil Mammal Sites - Naracoorte and Riversleigh</i>	112

## Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional: Key Questions and Expert Responses

Jon Day, <i>Operationalising the Outstanding Universal Value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area: addressing some challenges raised by the World Heritage Committee</i>	118
--	-----

Penelope Figgis AO, <i>Managing Australia's World Heritage: A Summary of Key Questions and Expert Responses</i>	128
--	-----

## World Heritage and the Community

Leah Talbot, <i>Engaging Indigenous Communities in World Heritage declarations: processes and practice</i>	134
---	-----

Dr. Rosemary Hill, <i>Bringing the community into World Heritage through biocultural diversity: issues and policy implications</i>	140
---	-----

Stephen Wills, <i>Engaging the community as volunteers for Management – the Case of Lord Howe Island World Heritage Area</i>	146
---	-----

Dr. Lea Scherl, <i>World Heritage Areas in the life of communities: An analysis from the Wet Tropics of Queensland</i>	152
---	-----

Allison Halliday, Hank Horton and Alastair Birtles, <i>The Role and Importance of the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN) in achieving Best Practice Management of World Heritage in Australia</i>	158
--	-----

Peter Mooney, <i>Community Involvement in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area</i>	164
---	-----

Karen Vohland, <i>Community Engagement and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area</i>	170
--	-----

## Communicating and presenting World Heritage

Daniel Gschwind, <i>Valuing our iconic heritage areas: how the industry can support keeping the outstanding exceptional</i>	176
--	-----

Hilary Schofield, <i>Australia's National Landscapes Program – Promoting our World Heritage Icons</i>	180
--	-----

John Sinclair, <i>Fraser Island: a personal view of 'presenting' World Heritage</i>	186
--	-----

Lisa King, <i>Communicating the World Heritage brand: Building appreciation and commitment to the concept</i>	192
--	-----

## The Future of Australia's World Heritage

Dr. Geoff Mosley AM, <i>Australia's World Heritage Nominations – What are our missing icons and what can be done to resume progress?</i>	198
---	-----

Jessey Reid, <i>Voice of the Future: What does World Heritage mean to a young Australian?</i>	204
--	-----

Assoc. Prof. Peter Valentine, <i>The Future of World Heritage in Australia</i>	208
---	-----

## The Cairns Communique

<i>A statement of key principles for the future management of Australia's World Heritage</i>	214
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# Foreword

## The Hon Tony Burke MP

Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities



Photo © Commonwealth of Australia

This year, 2012 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, or the World Heritage Convention by the General Conference

of UNESCO in November 1972. It is with great pride that I can say that Australia ratified the treaty in 1974 and was one of the first nations to enact legislation to carry out its responsibilities under the *Convention*.

The development of the *Convention* and its adoption 40 years ago reflected a new era of environmental protection and activism both in Australia and overseas. It was and remains a movement that brings people together from across the political, social and economic divide to work together to protect and maintain places precious and important to them and the community.

In Australia, this new environmental activism expressed itself in movements to save and protect iconic places like the Great Barrier Reef, the Franklin River in Tasmania, the Daintree Rainforest and the Alligators Rivers region in the Northern Territory now known as Kakadu National Park.

During this time of fundamental political and social change Australian Governments rose to the challenge of working to provide protection for our iconic World Heritage places. The Great Barrier Reef was World Heritage listed in 1981, South West Tasmania in 1982 (renamed the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area in 1989), the tropical rainforests of the Daintree in 1988 and Kakadu in 1992. There are currently 19 Australian places on the World Heritage List.

The Australian Government continues to rise to the challenge of fulfilling its obligations under the World Heritage Convention. We welcome the recent decision by the World Heritage Committee on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and its challenge to prove the case for the management of coral reefs around the world in the face of a range of threats.

We know that climate change, declining water quality from catchment runoff, and impacts from coastal development are the priority issues to be addressed

in managing the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park World Heritage Area. Meeting this challenge will not be easy and will require a long-term commitment and it is a commitment the government is willing to make.

The long-term and ongoing management of Australia's World Heritage places is of vital importance to the Australian Government. The government understands that the protection and management of a World Heritage place doesn't end with its inscription on the World Heritage List. We continue to work with landowners, industry, Traditional Owners and other governments within Australia to manage our World Heritage places.

Two years ago the World Heritage Committee added more than 20,000 hectares to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and in June 2012 the World Heritage Committee included the Melaleuca-Cox Bight area, and area of more than 3,000 hectares, to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

In 2011, I had the privilege of being the federal environment minister for the inscription of the Ningaloo Coast on the World Heritage List and seeing the fulfilment of a 30 year promise with the inclusion of the Koongarra area in the Kakadu National Park on the World Heritage List. The inclusion of Koongarra enhances the protection of more than 50,000 years of Indigenous history and culture.

In the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the World Heritage Convention the Australian Government is working towards a World Heritage listing for one of Australia's most remarkable landscapes and environments, that is Cape York Peninsula in far north Queensland. People across Australia have worked to prevent mining in Cape York and in particular Shelburne Bay. Shelburne Bay is a remarkable landscape containing pure white sand dunes of unparalleled beauty.

The Australian Government is committed to putting forward a proposal for the World Heritage listing of Cape York Peninsula to the World Heritage Committee as soon as possible. This commitment is coupled with one made to the Traditional Owners of Cape York Peninsula that a World Heritage nomination will only happen with their consent.



As the celebrations for this significant milestone for World Heritage protection come to an end it is important to reflect on Australia's and the world's major heritage achievements but it is just as important to ensure we keep focussed on the future and continue to work for not only new World Heritage listings but for new and innovative approaches to their management and protection.

The papers and presentations from the Australian Committee for the International Union for Conservation and Nature Symposium in Cairns in August 2012 will challenge our current thoughts and ideas on

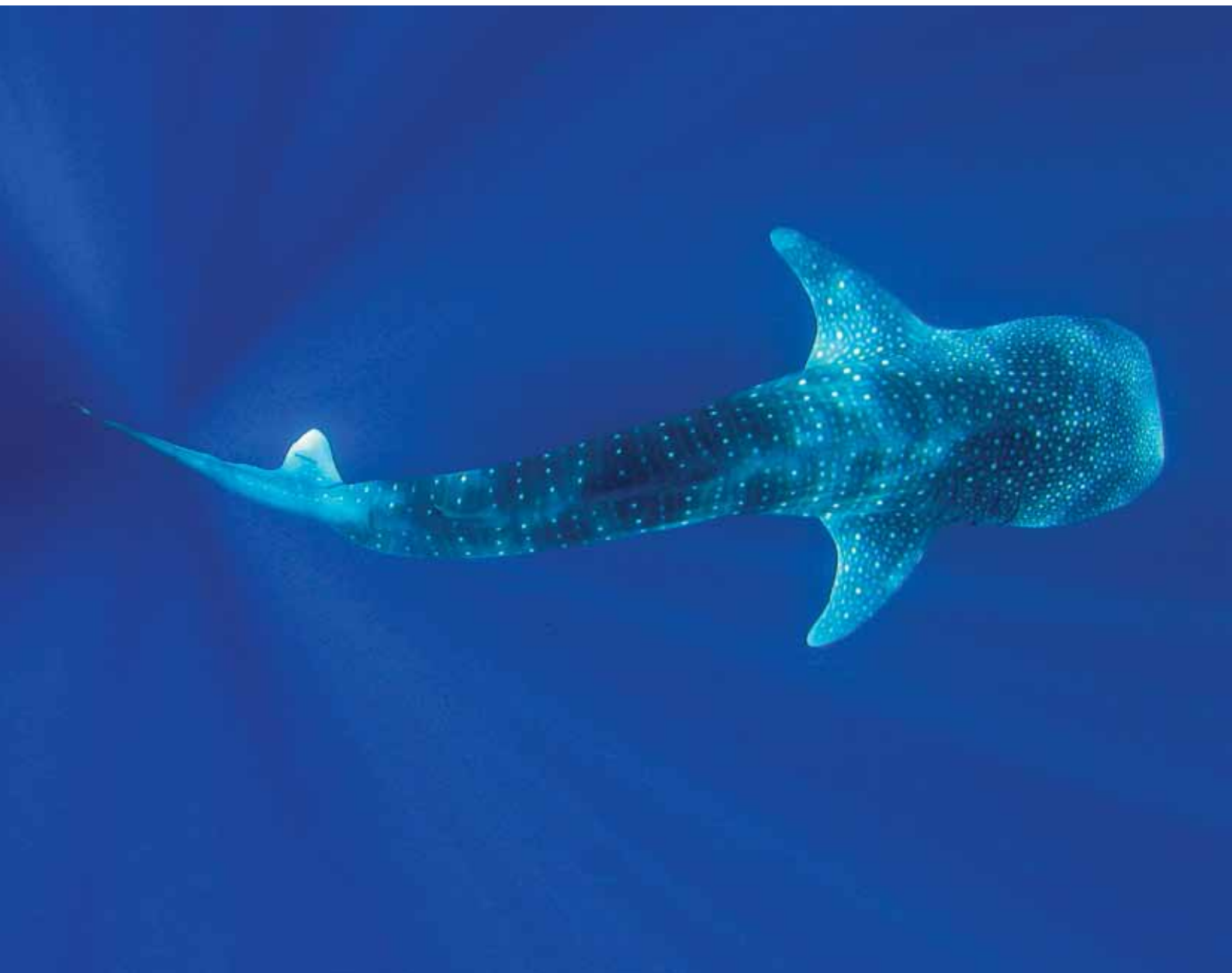
conservation management and provide us with unique information and ideas to guide and stimulate debate as we move towards the next 40 years of World Heritage.



**The Hon Tony Burke MP**  
**Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water,  
Population and Communities**

As the publication went to print in late June 2013, Minister Burke moved to the portfolio of Minister for Immigration, Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship.

The whale shark is the icon species of the abundant marine life of the Ningaloo Coast inscribed on the World Heritage List, June 2011.  
Photo © Axel Passek courtesy DEC.



# Australia's World Heritage – Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional

The Hon Tony Burke MP

Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

I want to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land that we're meeting on today and their elders past and present. I thank you very much for that very warm and informative Welcome to Country.

Welcome to Country provides a good frame to guide all discussions about heritage. Heritage is of course about the story of place. In Australia, we have the great privilege of the story of place, being something where we have a living history, and an expertise and depth of understanding through Traditional Owner groups being the longest continuing culture in the world that simply cannot be matched in other parts of the world.

We are of course in the fortieth anniversary of World Heritage. We also happen to be meeting on International World Indigenous Peoples Day. The theme of Indigenous voices being heard properly and honestly has been particularly important.

I'd like to begin with a very personal summary of how I engage with World Heritage. It provides a pathway for me to provide some explanation as to where I think we're up to, what I think we need to do better, and what I believe are the next steps.

In 1972, World Heritage was established through an interesting issue involving world funding for the relocation of some ancient Abu Simbel temples in Egypt threatened by the construction of the Aswan Dam. They didn't stop the dam, but the international community rallied to fund the moving of the temples. That was the beginning of World Heritage. In 1972 at the same time we had both environmental protection and Indigenous rights being looked at in a very real and new way with the advent of the Whitlam Government.

In 1972, at about this time forty years ago, I was two years old, and had no idea what was happening on the radio. In that time though, if I look back and reflect on the main stories I remember hearing on the radio. I remember hearing stories about the threat of drilling on the Great Barrier Reef and later as I got into high school, of the threat of the damming of the Franklin





The spectacular Roaring Meg Falls in Daintree National Park known by the Eastern Kuku Yalanji People as 'Kija', is an area that has very high Aboriginal cultural significance. Photo © K. Trapnell, Wet Tropics Images



River. Then I remember hearing stories of the risk of the Daintree Rainforest becoming a housing development and of Kakadu National Park becoming a uranium mine.

Effectively the major environmental stories of Australia have been stories where World Heritage has been at the core. With each of those, the Franklin and the - the Franklin certainly is the other way around. The listing happened first before there was a guarantee that the listing would be used to prevent the dam. But none the less, the stories of environmental protection and World Heritage have gone hand in hand for the last forty years in Australia.

Therein I think lies a significant challenge. We have a situation in Australia with World Heritage that is different from much of the rest of the world. In much of the rest of the world environmental powers lie with their national governments and World Heritage is seen simply as an extra layer of international recognition and telling of the story. In Australia of course, ever since those Whitlam years, it has also been a way of activating the Commonwealth through the External Affairs Power in our constitution.

Cape York will only become World Heritage with the agreement of its Traditional owners. Photo © Kerry Trapnell

The World Heritage Convention has involved number of very significant environmental decisions, transferring state control to federal authority, and ultimately to the desk of the person, who holds the office of the Minister of the Environment - which at the moment, with respect, is me.

My first political engagement was at the age of fourteen or fifteen, when I started writing letters to politicians. I told them I wanted to save the Daintree Rainforest especially the magnificent area where rainforest and reef met side by side. I had posters of the area all around my bedroom walls. I was passionate about it, it was the reason I ultimately made the decision to join the Labor Party when I was sixteen.

The Daintree World Heritage decision though, as I understood it, was very much about simply wanting to prevent a state government from going down a particular path. Now we have reached the fortieth anniversary, I think it is important for us to take stock, and make sure we are never treating World Heritage simply as a constitutional device. We need to make sure that with the incredibly significant shift in responsibility that happens when something is listed for World



Heritage, that we never allow that to be the whole story. And the story is one that is so important.

Heritage itself, whether built or natural heritage, is about telling the story. There is a lot of discussion that you'll hear at the moment, where people will lament the loss of books and how they like being able to actually hold a book. The move to iPads or Kindles, they say, means that they feel that they are missing part of the history.

What we need to remember here, is history existed long before the invention of the printing press- that while books have become a key tool for providing information, history lives in place. Text is a way of informing us about that history, but history actually lives in place.

One of my favourite poems is one by TS Eliot. A poem that is part of his *Four Quartets*, published together with *Murder in the Cathedral*. And the first of those is *Burnt Norton*. There's a line in that poem *Burnt Norton* that other echoes inhabit the garden. And I think that expression about, 'echoes inhabit the garden', is the best summary I've ever found of what heritage is about. In the garden, in the place, in the building, the echoes of the site, the history of the site, the stories of the ancestors of the site, had a home there.

That story can be transferred to a book, in a whole range of ways. But it will never live in a book in the way it lives in a place. In being able to tell that story, World Heritage places give us an opportunity to do it, for built heritage, and for natural heritage.

Only a few weeks ago, I had the privilege of being at the Royal Exhibition Centre, and there, if you're looking for a place in Melbourne where 'the echoes inhabit the garden', you can close your eyes and almost hear it: almost hear the voices of the people who would have been there during the Industrial Revolution, seeing the big new pieces of machinery that were coming in, able to do things that never could have been done in the past.

You could almost close your eyes, and hear the calls of the opening of the first national parliament of Australia as the mace is brought in. And you can close your eyes and hear the roars of the boxing matches there - history survives in that place.

So too, for me, when I first came to the Daintree, I was taken to coffee shops until eventually I said, look I just want to go somewhere really quiet, somewhere really quiet and hidden.

And I took my kids to Cape Tribulation, and could remember the images that had been on my bedroom wall, and could hear the voices then of people enjoying site, that was going to be preserved forever. I could hear the voices. Hear the voices of the ancestors,

the people who called this land home, right back to the first sunrise.

Then we come to the issue of management. With the example of the UNESCO Great Barrier Reef Report, I think, people will look at it and say well it does endorse that we are engaging best practice management.

You'll find a whole lot of language in there that's about endorsement. You'll find a whole lot of language in there that is about potential trends into the future, but ultimately - ultimately it is a reminder that World Heritage is not simply a constitutional device. Ultimately, the report says to us, with World Heritage comes a great level of ongoing responsibility.

It is not simply enough to have the best reef system in the world. There is also an obligation, just as ancestors show in looking after the country for future generations, but with World Heritage, we all take on looking after areas for future generations.

The strategic assessment that we're engaging in for the Reef, is a way of allowing the legal system within Australia to come to terms with the environmental and cultural responsibilities that we take on with World Heritage.

One of the problems has been that in both public debate and environmental decisions, we have tended to judge the value of how well we're looking after the environment by waiting for each project to come along, waiting to see how big the demonstrations were against it, and then seeing whether after all the investments happen at the final hurdle, do we allow it or do we knock it back?

If we do that, and we allow that to be the continued path, we'll have two problems; one, we will never get to value the story of the heritage of the areas that we put into World Heritage without massive conflict. So many Australians know the story of the Franklin River. How many know the story of Willandra Lakes? And, yet Willandra Lakes have been on the World Heritage list for so much longer.

We can't allow the story to be only told if there is enough conflicts surrounding it. We have to make sure that the management and the care for an area is something that we respect. In being able to respect management and care for an area, we therefore have to be able to make sure the values of an area truly reflect the values that are listed, must truly reflect the values that are there.

I've had one of the more moving moments of my life, which I quite proudly can't really talk about it, at an end ceremony at Uluru, when Uluru was listed for its natural and cultural values.

Some of the cultural values, by definition can't be spoken about. Yet there is an obligation for them to be protected, and there's work that's going on which will be some of the most significant work I think I'm ever involved with in my life, that there's about 12 people I wouldn't be able to talk to about, but this work is important and it must occur. We undermine the heritage listings at their core if we only look to the natural values without respecting cultural values, and respecting cultural values within the rules that are ascribed to those cultural values, which often will be that they can't be spoken about.

For my own part, there's a story that is quite a story of personal identity and political identity in the Wet Tropics listing, and it means a lot to be making this speech, only a few hundred metres from the boundary of that Wet Tropics World Heritage listing. It's also the case for the National Heritage part of that we see Indigenous values, Indigenous cultural values have not been formally listed yet.

I also want to make sure that if we look at what are the next stages of World Heritage listings, what's the pathway that we need to go to next, that there are some principles from which I will not depart, and principles from which I hope no future ministers will depart: whether it be natural heritage or whether it be cultural heritage, as Australians we should now be in a situation where listings only occur with the consent of the Traditional Owners.

I believe when we fall short of it, we fall short of respecting the heritage we are pretending to protect. With Cape York, the process has been slower than many people would like, including myself. Anyone who was involved in the environmental movement at the time that I've described, saw images back then of Shelburne Bay, and was convinced that they were looking at images of the snow, not of the tropics. Those images in Cape York are just part of one of the most magnificent parts of the world.

I'm very hopeful that in the coming month we will be going through a process towards receiving Indigenous consent and Traditional Owner consent. But be in no doubt of two things: one, I very much want to be able to be the Minister to put that listing forward; and two, if there is no consent I will not do it. I think these rules, these principles, are important levels of respect, but they are also important to make sure that we are not undermining heritage at the same time that we are listing it.

The other area where World Heritage work is making progress at the moment is with respect to Tasmania. At the moment we have had talks that have been going

now for some time, for over two years. I first dealt with these issues when I was the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister and I am working through them now as the Environment Minister. Over the course of the weekend that we are coming to, we will have a fairly good idea as to whether or not a forestry peace deal is in fact going to be possible in Tasmania. If it is, opportunities should follow for some fresh movement on the world heritage boundaries there. That will be a real test on our capacity to tell the story. Because, of course it is a peace deal if it comes off, not a story of conflict.

I do believe structurally if you want to find a weakness in how we tell the story of heritage at the moment in Australia, is that if there is not much conflict, we don't tend to tell the story at all. This is something which we must fix, because otherwise we keep falling back into it being a constitutional device. It's there to tell the story and it's there because history lives, and is vibrant and has its echoes in place. And therefore we must find better ways of telling that story.

I believe there has probably been no way more effective in improving the telling the story of heritage than the work that's been done by Indigenous Rangers on heritage sites. This is occurring sometimes on national heritage sites, sometimes world heritage sites, sometimes in places within the national reserve system that are not currently listed in anyway.

But in the short time that we have been in office, the number of Indigenous rangers has gone from 135 to what will be, once the program reaches its next stages in a few months, up to 730, that is 135 to 730 Indigenous rangers - people living on country, working on country, caring for country. Through this program we make sure that all aspects of the heritage are preserved and that all aspects of the story of ancestors and of current generations are able to continue to be told now and into the future.

Effectively one of the tests with heritage I think, and it is well framed by a good friend of mine from the NSW Parliament, who is the local state member from my seat, Linda Burney, who always says the political test for us all is 'what sort of ancestors do we want to be'.

Let's look at the recent listings of Ningaloo for world heritage where you get the opposite of what you generally find at a beach. Generally at the beach you have the situation where across the dunes it can be buzzing with wildlife and then you get to the water and it is sandy and lifeless. At Ningaloo you get the lack of life on the land and it all bursts to life the moment you get under water.





Jeffrey Lee, the sole survivor of the Djok people agreed that he did not want a uranium mine on his land, he ensured his tradition land Koongara beneath Nourlangie Rock was added to Kakadu World Heritage Area.  
Photo © Commonwealth (Parks Australia)

With the final completions of the Kakadu listings, with the situation where you have Jeffrey Lee, the sole survivor of the Djok people that in agreeing that he did not want a uranium mine on his land, he wanted Koongara added to the World Heritage listing. The Northern Land Council is now going through the final processes which hopefully means it won't be too long before I can stand up in the parliament and move to repeal the legislation, that has never been proclaimed, but is still on the statute books that allows uranium mining to be proclaimed within those areas.

So whether it be the stories that are yet to be told with the world discovering the magnificence of the additional areas of Tasmania, or the true magnificence of those areas of Cape York, whether it be the National Heritage site (the biggest National Heritage listing ever) across 19 million ha of the west Kimberley, or whether it be the environmental protection announced recently where Australia is now the world leader on protection of the

oceans with the Coral Sea - the jewel in the crown of the entire project, whether they be environmental protections through other methods or whether it be through national heritage and world heritage, we are making sure that Australia is in the front line of having a story that needs be told. And within that we must make sure that the special role of Traditional Owners, the irreplaceable role of Traditional Owners, is at the heart of that heritage being preserved and that story being told.

If we do that, then the challenges that we have found in the UNESCO report, the reminder and the warning bells that have been sounded that say World Heritage is not about the day you announce it, is not about the constitutional shift in power, it is about how you manage it, preserve it, care for it and being 'a good ancestor'. Then for generations for come, Australia will be a land of many heritage sights, of many stories, a magnificent garden filled with echoes.

# Queensland's Commitment to the World Heritage Convention

The Hon Andrew Powell MP

Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection

The theme for this symposium *'Australia's World Heritage: Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional'* is a good basis for discussion. We all have an obligation to keep World Heritage Areas exceptional and to make sure they have a bright future.

World Heritage Areas are outstanding examples of the world's natural and cultural heritage. I'm really proud that five of Australia's 19 World Heritage Areas are right here in Queensland, one of the most naturally diverse places on earth. Cairns is particularly special as it is the only place in the world where two World Heritage areas meet—the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef.

I count myself very lucky to represent another spectacularly beautiful part of this state, the Glasshouse Mountains. I'm also a father of five and I want my children, and their children, to also be able to visit, see and experience the beauty and wonder of places like this throughout their lifetimes.

As Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP), my role is to act as a strong environmental regulator which supports the sustainable long-term economic development of Queensland. I am responsible for managing the health of the environment to protect Queensland's unique flora and fauna. The Newman government is determined that EHP becomes the benchmark environment and heritage agency in Australia.

## Queensland's Environment and World Heritage

The environment portfolio for Queensland is huge. It covers more than 172 million hectares of land, features 6000 kilometres of coastline and contains 1165 offshore islands and little coral islands cays.

Queensland has the greatest level of biodiversity in Australia. We have 85 per cent of the native mammals, 72 per cent of its native birds, more than half of the nation's native reptile and frog species, and close to 13,000 native plant species.

Aside from its intrinsic worth, our biodiversity provides us with important 'services' on which we depend such





Subtropical rainforest in Lamington National Park. Photo © Paul Candlin, Commonwealth of Australia



as fresh water, clean air and the resources needed for industries such as tourism, forestry, fishing and agriculture. For example, the Great Barrier Reef, one of the world's iconic tourist destinations, attracts up to two million visitors each year and contributes more than \$5 billion annually to the Queensland economy.

Managing this state's environmental values effectively and efficiently is a complex undertaking. Here in Queensland, protected areas are established under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Qld.) and the state's five World Heritage Areas are jointly managed by the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) and the EHP in partnership with the Australian Government and other states.

Queensland has worked in partnership with the Commonwealth and other States to protect these special places for many years — not always with complete agreement, but always with commitment to their identification, protection, sustainable use and to ensure they have an important part in the life of communities.

### **Queensland's existing World Heritage Areas**

Queensland's five World Heritage Areas have distinctive values and distinctive management challenges. Following is a summary of the issues and challenges the government identifies for each property – and some of our policy and management responses.

### **Great Barrier Reef**

The Great Barrier Reef is a World Heritage Area made up of almost 3000 individual reefs and many coral islands. Covering 35 million hectares, the Reef stretches more than 2000 kilometres along the Queensland coastline and is the world's largest coral reef.

Largely protected in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, state marine parks and national parks, it is home to more than 1500 species of fish, 4000 species of molluscs, 400 species of sponge and 300 species of hard corals.

In 1981, the Great Barrier Reef became Queensland's first World Heritage Area. The Reef is a crucial part of Queensland's extraordinary natural heritage and the Government is committed to ensuring it continues to be one of the best managed marine protected areas in the world.

Queensland, like so many other places, wants to balance the protection of the environment with economic growth, and the reef, strategically positioned within Australia's trade gateway, needs careful management and strong environmental regulation.

The Reef was the focus of a World Heritage monitoring mission during 2012. The mission report was considered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting in St Petersburg in June 2012. I welcome the Committee's decision to not place the Reef on the 'in danger list', following concerns expressed about the impacts of development on its values. The Committee made recommendations about the management strategies for the Reef and noted a number of habitats and species facing particular pressures. A number of these concerns have already been addressed by this government and we will continue to ensure that our planning and management framework represents best environmental management practice.

The Queensland Government is also working with the Australian Government to progress the strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and the adjacent coastal zone, while at the same time removing unnecessary overlap and duplication in development assessment. The strategic assessment will help identify, plan for and manage existing and emerging risks to ensure ongoing protection and management of the unique environmental values of the Reef. The process will also address the concerns raised in the decisions of the World Heritage Committee. It is expected that the assessment will take around 12-18 months to complete. I am confident that we can strike the right balance between environmental protection and ensuring that appropriate development can occur in coastal areas.

Reef water quality is also a priority for the Queensland Government. The Reef is situated alongside valuable agricultural land and is subject to pollutants from farming such as nutrients, pesticides, fertilisers and sediment run-off. We know that to have a healthy reef, you must have a healthy catchment. Without good management of our landscapes and riparian areas, catchments will continue to shed soil, nutrients, pesticides and other pollutants. The Queensland and Australian Governments are jointly investing over \$5 million annually to monitor and model such things as:

- total suspended solids, organic and inorganic nutrients and pesticides
- grass and tree cover across catchments
- post-storm events like fires, cyclones and floods, as this tells us about land condition.

The Queensland Premier has also committed to maintain the \$35 million funding for Reef protection which covers ongoing cane nutrient trials, improved grazing and pesticide management research, extension, monitoring and modelling. Over the first two years, a \$2 million allocation will supercharge agricultural extension





Riversleigh's landscape of semi arid grasslands holds one of the world's richest fossil locations which tell of when the area was rainforest.  
Photo © Colin Totterdell, Commonwealth (DSEWPaC)

and \$8 million will support industry partnerships to deliver best management practice frameworks which will ensure our beef and cane production is profitable and the most environmentally responsible in the world.

### Wet Tropics

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area was listed in 1988 and extends from Cooktown to Townsville. It covers almost 900,000 hectares. The Daintree, Barron Gorge and Wooroonooran National Parks are all included within the area, which protects Australia's most extensive remaining area of wet tropical rainforest. The most diverse in Australia, these rainforests contain a stunning array of plant life on earth and have the highest concentration of primitive flowering plant families in the world.

This World Heritage Area is one of the most diverse and ancient rainforest landscapes on the planet. James Cook University and CSIRO researchers use it as a living laboratory where we are learning much about rainforest ecology and management for application throughout the world.

The Queensland Government has identified tourism as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. Here in the Wet Tropics we have an outstanding example of how important World Heritage can be to the

tourism industry and also of the valuable contribution sustainable tourism can make to the presentation of World Heritage values.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority has played a successful leadership role support of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and its communities over the past 20 years.

### Fraser Island

Fraser Island is the world's largest sand island and was World Heritage-listed in 1992. The island includes over 250 kilometres of sandy beaches, more than 40 kilometres of coloured sand cliffs, as well as dune blowouts. It is particularly extraordinary as despite being entirely composed of sand it supports tall rainforests and lakes nestled in the massive dunes.

On Fraser Island, the Newman government works closely with the scientific community, traditional owners and the broader community to make sure this iconic place is well managed and that we constantly review that management.

A key issue on Fraser Island is the potential to experience interaction with dingoes. While it is an important part of the island's ecosystem and a drawcard for visitors, there are risks associated with



coming close to wild predator species. That is why the Newman government has this year embarked on a comprehensive and independent review of dingo management on the island, to ensure both safety for visitors and dingo populations.

It also demonstrates our commitment to working closely with the tourism industry to make sure visitors enjoy their stay, do the right thing while they are there and leave with a positive memory.

### Gondwana Rainforests

The Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area, originally listed in 1986 to cover rainforests in New South Wales, was extended in 1994 to include rainforests on the Queensland side of the border.

It is made up many individual parcels of land that include some spectacular country, covering a total of 366 000 hectares; more than 59 000 hectares is in Queensland. Lamington, Springbrook, Mount Barney and Main Range National Parks are protected areas within Gondwana. Around two million people a year visit this World Heritage Area.

It is home to some ancient and vulnerable species and close to expanding coastal populations, making it highly accessible. This brings with it some extra challenges, for both protection and visitor safety. Day-to-day management of such a vast and complex area needs strong management directions in place.

Queensland works closely with the Commonwealth to manage the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and World Heritage Area.  
Photo © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA).

That is why the New South Wales, Queensland and Commonwealth Governments are working together to review the strategic overview that guides the management of the property to ensure safe and sustainable access, strong visitor experiences and protection of its ancient values.

### Riversleigh Fossil Site

The Australian Fossil Mammal Sites became a World Heritage Area in 1994. NPRSR manages the Riversleigh section, which covers 10,000 hectares of land in the southern section of Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park in north-west Queensland. Riversleigh is an amazing site that helps us unlock some of the mysteries of mammals through the significant fossils found there - among the richest and most extensive in the world.

We work closely with NPRSR traditional owners and scientists to inform management and future directions. The Newman government is also developing an updated interpretation strategy to make sure visitors get the most from their trip and understand why it is on the World Heritage List. Significant resources have also gone into better visitor facilities to make their stay more enjoyable.

Diverse as they are, when I consider the range of World Heritage Properties in Queensland, I think of the important principles that have contributed to their success, such as:



- strong systems of community engagement, ensuring the community has a real say in management and develops a sense of ownership and support
- effective planning and regulatory systems that ensure the Outstanding Universal Value of the properties is considered in decision-making
- partnerships between researchers and managers to ensure the best possible information is available for decision making
- strong collaborations between the governments and agencies that have a role in management, and
- active programs to ensure a close connection between the community and the World Heritage Area.

If we can continue to pursue these principles for our current and any future world heritage areas, we anticipate a very positive future.

### Cape York Peninsula

The potential for a World Heritage nomination of areas of Cape York Peninsula is under active consideration by the Commonwealth and Queensland governments. Extensive consultation is already underway with community groups, traditional owners, local government and industry on a nomination and the identification of outstanding values.

Together with this work, the Newman Government is committed to the development of a Bioregion Management Plan for the Cape York Peninsula. The Cape York Bioregional Management Plan will provide protection for the Peninsula's precious natural environment while allowing for appropriate development opportunities. The Plan will be the statutory regional plan for the Cape. The Cape York Plan will incorporate management of pristine waterways and the protected estate and set real natural resource management targets—all allowing for an integrated approach to the conservation of natural heritage values. The plan will identify, in consultation with Indigenous communities, industry and other landholders, the optimum mix of land use on the Cape, to provide increased certainty for all.

The plan will form a valuable part of the management arrangements for a world heritage area, should a nomination be successful. We are interested in hearing people's views on potential boundaries and suitable management arrangements for a possible future world heritage area.

### Conclusion

Queensland has a long standing commitment to the protection of World Heritage Areas going back to 1981 with the listing of the Great Barrier Reef.

We boast the greatest levels of biodiversity in Australia. This is an important part of what makes Queensland a special place to live and provides us with a range of services including the basis for industries such as tourism, forestry, fishing and agriculture.

While these services are important to our economy the government remains committed to ensuring their development is in harmony with strong protection of the environment. We want World Heritage Areas and other places to remain in place for future generations to enjoy.

We will continue working in partnership with the Commonwealth and other States when it comes to the identification, protection and sustainable use of these special places.

This 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Heritage Convention is a perfect time to celebrate and reflect on the part that we all play in keeping outstanding areas around the world exceptional.

### Author

**Andrew Powell** is the Queensland Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and the State Member for Glass House.

### Biography

Before being sworn in as Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection in April 2012, Mr Powell held various parliamentary roles including the Shadow Spokesperson for the Environment and member of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee. Mr Powell was also previously a member of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and served on the panel of Temporary Speakers in the chamber.

Mr Powell's experience before becoming a Member of Parliament in 2009 includes a number of years in public sector roles. This includes work for the Queensland Department of Child Safety (2005–09) and the Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet (2001–04). In his earlier career, Mr Powell worked in Fiji and New Zealand (2000) and for the Commonwealth Department of Defense (1996–2000), where he gained experience in international relations, human resources and financial management.

*Born in Melbourne in 1973, Mr. Powell holds a Bachelor of Science and Arts from the University of Queensland and a Certificate III in Public Administration from the Department of Defense.*

# Indigenous people and World Heritage: the Benefits, Opportunities and Challenges

Chrissy Grant

I want to thank and acknowledge Henrietta Marrie for her warm Welcome to Country, and show my respect to the Elders past and present from the Yidinji Traditional Owners and other Traditional Owners present here today.

I am a Kuku Yalanji Traditional Owner on my mother's side with responsibilities on country from south of Daintree River to Cape Tribulation. My heritage also includes Mualgal from Kubin in the Torres Strait on my father's side.

To present this paper it was essential that I talk to as many of the Traditional Owners in the World Heritage properties as possible. Without their willingness I would not have the rich input into my paper. My thanks to them all and I have acknowledged them in references.

There is reliable evidence of Aboriginal people living in Australia's vast landscape of up to 60,000 years ago. After a decade of research Bill Gammage (2011) in his latest book *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia* determines that early Europeans commented again and again that the land looked like a park. He also argues that Aboriginal people managed the landscape effectively with traditional methods and fire regimes that prevented catastrophic fires such as have occurred in more recent times. Aboriginal people were thought to have managed the land in a far more systematic and scientific fashion than it was ever realised.

Aboriginal people have actively managed the land and the environment for a sustainable existence across many types of landscapes of land and sea. Those landscapes included vast areas of rainforests, deserts, grasslands, forests, mountain ranges, rugged coastlines, inland lake systems, rivers, reefs and islands; some of which are now recognised at the highest level being listed as World Heritage Areas.

## World Heritage Areas with Indigenous cultural significance

Worldwide there are 962 World Heritage Areas (Areas) of which there are 745 protected for their cultural values as well as 29 mixed with natural and cultural values. That leaves 188 World Heritage places protected for their natural values. For Aboriginal people there are cultural values and significance across the landscapes and natural features. Stories lie across the land giving it









Cave art in Kakadu World Heritage.  
Photo © Tom Smith, Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPaC)

special importance to the Traditional Owners.

With Australia's 19 World Heritage Areas inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List there are only four recognised for their Indigenous cultural values – Kakadu, Willandra Lakes, Uluru Kata-Tjuta, and the Tasmanian Wilderness. However, Fraser Island, the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics listings also include mention of Aboriginal people's prior occupation and the cultural significance of the area in the description of the Areas. The serial World Heritage listings for the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia in NSW and Queensland amount to 11 properties - mainly National Parks and Nature Reserves; there are two Fossil Mammal Sites in Riversleigh in Queensland and Naracoorte in South Australia; and a total 12 separate sites for the Convict sites across Tasmania, NSW, Western Australia and External Territories.

For some Traditional Owners, the fact that only four out of 19 listed Australian World Heritage Areas are formally

recognised for Indigenous culture, is unacceptable.

So it is no wonder that they are questioning why the Aboriginal cultural values are not recognised in World Heritage listings, particularly where the landscapes have been managed for thousands of years.

The following is a brief overview of what is currently in place across some of those Areas with perspectives from the Traditional Owners that I was fortunate to be able to speak to about their Areas. Their input and feedback provided some valuable suggestions for management arrangements, dedicated funding, the need for appropriate representation of Traditional Owners in the decision making structures, and for meaningful engagement across all aspects of World Heritage.

### **Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park**

The Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park was initially listed for its natural heritage in 1987 and relisted for cultural heritage in 1994. Leading up to 1985 there were many



years of negotiation for Anangu to become the legal owners of their traditional land. They wanted the right to look after the area in what they believed to be the proper way. Anangu became increasingly concerned that their traditional lands were under pressure from pastoralism, mining and tourism.

Established in 1986 the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Board of Management has 12 members, eight of whom are Anangu, one representative each from tourism and environment, nominated by the Federal Minister and one representative nominated by the Northern Territory Government. All are approved by Anangu and the Director of National Parks. They are responsible for the preparation of the Plan of Management and making policy and management decisions.

For Anangu people *Tjukurpa* is the foundation of Anangu life and society. *Tjukurpa* is not written down, but memorised and it guides the development and interpretation of policy as set out in the Plan of Management which are developed in consultation with Anangu and a wide range of individuals and organisations associated with the park.

*Unfortunately with the Anangu going through 'sorry business' I was unable to talk with the appropriate Traditional Owner. However with the structure in place the Anangu are actively engaged at all levels of the Area from the Joint Board of Management to implementation on the ground.*

### Kakadu National Park

Kakadu National Park is listed for its natural and cultural heritage and declared in three stages 1981, 1987 and 1992 – with the latest extension being Koongarra which was added to the Kakadu World Heritage Area by the World Heritage Committee on 27 June 2011. Like other areas around the boundaries of Kakadu, Koongarra was under threat of being mined. Traditional Owners wanted to protect and conserve the strong cultural values so pushed for a number of years to have it included in the WHA listing (Australia map, 2012).

A Board of Management with a majority of 10 representatives of the traditional owners out of 15 was established in 1989 to prepare, along with the Director, Plans of Management for the park; to make decisions about the management of the park that are consistent with the Plan of Management; to monitor the management of the park with the Director; and to give advice, along with the Director, to the Minister on all aspects of how the park develops in the future.

*Unfortunately Kakadu Traditional Owners were also going through 'sorry business' and again I was unable to speak with the appropriate person. However you've*

*heard the concerns directly from the Mirrar people at the conference with their concerns about World Heritage listing or conditions imposed on Indigenous people without their free, prior and informed consent. Not surprisingly the Mirrar are not the only Traditional Owners to raise this issue.*

### Willandra Lakes Region

The Willandra Lakes Region (Region) is inscribed on the World Heritage List for its cultural values bearing an exceptional testimony to a past civilisation. It is an extensive area found in western NSW that contains a system of ancient lakes formed over the last two million years. Most of these long dry lakes are fringed by a crescent shaped dune or lunette. Aborigines lived on the shores of the lakes for at least 50,000 years, and the remains of a 40,000 year old female found in the dunes of Lake Mungo are believed to be the oldest ritual cremation site in the world. The Aboriginal cultural heritage values are described as unique cultural tradition including landforms and locations which greatly extend our understanding of Australia's environmental and Aboriginal cultural history.

There are three official World Heritage committees responsible for policy and management in the Region. The Two Traditional Tribal Groups Elders Council represents the interests of those Aboriginal people who are traditionally affiliated with the area and provide traditional perspectives on management issues, directions and priorities; the Community Management Council (CMC) made up of traditional owners, landholders, shire councils & government agencies and the Technical Scientific Advisory Committee.

In addition there are other committees and bodies that make significant contributions to the Region's activities such as the Mungo Joint Management Committee, the Willandra Landholders Protection Group, Department of Lands, and the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority.

*From a Traditional Owner's perspective the committees are working well. In fact the pastoralists and the Traditional Owner groups decided that they needed to work together and they're doing that now. There are a majority of Aboriginal heritage officers dealing with cultural issues. While they are struggling with funding to maintain their World Heritage Unit, there are benefits and advantages as well. With the entry fees into the Park a small amount is put towards the Discovery Rangers working and the remainder goes back into the park for management and not into the general revenue.*



## The Tasmanian Wilderness

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (Area) was also originally listed for its natural and cultural heritage in 1982 and extended in 1989, 2010 and 2012 under criteria not identical with the criteria for the original listing. The Aboriginal values recognised that human societies in this region were the most southerly known peoples on earth during the last ice age.

They are into their second Plan of Management which has a timeframe of 10 years and has retained the general thrust of the 1992 plan. Some new additions to the new plan affecting the Aboriginal communities are:

- increased emphasis on engaging the community;
- increased emphasis on identifying and protecting the world heritage and other natural and cultural values of the Area which may result in updating or re-nomination of the area for World Heritage listing;
- increased Aboriginal involvement in management of the Area with a partnership set up between the government agency and the Aboriginal community to manage for the conservation of Aboriginal values in the Area; and
- allowing for the continuation of established practices, where these do not negatively impact on the values of the Area.

*From the Traditional Owners' perspective, the Aboriginal engagement in the management of the Area has had its ups and downs. It started with the establishment of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Advisory Committee (TWWHA) with 16 members and working well between the Advisory Committee, the Land Council and the Elders Committee up until two years ago when a reduction of funds caused the committee to be disbanded.*

*The Tasmanian Government recently approved TWWHA Advisory Committee to start up again but with a smaller membership of eight - where there are two Aboriginal Board members – one male and one female. The new Advisory Committee will meet four times a year. There are good relations between the Aboriginal community, the Advisory committee and Aboriginal rangers implementing the Plan of Management. It will continue to feedback relevant information to the Land Council and the Elders Committee and seems to working well at this stage. While the change is less than what was previously in place, Traditional Owners are heartened about the future of their engagement with the management of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.*

## Fraser Island World Heritage Area

Fraser Island was listed in 1992 and its description acknowledges that there has been Aboriginal occupation of at least 5,000 years and in fact further archaeological work may even indicate earlier occupation.

The Butchulla people are the Traditional Owners of Fraser Island. Butchulla people lived in harmony with the seasons and the land and sea and today continue to walk the cultural pathway of their ancestors.

The Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) with eight Aboriginal members provides advice to the Management Committee on matters relating to the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the Fraser Island World Heritage Area (Area). Each family group within the Butchulla nation is invited to nominate one representative and Committee positions are held for a period of three years.

*The Traditional Owners would like to see a scheme where a minimal percentage of funds raised from visitation to Fraser Island are set aside for the Traditional Owners to implement initiatives for scholarships and jobs schemes for their younger people, but nothing has advanced in this area yet. The Butchulla people have aspirations for tourism ventures, as while there is heavy visitation to the Island which impacts on the environment, there are currently no benefits coming back to the community from general tourism.*

*There are four Aboriginal rangers with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, comprising male and female rangers. The IAC works with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and sometimes meets with the rangers to deal with cultural issues.*

*The committee meetings combine twice a year with the rangers but for the Traditional Owners (TOs) it is not considered enough interaction between the TOs and rangers implementing the management plan. According to the TOs the committee is not working to its fullest potential as there is very little involvement in the decision making processes.*

*Traditional Owners urge that caution must be heeded to ensure that when funds are allocated to any World Heritage Area, TO engagement must be secured, particularly when there are cultural sensitivities and impacts on the natural environment to be managed.*



The discovery of ancient human remains at Lake Mungo in 1968 revolutionised our understanding of the antiquity of Aboriginal civilisation in Australia.  
Photo © Mark Mohel Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPAC)

## The Great Barrier Reef

Australia's Great Barrier Reef (Reef) is the largest coral reef ecosystem on the planet and one of the richest and most complex natural ecosystems. The Reef was listed in 1981 and also acknowledges the cultural importance with many archaeological sites of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin that includes fish traps, middens, rock quarries, story sites and rock art. The inscription includes a number of islands where there are spectacular galleries of rock art, some of which record the history of the ships and vessels that travelled up and down the east coast past Aboriginal communities living on the mainland.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Authority) is the overarching governing agency for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (Area) which sits within the boundary of the broader Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Marine Park). The management structure consists of a five person Board of Management (Board) with one Traditional Owner member and four Reef Advisory

Committees who provides advice to the Board on the Area and the Marine Park. The Reef Advisory Committees are Catchment and Coastal; Ecosystem (with one Indigenous representative); Indigenous (with four Traditional Owners); and Tourism and Recreation (with one Traditional Owner). Additionally there are 12 Local Marine Advisory Committees covering areas from Cape York to the Burnett where Indigenous people are able to have input.

There are seventy-four Traditional Owner groups along the length of the Reef. Traditional use of marine resources provides environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits to Traditional Owners and their sea country.

*From a Traditional Owner's perspective the Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC) has met five times since it was established in 2009. The IRAC is currently utilised more as a policy group rather than a representative group of TOs but there are changes due soon to the way the committee currently works.*





Purnululu National Park. Photo © John Baker & DSEWPaC

*The committee has the opportunity to view and make comment on major policy documents such as Biodiversity Strategy.*

*No Aboriginal rangers are employed directly by the Authority, although there are a number of Indigenous Compliance Officers... There is currently an opportunity to support a Cultural Authority around the harvest of marine species through the development of Traditional Use Marine Resource Agreements (TUMRAs). These agreements are where TOs enter into a voluntary agreement for their use and management of marine resources. Recognition of Traditional Knowledge, as opposed to working within a western scientific framework will require a change of mindset within the Authority. TOs feel this has, and will, prove to be challenging into the future.*

*The cultural values are not listed and it needs to happen. Peoples' connection and use is recognised under Criterion 9 'Man's Interaction with the Environment' for which the Reef was inscribed on the*

*World Heritage List in 1981. There are moves to develop an Indigenous Heritage Strategy that will look into getting the Indigenous cultural values listed.*

*There needs to be a broader focus on TOs participation in the management of Sea Country, not just focused on turtles and dugongs, but for the development of more comprehensive management frameworks.*

### **Wet Tropics World Heritage Area**

The Wet Tropics were listed in 1988 and acknowledge Aboriginal occupation as far back as 50,000 years with a rich environment for hunter-gatherers. Eighteen rainforest Aboriginal language groups exist across the Wet Tropics area. These Aboriginal rainforest people used a range of forest products including toxic food plants. This usage is not recorded anywhere else.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) was established under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* to provide leadership, facilitation, advocacy and guidance in the





management and presentation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (Wet Tropics).

The management structure is across three levels with the State and Commonwealth Ministerial Council coordinating policies and providing funding and the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board responsible for general planning and policy development. The six person board has two Indigenous Directors. The Board is advised by the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance, the Community Consultative Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee. The State Department of Environment and Heritage Protection manage the day to day aspects of the Wet Tropics.

*The experience of some Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics can be described as frustrating, discriminating and uncertain. As a whole group they feel that they are not getting the respect that should be in place for a good working relationship with agencies to manage their traditional country. The Rainforest Aboriginal people lodged a re-nomination for their cultural values*

*to be added to the Wet Tropics listing and are disappointed that nothing has been finalised after nearly 5 years of waiting; and frustrated that there has been no formal communication to the Traditional Owners about their re-nomination proposal. So the message from the Minister that cultural values for the Wet Tropics will be added is very welcomed by the Rainforest Bama and more broadly the Australian public and we look forward to a positive outcome.*

*Some uncertainty for the northern TOs is that they are already dealing with two World Heritage Areas with the Wet Tropics and the GBRWHA. The Yalanji language group is already split into Western and Eastern and traditionally it was never separated – they were all one group. Hence with Cape York Traditional Owners going through the process of consultation for World Heritage, there is the possibility of having yet another World Heritage Area to deal with. This is a very daunting prospect for people who do not perceive the boundaries imposed by non-Indigenous society.*



*There are some positives with the Rainforest Aboriginal People becoming stronger and united in their engagement with Government and other stakeholders. The Rainforest Aboriginal People's Alliance was formed by Traditional Owners to represent and advocate the interest of the Bama across the whole Wet Tropics region. This Alliance strongly promotes the principles contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and advocates against the practice of selective consultation with particular individuals and groups about matters affecting the whole region. For this to be achieved the TOs believe that respect has to be given to the role of the Alliance by governments, industries, businesses and organisations when doing business with Rainforest Bama.*

Indigenous people and their connection to their Country in other World Heritage Areas such as Purnululu, Ningaloo, Shark Bay and Greater Blue Mountains are also advocating that their cultural values are recognised and included in the World Heritage listings.

### **Indigenous Rights and Management**

Australia has supported the adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) that recognises rights associated with the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect them; free prior and informed consent; self-determination; have rights to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or used; and to improve their economic and social conditions to name a few.

The feedback from a range of TOs was about exactly these things. They want to work with governments to be engaged on decision making committees – not just continuing to be giving advice that does not seem to be going anywhere. They want to participate in all processes, but also to be informed prior to the event so that they can make informed decisions and give their consent freely. Indigenous people everywhere work towards self-determination where they are in control. They also want the opportunity through the World Heritage listing to pursue their economic, social and cultural development. They want to stay on Country and practice their culture and more importantly educate their younger people on Country.

But they cannot, and should not be expected to continue to do this work on a voluntary basis. They should be adequately compensated. Very often Indigenous people at the forefront of community interests wear several different 'hats' and are constantly having to change them even within the one meeting. It comes with the territory of being a responsible

Traditional Owner working to improve the conditions of their communities. But I think we've adapted well.

Usually where Indigenous people still have access to their Country, they are still involved in managing and caring for Country. Managing their Country may be through a number of ways – it could be an Indigenous Protected Area; Rangers working on Indigenous land, in national parks, Indigenous Protected Areas, Wild Rivers, community organisations and the like. Indigenous land management is the fastest growing employment area for communities.

Indigenous people are advocating obtaining access to World Heritage Areas to be able to maintain their cultural practices and traditions. For Indigenous people, the importance of having access to their country regardless of title, is evidenced by the fact that there are improvements in their health and well being, language, education, cultural knowledge and skills... the list can go on.

While some Aboriginal people are engaged in a number of ways in the management of the World Heritage values, others want equity in representation at Committee levels and involvement in the management of the World Heritage values. It is time to recognise Aboriginal people's cultural values and the appropriate resources to manage them in Australia's World Heritage Areas.

### **Opportunities for Traditional Owners of World Heritage Areas**

A recent World Heritage and Indigeneity Workshop was held in Auckland, New Zealand in March 2012 with Australian Aboriginal input from two Areas – the Greater Blue Mountains and Willandra Lakes. The outcomes from the workshop offered substance to the inclusion of a fifth strategic objective to 'Enhance the role of Communities in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*' into the Operational Guidelines. The outcomes from that workshop will be presented to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

The terminology of 'Indigeneity' received mixed views but all agreed that Indigenous people are those that have an intimate and powerful connection to the lands on which they live and their cultural identity shapes and is in turn shaped by their natural environment.

There is a strong push to have the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN), or a similar arrangement for Traditional Owners to be actively involved in the management and promotion of their cultural values. The AWHIN must be re-instated and properly resourced. There may be other opportunities to gain funding for such a network, and governments need

to work with the Indigenous members to secure those resources. A meeting every three years is not effective in anyone's language.

Indigenous Traditional knowledge and practices contribute to 'cultural sciences' and should be acknowledged equally as western science. While the Anangu are working with scientists at Uluru, there needs to be recognition of Indigenous 'cultural scientists' and traditional knowledge holders through inclusion in World Heritage Scientific Advisory Committees.

The Commonwealth is currently developing a set of guidelines for Indigenous engagement and it is a perfect opportunity to include a set of principles that will address Indigenous engagement specific to World Heritage nomination and management of the values. The guidelines should also endorse the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the *Convention of Biological Diversity* for 10(C) and 8 (j), and the Nagoya Protocol as well as the *AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research into Australian Indigenous Studies* for best practice standards.

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act), Subdivision G – Assistance for protecting World Heritage properties, S.324 could be used to assist Traditional Owners become more engaged in the management of World Heritage Areas. This section in the EPBC Act has the capacity for the Minister as he thinks fit, to give financial or other assistance to Traditional Owners (any other person) to protect or conserve the values of a declared World Heritage property. Therefore through Plans of Management Indigenous people could be assisted to manage and protect their Indigenous cultural heritage.

My final word is that in researching previous meetings and conferences focussing on Indigenous People's engagement in World Heritage, the opportunities and issues raised today are the same issues and recommendations that have been raised since 1998. It seems that there has been very little or no action to improve the situation. Let's hope that the next time a World Heritage Conference or meeting is held at the national level, that we won't be repeating these concerns again.

### Primary Sources for Indigenous Comment

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**Hank Horton**, Traditional Owner, Tasmanian Wilderness, personal comment, 2012.

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**Melissa George**, Traditional Owner, Great Barrier Reef, personal comment, 2012.

**Robyn Bellafquih**, Traditional Owner, Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef, personal comment, 2012.

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### Biography

Ms Chrissy Grant is an Aboriginal (Kuku Yalanji from the Jalunji-Warra clan) and Torres Strait Islander (Mualgal from Kubin on Moa Island) Elder. Ms Grant is a retired public servant and works as a consultant as well as holding positions on Ministerial Advisory Committees, other governmental panels and committees and non-government boards.

Ms Grant has worked at the national level for more than 30 years and has built extensive networks within Indigenous communities from housing to heritage across the country. During her career, Ms Grant has facilitated many workshops and meetings and has extensive experience previously as Director of Indigenous Heritage in the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) and later the Department of Environment and Heritage working with communities on cultural and natural resource management and particularly with heritage management, conservation and protection.

# Celebrating the role of World Heritage in Australia's environmental and cultural history

Denise Boyd  
Don Henry

Robert Hughes in 'The Fatal Shore' reflects on Australia's convict heritage, a still powerful thread in our diverse Australian journey.

*"The visitor today, wandering through what remains of the [Port Arthur] penitentiary with other tourists, can hardly grasp the isolation it once stood for. Perhaps that is easier deduced from Nature itself, from the barely penetrable labyrinth of space that England chose as its abode of crime; and to see that, one need only go to the black basalt cliffs that frame the Tasman Peninsula, crawl through the bushes to their unfenced rim and gaze down on the wide, wrinkled, glimmering sheet of our imprisoning sea."*

We have now found, and are still finding, that this glimmering sea doesn't imprison us, but laps on the shores of a magnificent natural and rich cultural heritage, that abounds on this ancient continent.

The story of imprisonment of some peoples is not our current story. Australia's World Heritage places remind us that we are custodians of something special, of universal value. This is part of us and we are part of it. This is home.

## World Heritage and the Australian environment movement

From the earliest days of Australia's environment movement, formal recognition and protection for our beautiful landscapes and unique natural heritage were at the core of advocacy efforts. At the first meeting of the newly formed Australian Conservation Foundation's Council in 1965, the Great Barrier Reef, the Mallee, rainforests and Central Australia were identified as the four areas most needing coordinated national attention and action.

Since the 1970s, World Heritage listing has featured as the rallying point for many struggles against development and degradation, and remains a powerful focus to this day.

The emergence of a strong and coordinated environment movement during the 60s and 70s, along with occasional windows of opportunity afforded by responsive politicians, have given Australia a rich, but incomplete, network of protection across land tenures and jurisdictions.

The 1970s was a decade of increased public awareness of conservation issue. This resulted in various responses, from local activism to protect wildlife and bushland, to direct political activity with the





The Gordon River Falls. The 1980s battle to save the wild Franklin Gordon River of the Tasmanian wilderness was the defining battle of Australia's World Heritage history. Photo: © Grant Dixon



establishment of the world's first green political party in Tasmania in 1972 (Broadbent, 1999, p.54).

Environmentalists concerned about a range of issues from the impacts of commercial whaling, uranium mining in Kakadu, dams in Tasmania to sand mining on Fraser Island became increasingly skilled at campaigning from grass roots action to national policy and advocacy.

In 1974, Australia was one of the first countries to join the World Heritage Convention and the Australian Conservation Foundation proposed World Heritage nominations for areas of great natural and cultural heritage value, beginning with the Great Barrier Reef and Fraser Island (Broadbent, 1999 p.124).

From this time, through the eighties and nineties, and to a slightly lesser extent into the new century, World Heritage became the central goal of many of the dramatic campaigns for natural areas in Australia that define the evolution of modern conservation. The roll call is extensive: the Great Barrier Reef; Fraser Island and the Great Sandy region which included the Cooloola sand dunes; Moreton and Stradbroke Island; the rainforests of NSW which included such iconic battles as the Border Ranges, Terania Creek, Nightcap Ranges and South east Queensland; Stages two and three of Kakadu including the battle against Coronation Hill (Hamilton, 1996); the Wet Tropical Rainforests of northern Queensland, including the much disputed Daintree Region; and the ultimate and defining conservation battle of the last century the campaign to stop the damming of the iconic wild Franklin River in the heart of a declared World Heritage Area (Buckman, 2008 and Green, 1984).

World Heritage listing assumed this central importance because environmentalists felt that once an area was listed it would make its protection permanent. It was in effect Australia making a commitment to the rest of the world to ensure the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of listed places would be conserved for current and future generations. This goal seemed to have been partly achieved when in 1983, as the culmination of the nationwide campaign to save the Franklin River, the High Court of Australia upheld the validity of the World Heritage Properties Conservation Act 1983 (Broadbent, 1999 p.214).

### A contested concept

It is worth remembering as we contemplate 40 years of the Convention that almost every stage of achieving World Heritage listing was a profound struggle where the NGO movement had to stand up against the prevailing paradigm of land only being valued for its capacity to produce commodities - minerals, timber,

pastoral feed or crops. This utilitarian approach to land use combined with a strong aspect of the Australian political culture, which pitted state's rights against the fear of a strong central government (Toyne, 1994) to create an adversarial rather than collaborative approach to conservation initiatives. The World Heritage Committee often stood amazed as opposing contingents of Australians arrived for World Heritage meetings to support or oppose a listing. An extreme example was when the Queensland Government sent its Minister for the Environment to lobby against the Australian nomination of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (Valentine and Hill, 2008). It is worth noting that the Queensland delegation could not be heard due to the UN protocol that only national governments can address the meeting.

World Heritage therefore has been a focus of competing interests. Before it was listed, some saw the Reef as an oil generator, others as a great protected part of nature (Wright, 1977). Some saw the wet tropical rainforests as a source of wood, others as biologically rich and ancient ecosystems (Valentine & Hill, 2008). Some saw Koongarra in Kakadu as a uranium mine, while the Traditional Owners held it sacred as living cultural heritage handed down through hundreds and thousands of generations (ACF, 2013). Some saw the Franklin River in Tasmania as a source of hydro-electricity, others as a great wild river (Brown, 1987).

The Franklin Dam campaign was indeed a battle royale, culminating in the famous blockade which, in the summer of 2002 – 3, brought thousands of people to the river in undoubtedly Australia's most dramatic and most televised activist campaign (Green, 1984).

It became a global issue, even coming to the attention of the author of this paper as a school student in Scotland, with news that the famous botanist David Bellamy had been imprisoned for trying to stop the dam. Civil disobedience became a pathway for a new form of activism to protect wildlife and special places, familiar to students of social history in campaigns to end slavery, racial discrimination and women's suffrage.

Hence these outstanding places, and the people who would exploit or protect them, have led to significant and vitriolic battles often lasting many years, and resulting in political and legal changes. We are still feeling the effects of these events. In Tasmania the bitter brawl over the forests continues to this day as those who would convert ancient forests to paper clash with those who see them as treasure houses of history, culture and biodiversity. The forestry industry has struggled to adapt to changing global markets, while conservationists advocate for living, intact forests to be properly valued and protected as an economic asset.



## Issues of Today

The focus of conservation discussion in Australia has widened to include more systemic issues like sustainable development, restoration of degraded landscapes and waterways, expanding protection to the marine environment, and working with Traditional Owners to protect natural and cultural values.

However many organisations like ACF continue to support World Heritage and strongly support extensions and new nominations. They remain constantly alert to the integrity of the Convention and concerned at any diminution of its on-going importance. ACF for example has joined the many voices of concern which are discussed in detail by other authors over the threats to the Great Barrier Reef particularly by major resource development, ports and shipping (See chapter by Day).

There is still much to do. The early listing of Australian World Heritage sites brought attention to both natural and Aboriginal heritage, notably Kakadu and Uluru, but also the long overdue recognition of the antiquity of

Australian Aboriginal culture through Tasmanian Wilderness and Willandra Lakes. More recently there is increasing awareness of the way in which cultural heritage is intertwined with natural heritage and the indivisibility of these two strands for the Traditional Owners of country. This has also led to the understanding that those Traditional Owners must be afforded the opportunity to give their 'full free, prior and informed consent' to use of Country, including nominations for listing to the National and World Heritage lists.

The Australian Conservation Foundation has adopted as policy the need for such consent as essential to genuine understanding of, and commitment to, reconciliation and healing between new and old cultures living in Australia.

The cultural values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage area will finally soon receive recognition on the National Heritage list after many years of absence. Yet almost 30 years after the Wuthathi and environment groups stood shoulder to shoulder to protect the great natural and

Shelburne Bay on Cape York is place of stunning environmental and cultural values – will it be recognised as World Heritage?  
Photo © K.Trapnell, Wet Tropics Images



cultural values of Shelburne Bay on Cape York Peninsula from mining, this magnificent region remains without formal recognition or protection.

Another key priority for the Australian environment movement is the strength and integrity of Australia's national environmental laws. Various heritage protection laws were combined into the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act in 1999, codifying Australia's responses to its various obligations under international treaties, using the external affairs head of power of the Constitution. This had the effect of giving the Commonwealth capacity to override the States on matters of national environmental significance including impacts on World Heritage.

The broadly discretionary nature of the Act means that the Commonwealth is not strictly required to protect threatened species, and indeed it has failed to do so on several important occasions, such as commercially exploited fish species which from an ecological perspective are threatened or endangered. However, the Act has also allowed the Commonwealth to block environmentally damaging development proposals being championed by the states and or private sector.

In this respect, it has served as a crucial safeguard to rein in pro-development State Governments.

However, in 2012, proposals were tabled with the Council of Australian Governments for the Commonwealth to delegate decision making powers to the States. If this occurred, it would leave the Commonwealth powerless to prevent the destruction of nationally and internationally significant natural and cultural sites. While the Commonwealth has not yet moved to delegate these critical powers, the issue remains a live and significant threat to our natural and cultural heritage.

## Conclusion

So here, in this island continent, World Heritage is about recognising, celebrating, looking after, and benefiting from our natural and cultural treasures. We have our World Heritage places because Australians chose to act, to recognise, to protect. This is the legacy of a nation and, in particular its environment movement, choosing to value and protect World Heritage. We are still on this journey. Some of our great natural, cultural and historic areas of undoubted universal value are not recognised, are not protected. ACF has its own list of 'Missing Icons' (see Figure 1. and chapter by Mosley).

The decision of the World Heritage Committee in mid-2012 to keep a watching brief on whether the Great Barrier Reef should be listed as 'World Heritage In Danger' should be a wakeup call to all Australians that development pressures are threatening some of our existing World Heritage areas.

Protecting our special natural and cultural places, and giving them the recognition they deserve, requires a rigorous assessment of what is required to ensure our natural life support systems can function at the ecological, cultural and social level. Only then can we make well informed decisions about economic activities that might be appropriate with and adjacent to these places. It should not be an exercise in deciding what is possible within the constraints of current political limitations and out-dated economic thinking.

Millions of people have been delighted and inspired by the sense of wonder gained from jumping in the water with a mask and snorkel to see the Great Barrier Reef from below the surface. Only then is it possible to appreciate the hundreds of colourful, unusual, beautiful and bizarre life forms to be found on a coral reef.

World Heritage in Australia provides not only for the protection of our outstanding heritage for future generations of the world, but opportunities for each of us to experience the wonder and inspiration of such amazing places. Australia's World Heritage sites hold

Australia's Missing World Heritage Icons
Note that some of these places may encompass smaller areas that are already listed as World Heritage (such as the Kimberley), or may require extensions to recognise the significance of adjoining landscapes (such as the Tasmanian Wilderness or the Great Barrier Reef). However the natural values of the area are such that full listing is warranted.
• Antarctica (Australian Antarctic Territory)
• Arnhem Land
• The Australian Alps and Eucalypt Forests of South East Australia
• Eastern Arid Zone (including Channel Country, Simpson Desert and Lake Eyre)
• Great Barrier Reef (northern section)
• The Kimberley
• Nullarbor
• South West of Western Australia (the 'West Australian Wildflower Region')
• Tasmanian Wilderness (extension and Tarkine)
• Western Arid Zone

Figure 1



this great gift of wonder and inspiration now, for the next generation of Australians, and for the rest of the world.

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## Links

For more information about ACF's environmental campaigns and history, please visit [www.acfonline.org.au](http://www.acfonline.org.au)

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## Biographies

Denise Boyd

Denise was the Campaigns Director for the Australian Conservation Foundation from early 2006 to December 2012. She has twenty years' experience working in Australia and internationally on environmental, conservation and animal welfare issues. While with ACF she was an Executive Member of the Australian Committee for IUCN, and led ACF's delegation to IUCN World Congress in 2008 and 2012. She is a Board member of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition and a General Assembly member of Greenpeace Australia Pacific.

Don Henry

Don Henry has been the CEO of the Australian Conservation Foundation since 1998. His long career began in the 1980s with campaigns to protect Moreton Island, Great Barrier Reef Islands, the rainforests of north Queensland and Cape York. As Director of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland and the editor of *Wildlife Australia* he succeeded in generating grassroots support for conservation among both rural and city people. He then worked for the World Wide Fund for Nature (first in Australia, then in Washington DC) and during this time he co-chaired a global forest initiative with the World Bank designed to conserve 250 million hectares of forests. In 1991 he was awarded a Global 500 Environment Award from the United Nations Environment Program. He has served as a Commissioner with the Australian Heritage Commission and President of the Australian Committee for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

# Australia's achievements and legacy on the World Heritage Committee

Paul Murphy

Australia's term on the World Heritage Committee (the Committee) between 2007 and 2011 contributed to the strengthening of the integrity of the World Heritage Convention (the convention) and the continued engagement of Asia and the Pacific with World Heritage. Future challenges and opportunities remain, including implementing and monitoring the Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the Convention 2012-2022 (UNESCO, 2011), maintaining momentum in World Heritage capacity building activities in Asia and the Pacific, and reconnecting Advisory Body recommendations with decisions taken by the Committee. Australia has a role to play in addressing these challenges and in identifying further opportunities to improve the operation of the Convention.

## Australia's World Heritage Committee term

Australia's credentials as a member of the Committee (2007-2011) are strong. Australia is a first rate manager of our World Heritage properties. We are also a constructive and valued party to the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (the Convention), and have played a leadership role in building World Heritage capacity in our region; especially in Pacific Island Countries. These aspects are interrelated in a number of ways. Australia's successful management of its World Heritage properties contributes to its credibility as a party to the Convention and its ability to lend assistance to other states parties in our region. Similarly, Australia's contribution to the World Heritage system on the international stage creates trust that we will deliver on our obligations in relation to our domestic World Heritage properties.

## Strengthening the World Heritage Convention

Australia's recent Committee term focused on strengthening the integrity of the Convention as a constructive and valuable contribution to the Convention's future. The Australian contribution included increasing the merit basis of the operations of the Convention, and seeking to improve the governance frameworks surrounding the Convention through operational reform and policy development.

Australia's contribution to operational reform included initiating and securing a mandate for the process of Reflection on the Future of the Convention (Futures Process) as a major outcome of the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee (Quebec, 2008). Australia co-sponsored the first major international meeting on the future of the Convention (February, 2009) and expert meetings on priority areas including improving processes prior to the





Jelly fish lake Rock Islands of Palau World Heritage Area. Photo © Helen Pippard





nomination of properties ('upstream processes'), decision-making procedures, and state of conservation issues. Australia participated in a working group on procedures for Committee member election, which, in 2011, resulted in amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

We were also involved in the drafting of the Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022 (UNESCO, 2009) which set out six specific goals to assist in structuring the work of the Convention over the next ten years. In addition we supported changes to the Operational Guidelines to simplify their use and implementation. We chaired the inaugural finance working group to respond to

pressures on the World Heritage Fund, and contributed to developing the format for the second cycle of periodic reporting.

Australia has also contributed to broader policy development initiatives, including co-hosting the international workshop on sustainable tourism at heritage sites in Mogao, China (2009) which resulted in a statement defining the relationship between World Heritage and tourism being adopted by the Committee in 2010. The Committee adopted the *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme* arising from this process in 2012 (UNESCO, 2012). We also sponsored and were involved in the working group of a World Heritage 'brand audit'. Australia also acted as rapporteur for the expert meeting on World Heritage





and buffer zones in Switzerland in 2008 and contributed to a refined policy approach focusing on protecting values, rather than places.

### **Engagement with Asia and the Pacific**

Australia is proud of its role in supporting World Heritage activities in Asia and the Pacific during its recent term on the Committee and looks forward to continuing this work. During our period on the Committee, and with our assistance, the number of World Heritage properties in Pacific Island Countries increased from one to five. Australia's assistance has also focused on developing expertise and governance arrangements in the region that assist in the sustainable management of properties, once listed.

Australia's assistance in the Pacific has included the establishment of a AUD 3.3 million UNESCO Australian Funds-In-Trust (AFIT) to support regional training and capacity-building activities, including four Pacific World Heritage workshops in Tongariro (2007), Cairns (2008), French Polynesia (2009), and Samoa (September 2011), and funding Pacific representatives to attend heritage training at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in Japan. Through the AFIT, Australia supported Pacific Island Country representatives to attend Committee meetings in 2008, 2010 and 2011.

We also provided direct assistance to the successful nominations of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (Kiribati), Bikini Atoll (Marshall Islands) and Rock Islands

Southern Lagoon (Palau), as well as a possible future nomination of the Ancient Capitals of the Kingdom of Tonga. AFIT funding has also contributed to the Angkor Heritage Management Framework in Cambodia. Seed funding from the AFIT has been committed for the Pacific Heritage Hub, to be located at the University of the South Pacific campus in Suva, Fiji. The Pacific Heritage Hub is a priority regional activity under the Pacific World Heritage Action Plan 2015 (UNESCO, 2009), adopted by the Committee in 2009. It aims to strengthen heritage in Pacific Island Countries, increase communication networks, coordinate training opportunities and bring together donors and projects in the region.

Through AusAID's Pacific Public Sector Linkages Program (AUD 1 million), Australia has also provided long term assistance to Pacific World Heritage properties by building the capacity of the governments and communities which manage them. This has included strengthening governance in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, and site maintenance and heritage tourism infrastructure at Chief Roi Mata's Domain, Vanuatu. Australia continues to provide substantial assistance for related activities in Asia and the Pacific.

Australia assisted in the listing of the beautiful Rock Islands Southern Lagoon World Heritage Area. Photo © Stuart Chape





## Future challenges and opportunities

Despite the achievements during Australia's recent term on the Committee, a number of activities and initiatives remain works in progress. These will require the continued efforts of Australia and like-minded states parties, together with governments, communities and managers of World Heritage properties. With Australia's term on the Committee having come to an end, there is a risk that we could lose some of the momentum we have helped to build in the region. There is also recognition that despite recent gains, most Pacific Island Countries struggle to engage with, and share in the benefits of, World Heritage recognition and protection.

Opportunities to address these challenges include working with other states parties, and particular Committee members, to implement and monitor the Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022. Australia continues to work with governments, communities and managers in our region on identification, nomination and management of World Heritage properties, with projects receiving Australian assistance continuing in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tonga. Australia will maintain its involvement in central reform processes and regional activities.

A further challenge that has become particularly apparent at the most recent 2012 Committee meeting in St Petersburg, Russia, is the growing disjunct between the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies, IUCN and ICOMOS, and the decisions of the Committee regarding nominations. There may be opportunities to improve this aspect of the process, which lies at the heart of the credibility of the World Heritage system. There are certainly risks if nothing is done.

## Conclusion

Australia's 2007-2011 World Heritage Committee term has reinforced Australia's reputation as an international leader in strengthening the integrity of the Convention, and one that has contributed expertise to improve the policies that conserve World Heritage. Australia has supported our region's engagement with World Heritage and helped to increase the region's share in the cultural, economic and social benefits of World Heritage recognition and protection. Our recent contribution has continued the prominent role Australia has played in the Convention since its adoption (DSEWPaC, 2011). Nevertheless, there are a range of challenges and opportunities for further improvement that demand our continued active engagement with the World Heritage system.

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Paul Murphy is an Assistant Secretary in the Heritage and Wildlife Division of the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities. Paul's branch oversees Australia's implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the Kokoda Initiative, natural and cultural heritage in Northern Australia and the preparation of a World Heritage nomination for Cape York Peninsula. Paul has extensive experience as a senior natural resource manager in the Australian and NSW governments. For most of Paul's public service career he has worked in fisheries management. Paul joined the former Heritage Division in 2010.

# Setting Best Practice Standards for World Heritage Management

Prof Richard Mackay AM

Australia boasts nineteen World Heritage properties which have been accepted by the international community and World Heritage Committee as having outstanding universal value. They are precious and part of humanity's inheritance. We have an obligation to nurture and conserve them, to present them to the current generation and transmit them to future generations. But does our current management regime for these exceptional places meet contemporary best-practice standards?

The Australian *State of the Environment Report 2011* (DSEWPoC, 2011) concludes that Australia is recognised internationally for its leadership in heritage management. The Australian Natural Heritage Charter (AHC and ACIUCN, 2002), the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS, 1999), and the *Ask First guidelines* (AHC, 2002) for Indigenous heritage were all best-practice benchmarks of their time. From a World Heritage perspective, adaptive management in the Tasmanian Wilderness, the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Outlook Report* (GBRMPA, 2009), co-management in Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta, and the Strategic Plan for the Greater Blue Mountains (DECC, 2009) offer worthy exemplars. However, there is work to do if we are to maintain a pre-eminent position in World Heritage management and to keep our outstanding places exceptional.

There have been significant achievements since Australian properties were first included on the World Heritage List in 1981. We have an established process for identification and listing; collaborative arrangements between the Commonwealth, States and some Traditional Owners; a suite of management plans prepared in accordance with national legislation; excellent interpretation; and visitor/tourism opportunities. Some World Heritage properties provide substantial opportunities for Indigenous engagement and involvement. Many are supported by advisory and scientific committees and/or executive officers.

But our World Heritage places are subject to increasing threats. These include the impacts of climate change, increasing invasive species, population pressures and shifts, increased development (especially resource extraction projects) and loss of traditional knowledge and skills. The 2012 *World Heritage Committee Reactive Mission Report on the Great Barrier Reef*





The Jenolan Cave complex in the Blue Mountains is an ancient landscape of high geo-diversity value. Photo © P. Figgis

*Marine Park* (Badman and Douvere, 2012) highlights the potential impact on World Heritage values from actions undertaken on adjacent lands, as well as the danger of incremental cumulative impacts. Any best-practice approach must actively address these contemporary threats to World Heritage values.

In Australia, World Heritage is managed under a cascading regulatory regime. Australia, as the 'State Party' to the World Heritage Convention (the Convention), has a range of important obligations. For example, under Article 5 of the Convention there are obligations to ensure that World Heritage has a function in the life of the community, to establish services for protection and conservation, to present natural and cultural heritage, to develop scientific and technical studies, to provide legal and financial support measures, and to foster centres of excellence (UNESCO, 1972).

In practice, these obligations and the specific technical requirements and processes set out in the *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO, 2012) to the Convention are addressed through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and the recently agreed Australian Intergovernmental Agreement on World Heritage (Intergovernmental Agreement). The EPBC Act provides a range of measures, including prescriptive regulations for the content of management plans. The Intergovernmental Agreement sets out a series of high-level principles and specifies the roles and responsibilities of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. Implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement is overseen by the Ministerial Standing Council on Environment and Water. Significantly, the Intergovernmental Agreement also sets out particular roles for the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN) and the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC), which were established in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

The AWHAC includes representation from Australian World Heritage Areas and AWHIN. The AWHAC is a best-practice, innovative initiative, based on the idea that a peak body can connect the places and their people with decision makers, and can identify cross-cutting national issues and opportunities. The AWHAC advises the Standing Council on Environment and Water through a Senior Officials Committee. This advice is focused on common issues—national policies and programs, cultural protocols, research and monitoring—which transcend individual World Heritage property and State/Territory boundaries. AWHAC also provides a valuable forum for sharing knowledge and experience, a touchstone for considering programs and priorities and an opportunity for proactive initiatives such as national promotion. Since its establishment, AWHAC has

identified major national World Heritage issues, including Indigenous engagement and cultural protocols, approaches to presentation, communication and tourism, major threats, applied research and research priorities, and resourcing. The AWHAC meetings that have occurred 'in person' have proven to be extremely valuable, but there have been none since 2010. Current resourcing levels within the Commonwealth Department are such that liaison through teleconferences is likely to be the mechanism by which AWHAC meets for the foreseeable future.

The AWHAC has embarked upon a process to prepare a set of 'principles and standards' for Australian World Heritage management. While the details of this project are still under development, these principles and standards are intended to provide advice to government, managers and other stakeholders about the national approach to compliance with the World Heritage Convention, the Operational Guidelines, relevant legislation, and the Intergovernmental Agreement. It is expected that the evolving principles and standards will also draw on the 1996 Richmond Communiqué, as well as more recent work by the Australian Committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (ACIUCN) and the Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites. A wide array of approaches and issues might be incorporated in national principles and standards.

The Convention and Operational Guidelines provide guidance about identification and assessment, but it would be valuable to focus on what might be included within an Australian Tentative List for World Heritage nomination. Techniques for identifying appropriate boundaries and buffer zones might be specified. Consideration could be given to adjacent lands and off-site impacts. Internal processes might also be addressed. For example, the current procedure for nomination or re-nomination to the World Heritage List requires prior inclusion of the same place on the National Heritage List, based on corresponding value or values. However, there is a significant current 'bottle-neck' in the National Heritage List assessment process: in the 2012-13 year the work program for National Heritage List assessment includes only one place - the Coral Sea. Even iconic places that are already included on the 'Priority Assessment List' by the Australian Heritage Council and Minister are not part of a current active assessment process.

Protection of heritage values is an obvious overarching objective. In terms of future directions it might be useful to address fundamental requirements for effective statutory controls and related processes. Simply, are our laws adequate to honour and fulfil the requirements





View from Mt Eliza. Photo © Michael Legge Wilkinson, Lord Howe Island Board

of the Convention? There is a current move away from reactive decision making to proactive strategic assessment. This aligns well with the implications arising from the findings in the Great Barrier Reef Mission Report in relation to the best methodology to avoid cumulative impact. But how should that principle be applied in practice? What are the appropriate benchmarks or thresholds for 'significant impact' and/or 'outstanding universal value'? Is 'rehabilitation' a legitimate general objective or would a more sophisticated values-based assessment model be more appropriate, both within World Heritage properties and on adjacent lands?

Preparation of principles and standards for Australian World Heritage places also offers an opportunity to review the current inflexible EPBC Act regulations regarding management plans. The need for a greater focus on the outcomes that management plans can deliver, rather than the process for their preparation or prescriptive content has already been identified through the Hawke Review (Hawke, 2009) of the EPBC Act.

The Convention specifies that World Heritage should have a function in the life of the community. How does Australia ensure that such community engagement occurs? What are appropriate roles and functions for advisory committees? Which properties need advisory committees or other mechanisms to connect place with community? How should Traditional Owners participate,

not only in the management of those sites which have been listed for Indigenous Cultural reasons, but for other properties where they have an interest? How should the economic or social contribution of World Heritage places be measured or understood?

There has been considerable progress in Indigenous participation in World Heritage management, but there are still inconsistent approaches, confusing systems and inadequate resources. What methods should be used to seek input or obtain consent? Are there general principles that can embed the rights and traditions of Traditional Owners and other Indigenous stakeholders within World Heritage management? How should AWHIN be resourced and what are the key functions of this group?

Threats must also be addressed, as must opportunities. Tourism is both - a vital element in community engagement and communication of values, but at the same time an agent of change and cause of impact. How should tourism be managed: through regulation or through the use of market forces to promote appropriate behaviour, or both? Are industry partnerships appropriate; is there a relevant, useful national standard or practice? Should there be World Heritage 'branding', as occurs in countries such as the United States of America?



The floodplains of the Alligator Rivers, Kakadu National Park support an abundance of wildlife which has sustained a rich Indigenous culture for millennia. Photo © Sally Greenaway, Commonwealth of Australia

Arguably climate change represents the greatest current threat to World Heritage values in Australia (Commonwealth, 2009). We are already witnessing altered wildfire regimes, changes to vegetation communities, and increases in the number and penetration of invasive species. World Heritage properties are potentially extremely important refuges, as well as laboratories for studying resilience and the local-scale adaptive management that is needed - bearing in mind the current global focus on carbon pricing and emission reduction.

By any logical measure, places with outstanding universal value deserve priority for applied research. By and large we have not delivered on the obligation to foster centres of excellence. Yet World Heritage properties are, in many ways, ideal crucibles for developing and fine-tuning techniques for monitoring management effectiveness, for addressing invasive species, for providing refuges for species under pressure, and for using scientific, social and economic evidence as a basis for decision making. The connection between such applied research and our international obligation for periodic reporting is self-evident. There is a compelling argument that World Heritage warrants greater priority, to the point of preferential funding status with the Australian Research Council.

It is not simply applied research that warrants such support. There are also opportunities for important skills development. The looming crisis in heritage trades skills, as the small population of aged practitioners retires without training a new generation (Godden et al., 2010), offers a case in point. Not only could World

Heritage properties blossom as centres of research excellence, through strategic tertiary institutional and other relationships, Australia also has the capacity to share its emerging expertise and knowledge by actively supporting World Heritage management throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Many of these factors combine within an overall principle that World Heritage warrants greater priority in resource allocation. We have international treaty obligations under the Convention; it is illogical that some of the resources required to fulfil these obligations are currently allocated on a non-recurrent basis through a competitive bidding process. A regular World Heritage budgetary appropriation, or at least a dedicated World Heritage stream within the current Caring for Our Country program, represents a minimum reasonable commitment from the Commonwealth.

World Heritage is a national issue, requiring national leadership, even though there are agreed State and Territory management arrangements. In Australia, the World Heritage world is changing - our exceptional places are threatened by climate change impacts, by invasive species and by all manner of development. On the positive side, recognition and involvement of Indigenous Traditional Owners is increasing and tourism is being embraced. Do we want a consistent approach to these issues and opportunities? Does World Heritage status warrant research funding priority? Should there be an Australian 'World Heritage' brand?

We are living through times of reduced resources and increasing threats, but our inter-generational obligation remains: to cherish and transmit our World Heritage properties. A national strategic approach is needed.



The 'Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional' symposium discussions and communiqué will help inform developing best-practice standards for Australian World Heritage management.

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# International and Regional Perspectives on the State of World Heritage

Kristal Buckley AM

For the past 6 years, I have had the privilege to represent the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) at the annual session of the World Heritage Committee (Committee) where the business of the World Heritage Convention (Convention) occurs. This includes decisions concerning nominations to the World Heritage List, and specific consideration of the issues relating to the State of Conservation of listed World Heritage properties. Most recently, this took place in St Petersburg in the Russian Federation in June 2012.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites is based in Paris. ICOMOS is a non-government organisation (NGO), a global network of cultural heritage practitioners, with national committees in more than 100 countries including Australia. In the World Heritage context, we mirror the role of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), providing the expert advice to the Committee on cultural heritage issues, including the evaluation of nominations and advice on conservation issues affecting World Heritage properties.

The three Advisory Bodies – ICOMOS, IUCN and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) – are named in the Convention and play a specific role in its implementation. However, at Committee meetings we are not on the podium where the officials of UNESCO support the work of the Committee as its Secretariat. We are not in the front rows where the 21 elected member states that make up the Committee conduct the discussion and make the decisions; and, not in the many watchful seats behind. Our seats are poised in between these others. We are charged by the Convention and its Operational Guidelines to attend, to advise, and to be as scientific, rigorous and objective as possible in our work (UNESCO, 2012a).

The Convention celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday this year (UNESCO, 2012b). Many of us know that 40 is not the same as 20, but opinions vary about whether there is a mid-life crisis, or whether the problems that are frequently identified are merely a consequence of the immense success of the promotion and implementation of the Convention. Certainly such birthdays offer a chance to think and argue, to reflect, and renew – to consider what should come next.









Maheno Shipwreck, Fraser Island.  
Photo © Paul Candlin, Commonwealth of Australia

This year saw the first ever live streaming of the Committee's discussions. The meeting also saw the advent of an NGO forum that met prior to the Committee session in St Petersburg (SPB Forum, 2012). Their decision to establish a global World Heritage Watch is particularly significant.

The theme chosen for the 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations is *World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the role of communities*. This theme mirrors some changes in the World Heritage system over its four decades. In particular it reflects the growing awareness that social and cultural contexts are not peripheral, and that communities are pivotal, even though the implementation of the Convention is a transaction between member states.

In her comment on the year, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova said *"together for 40 years we have protected the world's most outstanding places because this is our shared responsibility, because heritage is a force that unifies humanity, because it is a force for peace"*. This is the very high ideal that underpins the creation of UNESCO itself and the World Heritage system. It sets a very high bar for measuring our success.

There are many issues forming this dialogue beyond this short paper. The following are a few that seem relevant to our discussions about Australia's World Heritage - and by extension, the role that Australia could, or should, play in regional and global processes:

- The 'imbalance' in the World Heritage List regarding the representation of the world's regions and cultures, the relatively low number of natural and 'mixed' properties, and how to fill the perceived gaps, are continuing concerns.
- Conservation is at times overwhelmingly complex and challenging owing to diverse pressures such as armed conflict, climate change, rapid urbanisation, resource exploitation, natural disasters and poverty alleviation. Sustainable development is clearly an appealing framework for addressing some of these pressures – particularly in developing countries. But finding mechanisms that actually achieve both conservation and development goals is a continuing challenge that the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations are actively exploring.
- The '5<sup>th</sup> C' (Community) was adopted by the Committee in 2007 through the leadership of the Chairperson of the Committee, New Zealand's Tumu Te Heuheu. It joined the other '4 C's' in the Committee's strategic objectives – conservation, credibility, capacity and communication. However, the roles of communities have yet to be incorporated effectively into the processes and outcomes of the World Heritage system.
- Building capacity is a priority, and is much more than just training (UNESCO, 2011). Article 5 of the Convention text urges States Parties to develop national institutions for conservation, protection and presentation of all cultural and natural heritage. However, over the past 40 years, this part of the Convention has been eclipsed by the focus on the World Heritage List.





It is impossible to capture briefly all the facets of an international perspective. The following five vignettes might provide a window on some key issues.

- UNESCO's Director-General has expressed her grave concern about armed conflict and its impacts on the people and the cultural heritage of Syria (and also Timbuktu in Mali), saying "*damage to the heritage of the country is damage to the soul of its people and its identity*" (UNESCO, Press 30 March 2012). The St Petersburg session of the Committee also learned of the deaths of seven staff at the Okapi Wildlife Reserve, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, killed by poachers. Sometimes our goals of peace and inter-cultural dialogue seem remote.
- Issue 62 of the magazine *World Heritage Review* (2012) was themed 'World Heritage & Indigenous Peoples'. The Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre are working together to work out what rights-based approaches mean in practical terms, including the implications of the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Larsen, 2012; Sinding-Larsen, 2012; Oviedo and Puschkarsky, 2012; Logan, 2012). Australia and the Pacific potentially have important voices in this process, yet we know that many Indigenous people with 'country' in World Heritage properties have continuing issues with the recognition of their rights, management, tourism, and economic benefit sharing.
- The admission of Palestine as a member state of UNESCO in 2011 was followed by the withdrawal of US financial contributions to UNESCO, with severe

impacts on the already over-stretched resources available to the World Heritage system. Amongst other implications, this means that innovation – such as the expansion of upstream processes - is less easily achieved at a time when the core functions are difficult to cover.

- In recent sessions, a number of decisions taken by the Committee did not follow the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies. It is difficult to generalise about this or to foresee what the future holds, but it is evident that the role of professional or scientific expertise, and the provisions of the Operational Guidelines are being questioned (Meskell, 2012) (see Murphy and Shadie in this publication).
- The Reactive Monitoring mission to Australia's Great Barrier Reef by IUCN and UNESCO in March 2012 followed the expression of 'grave concern' by the Committee about several reported matters. This reminds us that the work of conservation is never finished, even for such undisputed gems as the Great Barrier Reef. Importantly, the mission also demonstrated the potential of such missions to stimulate constructive dialogue.

In conclusion, I suggest that there are four things that the Australian Committee for IUCN (ACIUCN) and Australia ICOMOS could do right away:

- **Re-think the nature – culture divide.** It is vital to find practical ways to bridge this dichotomy. Forty years ago the Convention brought the heritage of culture and nature into a single instrument for international cooperation. It is time to 'walk the talk'

in relation to this important pairing, recognising that – in Australia and everywhere – culture and nature are not separate, and that our methods do not match the ways that the lands and waters we term ‘heritage places’ are experienced by people (Hill et al., 2011 and Hill in this publication). IUCN and ICOMOS are actively working on this at the international level, and IUCN’s World Conservation Congress held in Jeju in the Republic of Korea in September 2012 included a number of events with lively exchanges on these matters.

- **Work with Australian Governments.** Australia has a strong record and reputation in the World Heritage system, and has on many occasions shown leadership and innovation (DSEWPac, 2012). However we will not keep our reputation by congratulating ourselves and resting on the achievements of the past. The national organisations for IUCN and ICOMOS have multiple roles to play, and could be more effective as partners and sources of knowledge for national and State/Territory Governments.
- **Work together.** ACIUCN and Australia ICOMOS need to get to know each other better and coordinate some of the work we do to advise the Australian Government and communities with an interest in the promotion and protection of Australia’s World Heritage. Perhaps we could work together on a few areas where our practice could be improved, such as how to operationalise free, prior and informed consent, the development of an Australian Tentative List, support for the viability of the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee and the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network, and enhanced monitoring and management of Australia’s World Heritage properties. My experience at the international level is that collaboration can be very fruitful and creative – and much more effective than when we work in parallel.
- **Look beyond our shores.** While there is much to do in Australia, we should also take care to share and to learn in our own region. It is therefore welcome news that the Pacific World Heritage Hub was recently established with the support of the Australian Government, hosted by the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. Perhaps we can mark this milestone for World Heritage by looking for ways to support this new initiative and to work in effective partnership with colleagues in our region. Let’s see what we can do.

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### Links

Australia ICOMOS: <http://australia.icomos.org/>

ICOMOS: <http://www.icomos.org/en>

UNESCO World Heritage Centre: <http://whc.unesco.org/>

IUCN World Heritage Programme: [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/wcpa\\_worldheritage/](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/wcpa_worldheritage/)

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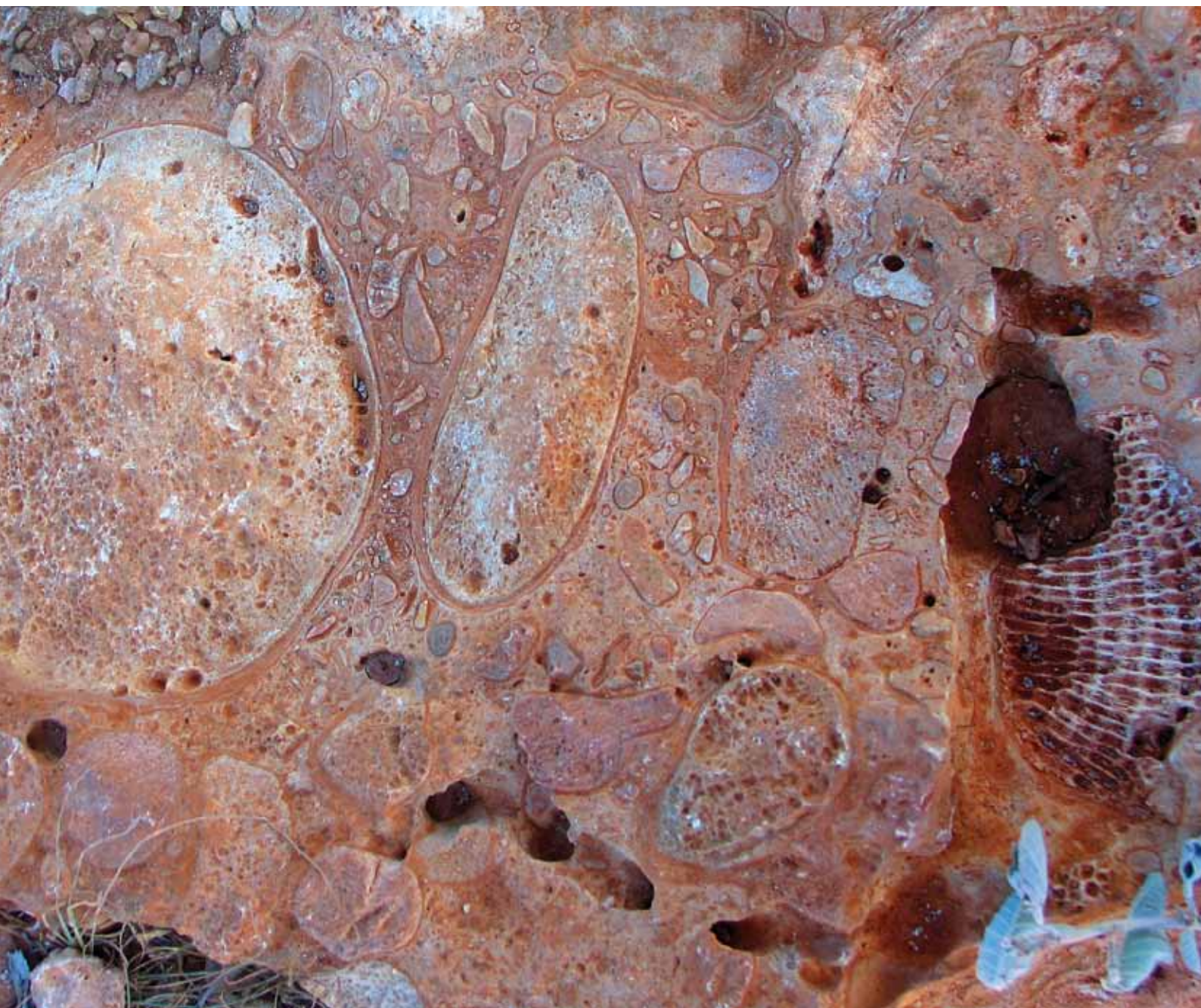
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Heritage comes in many forms: Fossil coral at the mouth of Mandu Mandu Gorge in Cape Range National Park. Photo: © Jane Ambrose, Commonwealth of Australia



# Strategic Issues for World Heritage: some IUCN and personal perspectives

Peter Shadie

This brief chapter aims to highlight a number of strategic issues for the World Heritage Convention (Convention) as it celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday and to stimulate our thinking on Australia's role. Australia, as a 'first world' mega-biodiverse country and the State Party with the most natural World Heritage properties, can and should, play a pivotal role in helping the Convention move in positive directions over the next ten years and beyond. The timing of the next International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Parks Congress in Sydney in November 2014 provides a special opportunity to demonstrate best practice at home and advocate excellence elsewhere. Listed below are a selection of key challenges and opportunities for the Convention assembled from IUCN, the UNESCO World Heritage External Audit (UNESCO, 2011) and the author's views. It is stressed that these views represent those of the author and not any official position.

## Future strategic issues

### 1. The objectives of the World Heritage Convention beyond listing

The inscription of properties onto the World Heritage List (the List) is not the end, but the beginning of the global community taking responsibility for effective protection and management of these exceptional places. This expectation is clearly identified in Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 1972). State Parties to the Convention have displayed a preoccupation with the listing process, often at the expense of objectives centred on protection, conservation, promotion and transmission of our shared priceless heritage to future generations.

Future strategies should reinforce the message of Article 4 and find ways to sustain a collective global responsibility for properties that are on the List. Proposals such as the IUCN Green List of Effectively Managed Protected Areas (IUCN, 2012a) and IUCN's Conservation Outlook initiative (IUCN, 2012b), which aim to recognise and celebrate well managed areas in a positive manner, should be used to concentrate international attention on better protection and management.

### 2. Confused understanding of 'a credible, representative and balanced list'

The preoccupation with listing noted above has resulted in very different views on what constitutes a credible, representative and balanced List. The Convention's Global Strategy for a Credible, Representative and Balanced World Heritage List (1994 - 2011) has generated a long running debate on this issue over nearly 20 years (UNESCO, 1994). IUCN contends that Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) as defined in the Operational Guidelines should remain the primary driver





The tall cool temperate forests of Tasmania have been a much contested area of World Heritage policy in Australia  
Photo © Wayne Lawler courtesy of Bush Heritage Australia



of decisions about the List. This leads to a view that credibility comes before representativeness and balance. From this perspective 'representative' equates to the representativeness of sites with OUV for all regions; 'balanced' is not about numbers of sites, rather bioregional representativeness; and 'credible' should be taken to mean ensuring a rigorous application of the criteria for nominations and management.

The reality, however, is that many countries do not follow these definitions and new nominations are increasingly based on geographical or political considerations. The reasons behind this are obscure, however, they appear to derive either from misinterpreting the intent of the Global Strategy or from motivations outside of the aspirations of the Strategy. World Heritage nominations may be motivated by economic prospects; a desire to strengthen protection of an area from current or potential threats; and/or a narrow focus on the values. The pride and prestige of having a site inscribed on the List can often cloud sound scientific rationale.

### **3. OUV – a variable and evolving concept**

Outstanding Universal Value underpins the Operational Guidelines for the Convention. The OUV of a property is central to the nomination and the basis of a decision to inscribe properties onto the List. Furthermore the maintenance of a property's OUV is becoming more explicitly the basis of management and the measure against which the state of conservation is assessed. The evolution of the Convention's Operational Guidelines and our understanding of the seemingly simple concept of OUV has changed over time. Outstanding Universal Value is now considered to be not just a measure of values but intertwined with the principles of integrity, protection and management. For example an area of habitat for a globally endangered species must not only have those species present but in viable numbers and with enough ecological integrity and adequate ongoing protective care to sustain that species into the future. All three words in OUV: 'outstanding', 'universal' and 'value' are also subject to cultural interpretation.

Greater analysis is needed to understand and agree on how OUV should be understood and technically defined. Recent nominations to the List are more and more using hyper-specialised arguments which define OUV on the basis of narrow technical evidence. Such arguments are at odds with the Convention's concept of 'universal' and future efforts should maintain the principle that values must be easily communicated, understandable and accessible to all. For example a value which would only be appreciated by a narrow field

of science may not readily translate into something understandable and of shared, 'universal' heritage to people all over the world.

As OUV is the core concept within the Convention it is essential that future strategies continue to debate the concept vigorously, what it means in different contexts now and into the future.

### **4. Increasing divergence between the World Heritage Committee and Advisory Body recommendations**

The UNESCO World Heritage External Audit (UNESCO, 2011) notes a "very worrying evolution for the credibility of the List: increasing divergences between World Heritage Committee (the Committee) decisions and the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies." In the period between 2000 and 2005 the average divergence between the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies and the decisions of the Committee was 13.4% which contrasts with 34.6% between 2005 and 2010. In short this is a measure of the extent to which the Committee has disagreed with or departed from the technical advice from its Advisory Bodies. The Operational Guidelines call for the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and IUCN to be "objective, rigorous and scientific in their evaluations" and to operate systematically and with consistent professional standards (UNESCO, 2008).

Four options are available for a site nominated to the List: it may be inscribed onto the List; it may be referred back to the State Party to fix a number of relatively simple issues; it may be deferred which means the issues needing to be addressed are more substantial; or the Committee may decide not to inscribe a property onto the List. In the case of deferral a fresh nomination and full evaluation cycle is triggered. The Committee is tending to refer nominations, rather than defer them, resulting in weakened opportunities to address concerns regarding values, integrity, protection and/or management issues.

Future strategies should reinforce the scientific credibility of the Convention such that it retains a reputation for listing only the world's most superlative places, which in turn receive international best practice care and management. Furthermore, processes under the Operational Guidelines may need to be reviewed to combine referral and deferral processes in a way that offers constructive opportunities to improve the conservation prospects of properties before they are considered for inscription.

Strengthening investment in so called 'upstream processes' is critical to ensure early cooperation and





Buffer management is critical for areas like the Blue Mountains where water quality can be compromised by settlement and visitation. Photo © D.Finnegan, OEH NSW

technical advice on these issues. That said, some tension between the views and recommendations of the Advisory Bodies and those of the Committee is not necessarily a bad thing as it provides a separation of science-based technical advice from other considerations which the Committee, as an inter-governmental body may wish to factor into its decisions.

#### **5. Convention still seen as a traditional approach to conservation**

The origins of the Convention in the early 1970s coincided with a fairly traditional conservation paradigm which centred on ‘setting aside’ protected areas. Sites added to the List included iconic ‘national parks’ and historic buildings in public ownership. Over time the Convention has added a more diverse range of sites with greater integration of natural and cultural attributes. Site management and governance has also evolved from more classical models to more varied approaches involving multiple actors. The Convention is moving in a number of ways to address more contemporary integrated approaches to protected area planning, establishment, governance and management.

There is mounting pressure on the Convention and its Advisory Bodies to address rights-based conservation issues with respect to the nomination of new properties and the management of existing ones. Articles 26, 29, Article 32, 36 of the United Nations (UN) Declaration on

the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration) relate to the rights of indigenous peoples relative to their lands, resources and environment (UNDRIP, 2008). The UN Permanent Forum (UNPFII) is mandated by UNDRIP to support dialogue with States and UN agencies on how to implement the Declaration. Challenges need to be addressed regarding the consultative processes followed by State Parties during the preparation of nominations and how IUCN evaluates nominations and assesses this aspect. For example, how can State Parties work in a more collaborative manner with Indigenous Peoples who may be the traditional owners of lands being nominated for World Heritage? Governments need to ensure culturally sensitive, transparent and timely collaboration with all stakeholders and rights holders before submitting a nomination. Beyond this are cases where Indigenous peoples with land rights have been the driving force for a World Heritage nomination, believing that the Convention offers an effective means to protect both heritage assets and living cultures. The fact that the Convention only recognises State Parties (Sovereign Governments) makes it challenging to empower others in aspiring for World Heritage status. Clearly Australia’s record of protected area co-management with Aboriginal People and Traditional Owners, and current process over Cape York (see Talbot chapter), offers outstanding opportunities to showcase innovative ways of working together on World Heritage.

With respect to the above challenges, IUCN in 2012 commissioned an internal review and sought recommendations on improving its evaluative processes around rights issues. IUCN will improve guidance to field evaluators; strengthen partnerships with rights groups (such as the IUCN Theme on Indigenous Peoples Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas (TILCEPA) and the UNPFII); add rights issues expertise to the IUCN WH Panel; and provide for a separate analysis of rights issues in its evaluation report to the World Heritage Committee.

## **6. Integrating World Heritage properties into wider land and sea scapes**

A further issue for the Convention is how World Heritage properties can be better integrated into the wider land and seascape. This approach is consistent with international calls under the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Targets and Programme of Work on Protected Areas (CBD, 2012). Related to this is the question of buffer zones for properties and how these might be established and managed effectively. Australian World Heritage properties generally do not define buffer zones, relying instead on the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), State and Local legislation and planning instruments. In large part, State and local legislation and planning instruments do not work particularly well, especially when the impact is on adjacent World Heritage lands, not the land subject to a particular development proposal.

The issue of buffer zones is well illustrated in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) west of Sydney. This area of over 1m ha sits on the edge of the Sydney Metropolis of five million people and deals with a raft of threats emanating from edge effects; a result of its convoluted, fragmented boundary, over 150 inholdings totalling 75,000 ha and several developed corridors which split the area. Threats to the GBMWA include fire, climate change, visitor pressure, visual intrusions, feral animals and introduced weeds, hydrological (surface and sub-surface), nutrient overload and mining subsidence to name a few.

The World Heritage provisions under Australia's national EPBC Act aim to avert threats and impacts on the nation's World Heritage portfolio. The EPBC Act could provide a useful regulatory tool to address buffer zone threats, however the legislation suffers from a number of shortcomings: it primarily addresses development control issues; is reactive; does not specifically address cumulative impacts; relies on initial self-assessment of impacts; and relies on effective coordination between Federal, State and Local government authorities.

This challenge is being addressed by the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute (BMWHI, 2012). BMWHI was created in 2005 as a not-for-profit research organisation with a mission to "broker and facilitate research and community engagement that supports the conservation and management of the GBMWA". BMWHI is a membership organisation comprising land management authorities and universities (see Appendix A).

The Institute is working on proposals to map threats and assess the feasibility of defining an effective buffer zone for the GBMWA. An effective buffer zone should seek to conserve all of the values within the World Heritage Area, through four complementary purposes:

- 1. control development and associated impacts on the World Heritage property;**
- 2. facilitate sympathetic landuse;**
- 3. facilitate enhanced conservation connectivity; and**
- 4. optimise benefits to surrounding communities.**

BMWHI plans to undertake baseline research that will inform the policy debate on an issue which is of relevance for all of Australia's World Heritage properties. The work will undertake a spatial analysis of landuse to pilot buffer zone landuse capability mapping.

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## Appendix A

### Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute

Article 5 of the 1972 World Heritage (WH) Convention calls upon State Parties to develop scientific and technical studies and research and to work out such operating methods as will make the State capable of counteracting the dangers that threaten its cultural or natural heritage (Art. 5c); and to foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field (Art. 5e).

The Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute (the Institute) represents one of the few expressions of this commitment at a site-based level in Australia. Established in 2005, some five years after the inscription of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA), the Institute's mission is to "*broker & facilitate research & community engagement that supports the conservation and management of the GBMWA*." It pursues this mission through an independent and not-for-profit membership structure that spans government land management agencies and a number of universities. For more than seven years the Institute has successfully worked to bring together land managers, policy-makers, the research community and the broader community on critical conservation issues for the GBMWA.

The Institute works to collaboratively identify knowledge gaps; define, broker and facilitate research & community engagement; and build partnerships to ensure the uptake of knowledge into policy and management. The institute is funded through membership contributions, charitable donations and project income and has generated research which represents a 4:1 return on investment. Despite this fact, funding the Institute is a constant challenge requiring the development of creative and entrepreneurial approaches to secure funds.

The Institute can do things that its individual members cannot. It has:

- the power to convene and broker across multiple tenures, sectors and disciplines;
- a capacity to bridge the gap between community, research, policy and management ensuring that research is management oriented;
- an ability to reinforce the scientific credibility behind policy and management decisions;
- an ability to innovate;
- an ability to promote the adoption of research findings and knowledge into management practice;
- a role as a repository of research and scientific knowledge which can be accessible to all; and
- a capacity to tackle contentious issues that may be difficult for individual agencies.

The Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute offers an instructive localised model of how research can be shaped to help answer specific site-based questions to improve World Heritage management. A similar approach could be considered in other World Heritage properties, perhaps creating a network of Institutes across the country.

More information: [www.bmwhi.org.au](http://www.bmwhi.org.au)

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### Biography

Peter Shadie has over 30 years' experience working in conservation both in Australia and abroad. He spent the early part of his career with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service before taking up a position with IUCN's Global Protected Areas Programme in Switzerland in 1999. He was Executive Director for the 2003 IUCN Vth World Parks Congress and oversaw planning and delivery of the Congress. From 2006 to 2010 Peter was the Head of IUCN's Protected Areas Programme in Asia, leading the Union's protected area work across 23 countries.

Since 2010 Peter has been based in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney where he works as a freelance consultant specializing in protected areas and World Heritage. Peter has been a Member of IUCN's World Heritage Panel for more than 10 years and currently works as a Senior Advisor on World Heritage. He also works part-time as Research Director for the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute.

# Managing World Heritage in Australia: trends, issues and achievements

Hala Razian  
Kathy Zischka

The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention (the Convention) offers an opportune time to highlight some of the key trends, issues and achievements in Australian World Heritage management. As part of the *Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional* symposium, the ACIUCN commissioned a snapshot report to provide a voice for on-ground managers in Australia (Razian & Zischka 2012). A questionnaire designed around key obligations of the Convention investigated five thematic areas of World Heritage management - governance, resources, capacity building, community engagement, and key opportunities and threats. This paper highlights some of the key findings presented in the snapshot report, as described through manager responses for fourteen of the sixteen Australian World Heritage areas listed for their outstanding 'natural' and 'mixed' (natural/cultural) values.

## Governance

In Australia, there is no single governing body for the management of World Heritage areas. Rather, management is carried out under one of three management arrangements: by the Commonwealth Government, by individual States, or by joint management. Of the sixteen areas, one - the Heard and McDonald Islands - is managed solely by the Commonwealth Government through the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) (DSEWPaC, 2013). Four areas have joint management arrangements between either the Commonwealth Government and Aboriginal Traditional Owners, or the Commonwealth Government and State management authorities. The former includes the Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park World Heritage areas, jointly managed by the Commonwealth Government through the Director of Parks Australia and a Board of Management consisting of an Aboriginal majority representing traditional owners. The latter includes both the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA), jointly managed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the Queensland Government, and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) jointly managed by the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) and the Queensland Government. The remaining eleven World Heritage areas are managed by respective state agencies, and in the case of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, jointly by New South Wales and Queensland (DSEWPaC, 2013).

Operational management falls largely under the jurisdiction of agencies responsible for the administration of national parks and reserves. When asked what key factors differentiate World Heritage management from protected area management more generally, managers highlighted the





responsibility of protecting and conserving the internationally significant Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) for which the site was listed. In this regard, managers stressed the central role that the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (EPBC Act) plays in providing a legislative framework for effective World Heritage area management. At the site-specific level, strategic management plans and documents, as well as guidance from management and scientific advisory bodies such as the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) and the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN), support the achievement of Convention objectives. Additionally, increased intergovernmental coordination between management authorities was identified as an opportunity to be leveraged to further facilitate and support effective management.

## Resources

The financial resources underpinning World Heritage management are critical for ensuring effective management outcomes. Feedback from managers regarding resource allocation shows that funding availability for management varies according to the jurisdiction, visitation rates and commercial activities

carried out within an area. Overall, managers reported that funding largely meets requirements for current management, although strategic investment in key operational areas, such as invasive control, would allow for improved performance. It should be noted that it is unlikely managers would be comfortable commenting publicly on the inadequacy of government funding.

The majority of funding for management is provided through Commonwealth and State agency budgets. Revenue collection activities, licensing fees and leases, and private donations and partnerships supplement this funding, but generally only to a minor degree. After Commonwealth and State Government sources, revenue collection was identified as the third highest funding stream. In those areas where tourism is a viable option, revenue collection provides an excellent opportunity for increasing funding to the site, although potential financial and ecological costs resulting from additional visitation must be carefully considered and managed. Managers reported that less than one percent of World Heritage budgets are derived from partnerships with the private sector. With such a low percentage, developing strategic public private partnerships has the potential to provide funds that supplement current budgets for investing in key operational areas.

Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area protects a rich array of marine life.  
Photo © Axel Passek courtesy DEC.





## Capacity Building

The Convention obligations include supporting the capacity of staff to effectively discharge their functions in management; the establishment of national or regional training centres; and the implementation of scientific and technical studies. Although no single training or education centre exists for World Heritage in Australia, several partnerships have been established to facilitate training and research programs as part of management strategies. Managers highlighted achievements in this area through case studies of training, and scientific and technical research programs.

Partnerships for training and education are being developed with a range of World Heritage stakeholders including government, non-government organisations (NGO), and tourism operators. These provide an opportunity to create and share effective management strategies for protecting, conserving and communicating OUV to the public. Managers highlighted a selection of successful partnerships including recently established ranger training programs in the Kakadu and Uluru Kata-Tjuta World Heritage areas, as well as the *Reef Ed* community engagement program in the GBRWHA. Similar to trends in funding, Commonwealth and State Governments also play a central role in World Heritage training and education programs, with the tourism sector reported as ranking third highest in active partnerships. Partnerships between the public sector and the tourism industry include the recently established World Heritage tour guide training program between WTMA and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC). Further case studies can be found in the project snapshot report (Razian & Zischka 2012).

Scientific and technical research partnerships and programs provide managers and staff with the capacity to monitor the natural and cultural values within World Heritage areas, and to respond to potential threats. Key partnerships have been established between governing bodies and local or national academic institutions for facilitating scientific and technical research, and with Indigenous communities and NGOs involved in a largely advisory capacity. Here too, private sector partnerships were under-represented. Case studies include long-term vegetation projects on Macquarie Island and remote sensing studies on the Heard and McDonald Islands through the AAD; monitoring programs in the Tasmanian Wilderness through the University of Tasmania; palaeological research in Naracoorte through Flinders University; and dugong monitoring with the Yadgalah Aboriginal Corporation in Shark Bay.

Managers highlighted the potential of using training opportunities to facilitate future initiatives for improving the broader understanding of OUV as a concept, how OUV can be more effectively communicated to the public, and how it might be applied to management. In this regard, developing partnerships for training with the private sector provides mutually beneficial opportunities for sharing communications and management expertise. The expansion of training and education programs offers an added opportunity to share best practice management skills nationally within the Australian World Heritage network, as well as internationally within the Asia Pacific region and beyond. Regional information sharing was conducted through a 2010/2011 Periodic Reporting training workshop for four Pacific Island countries, run by WTMA and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC).

## Community Engagement

Although innovative forms of community engagement and partnerships exist and are proving successful, there is potential for greater uptake of these kinds of projects to increase the function of World Heritage in the life of the community – another Convention obligation. When questioned about the level of stakeholder participation in decision-making, the majority of respondents indicated that stakeholders were ‘involved’. That is, managers are working with the public to understand and consider their perceptions. Responses identifying community participation in operational procedures mimic this trend. Respondents noted the importance of communications with local and regional communities and industries, and where no local community is present, with the broader Australian public. In this regard, partnership development with communities to leverage sustainable tourism, support indigenous rights and cultural traditions, as well as undertaking research, education and volunteerism activities, have been identified as key opportunities in supporting the obligation to give World Heritage a function in the life of the community (see chapter by Scherl). Investment in communication and outreach activities that actively involve stakeholders in decision-making and operations could facilitate improved relationships and support for World Heritage management programs.

## Opportunities and threats

Although a history of conflict over World Heritage listing in Australia has served to propel the World Heritage brand into the spotlight and achieve significant protections, it has also stirred opposition and propagated a degree of perception in some quarters



Managing visitation on fragile environments like Fraser Island remains a central challenge of managers. Photo © Shannon Muir, Commonwealth of Australia

that protection may conflict with the social, cultural and economic vitality of local and regional communities (Leask and Fyall, 2006). Innovative and strategic partnerships with tourism operators and the private sector that ensure better communication of both the meaning and multiple values of World Heritage could help dispel this perception.

World Heritage areas can also provide the platform through which innovative and sustainable economies can develop. This is particularly true in terms of increasing employment of Indigenous communities to manage land and sea country using both traditional management practices and knowledge sharing and also interpretation of the cultural meaning of their country in tourism operations.

Importantly, an opportunity exists to leverage skills and expertise by sharing successes and lessons learnt through communication and training exchanges across the network. However this means that agencies need to commit to both face to face and other ways of encouraging such exchanges.

### Conclusions: Leveraging Networks and Partnerships

The study provided an opportunity to investigate some of the trends, issues and achievements across a broad level of Australian World Heritage Area management. Based on the analysis of findings, recommendations were proposed to bolster World Heritage success in Australia. Managers have the opportunity to leverage the World Heritage brand by exploring innovative and mutually beneficial partnerships to increase the function of World Heritage in the life of the community. Further

opportunity also exists to develop and engage in strategic partnerships with key sectors - tourism, local communities and the private sector – to further elevate the World Heritage brand. Working towards strengthening active Indigenous engagement in World Heritage areas will continue to deliver positive results. Finally, it is important that managers have opportunities to effectively leverage existing expertise within the World Heritage network by sharing lessons learnt in implementing Convention obligations, in order to facilitate best practice management of our World Heritage in the future.

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Kathy Zischka works in marine and environmental conservation and management, and has held positions with NGOs, academic institutions, government, and in the international aid and development sector. Recently, Kathy has consulted for Greenpeace International, prior to which she worked at the government Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in the Kingdom of Tonga advising on marine conservation issues for an AusAID capacity building program. Since 2005, Kathy has worked in NGO whale shark research; in academia at the University of Western Australia; and in ecotourism on the Ningaloo and Great Barrier Reefs. She has volunteered for Greenpeace Australia Pacific, the WA Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), the NZ Department of Conservation (DoC), and coral reef research NGO Operation Wallacea. Kathy has initiated collaborative research on legislative gap analysis work for marine protected areas in Tonga, and seeks to further implement her skills and experience in international environmental law and policy, marine research, and environmental management, within the environmental conservation and natural resource management sectors.

**Ms Hala Razian**

MEnvMgt (Environmental Management), MSc  
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Hala Razian is a sustainable development project practitioner and manager supporting public, private and not-for-profit sectors since 2004. Previous professional experience includes research and program development for Environmental NGOs The Wilderness Society Australia and Greenpeace Asia Pacific. Prior to working in the environmental management field, Hala supported micro and small business lending program rollout in West Africa and Eastern Europe with development finance advisory services firm ShoreBank International. This work leveraged private sector and corporate social responsibility advocacy and program implementation undertaken while working for the United Nations Development Program and UNICEF in Lebanon. Hala holds certificates in humanitarian assistance and strategic impact assessment, and speaks English, Arabic and French.

# Managing Australia's World Heritage in Kakadu National Park and Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park

Peter Cochrane

Kakadu National Park and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park are very significant properties, nationally and internationally and along with the Great Barrier Reef are probably Australia's best known World Heritage icons. While both Northern Territory properties have been home to Indigenous people for tens of thousands of years and contain important evidence of continuing occupation through art sites and oral tradition, they encompass vastly different ecological, cultural and historical settings.

Both parks face some similar challenges, such as improving the participation of local Indigenous people in their management and increasing the benefits to local communities from management and associated tourism enterprises. Climate change and invasive species pose significant risks, although for different reasons.

The properties are jointly managed by Parks Australia and their traditional owners, through a governance model that is now 25 years old. Reduced revenues from government and from steadily declining visitation have put a sharp focus on operating costs, future priorities and management effectiveness.

## Uluru-Kata Tjuta

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is on the World Heritage List for its natural and cultural importance, with the sandstone monolith of Uluru arguably the most distinctive international symbol of the Australian landscape. Uluru and the domes of Kata Tjuta rise sharply from the park's flat plains, sand dunes, and desert oak woodlands.

At the geographic heart of Australia the predominantly red tones of Uluru and Kata Tjuta epitomise the richness, isolation and starkness of what has come to be known as 'the red centre'. These natural qualities convey a powerful sense of the very long evolution of the Australian continent.

The rock art symbols and figures on shelter walls at Uluru depict a complex cultural system that has been passed down through many generations. The land-scape of both the park and its surrounding lands are imbued with profound spiritual importance.

*Tjukurpa*, the traditional lore of the park's Indigenous owners, Anangu, is alive today in local social structures and customs, and it guides all aspects of life and work in the park.







It is part of the traditional belief system of one of the oldest human societies in the world. Under *Tjukurpa*, the landscapes of Uluru and Kata Tjuta are physical evidence of the actions, artefacts and bodies of the ancestral heroes (*tjukuritija*) who travelled the earth in creation times. The park's environment is an outcome of millennia of management using traditional Anangu methods governed by *Tjukurpa*. Anangu culture remains strong because the Law is embodied in *Tjukurpa* through *inma* (dance), stories, songs, ceremonies, language, knowledge and other practices to look after the country. These elements continue to define the Anangu relationship to their land.

The cultural landscape of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is an outstanding illustration of successful human adaptation over many millennia to the exigencies of a hostile arid environment.

The integrity of the cultural landscape is derived from the traditional practices of its Indigenous owners and would be threatened by any substantial change to this management system.

## Management

Feral animals are present, notably foxes and cats, but control measures are in place to contain them. The highly invasive buffel grass is a continuing challenge to contain. Fire has been a widely used landscape management tool for thousands of years and the park maintains an active burning program led by traditional owners. This is important as there is evidence to suggest that the cessation of traditional Aboriginal fire management across the wider landscape has led to a much greater potential for large scale wildfire with serious impacts on wildlife. An active regional approach to fire and feral animal management is now in place through collaboration with Indigenous Protected Areas which cover the vast Aboriginal lands surrounding the park.

Human impacts are largely confined to tourist and Anangu residential areas and are therefore limited. However, while sacred sites and cave paintings have been closed to public access, some visitor trespass still occurs, and there is also slow but progressive degradation from natural weathering.

Uluru Handback 25th Anniversary.

Photo © Grenville Turner, Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPaC)







Red Centre. Photo © Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPaC).

Sustaining the authenticity of park values relates not only to protecting these physical sites but also to ensuring that Anangu continue to pass their stories, ceremonies and knowledge of their environment to future generations. An ongoing challenge is ensuring that visitors understand and respect Anangu traditions and that tourist infrastructure impacts minimally on the landscape.

Revenue from park use fees contributes to management operating costs, and steadily declining visitation has had a significant impact on park budgets over the last decade. The current management plan (2010-2020), the fifth plan since the park's establishment in 1977, provides for the eventual closure of the Uluru climb, which has been a contentious element of the park experience for decades. A key management priority is to foster the development of new visitor experiences, particularly through Indigenous businesses, to replace the climb and to rebuild visitor numbers.

The Mala, an important species associated with the cultural landscape of the park and considered extinct when the park was established, has since been successfully reintroduced into a large feral-animal free enclosure in the park.

The Mutitjulu community is located within the park, and the park provides the community with power, water and sewerage at a significant and growing cost.

## Kakadu

Kakadu has been home to Aboriginal people for more than 50,000 years. Many of the park's extensive rock art sites date back thousands of years, providing a window into human civilisation before the last ice age. Detailed paintings reveal insights into the hunting and gathering practices, social structure and ritual ceremonies of Indigenous societies.

Kakadu is the largest national park in Australia and one of the largest in the world's tropics. It preserves the greatest variety of ecosystems on the Australian continent, including extensive areas of savannah woodlands, open forest, floodplains, mangroves, tidal mudflats, coastal areas and monsoon forests. The park also has a huge diversity of flora and fauna and is one of the areas of northern Australia with a wide variety of habitats largely intact.

It was established in three major steps, with the first stage declared in 1979.

Kakadu is a rich natural and cultural landscape of spectacular scenery and arresting beauty. The park contains the western rim of the ancient Arnhem Land plateau, with escarpments up to 330 metres high extending in a jagged and unbroken line for hundreds of kilometres, contrasting with vast eucalypt woodlands, dynamic freshwater floodplains and large tidal rivers.



The vast floodplains of the Alligator rivers in Kakadu National Park are one of the richest biological regions in Australia.

Photo © Ian Oswald Jones, Commonwealth of Australia

Key attractions of the park occur where streams plummet over the escarpment rim into stepped waterfalls and plunge pools.

The park was proposed as part of the development of uranium mining in the region which had started in the 1950s. The Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry (RUEI) ran from 1975 to 1977. The inquiry considered the environmental impacts expected to occur as a result of uranium mining in the Alligator Rivers Region. Included in those recommendations was the establishment of the Kakadu National Park (DSEWPaC, 2013). The Ranger Uranium Mine has been operating on an excision within Kakadu National Park for over 30 years. The town of Jabiru serves both the park and the mine.

## Management

In the decades since Kakadu's establishment, the removal of huge numbers of Asian Water Buffalo and the progressive re-introduction of fire management led by traditional owners have led a remarkable revitalisation of the park's biodiversity. However, there are more recent challenges. The widespread decline in abundance and species richness of small mammals across northern Australia is also a characteristic of Kakadu. Predation by feral cats is a likely cause but the reality is probably more complex. The Board has approved the construction of two cat enclosures to test this hypothesis and allow for the re-establishment of populations of species that are disappearing locally. Cane toads invaded the park in 2001 and have reduced the abundance of important species including the

Northern Quoll and some reptiles. The park has collaborated with independent scientists to train Quolls to be cane-toad averse, and this trait is being successfully passed on to their offspring. Remnant Quoll populations survive in the park. While Kakadu has very successfully contained the highly invasive and devastating *Mimosa Pigra*, other weed species are progressively invading the floodplains (*Para Grass* and *Olive Hymenachne*) and river systems (*Salvinia*). *Mission* and *Gamba Grasses* pose major threats to fire risk and ecological function.

Cultural sites have received less attention in recent years, and natural and chemical weathering, feral animals, fire, and insects such as mud-building wasps all contribute to the slow but progressive degradation of art sites, which traditional owners do not restore.

In 2013, a decades-long fight by the main traditional owner Jeffrey Lee AM culminated in the incorporation of Koongarra into the park. Mr Lee fought to prevent mining on his ancestral lands, which were surrounded by Kakadu but excluded from the boundaries when the park was declared in 1979 because of a significant uranium deposit.

In Kakadu's south, old uranium mines and contaminated sites dating back to mining in the 1950s and 60s, have been successfully rehabilitated in close consultation with relevant traditional owners. Contaminated soils, materials and equipment have been securely buried in a permanent repository, meeting a key requirement of the park lease.





Climate change poses significant threats to the park World Heritage values. Threats include salt water intrusion into freshwater ecosystems, altered fire frequency and intensity, and changing competitiveness of native and invasive species.

Just over half the park is under claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act, with some claims dating back over thirty years. The township of Jabiru, which is within the park, is under a native title claim, and is likely to be scheduled as Aboriginal land as part of the settlement of this claim.

### **Future directions for both parks**

Both parks are exploring new opportunities for outsourcing park functions to local Indigenous businesses, and fostering new visitor experiences, products and services, particularly those that employ or benefit Indigenous owners. We continue to explore new ways of increasing direct and indirect employment by Indigenous owners. We also work with local schools and community ranger groups to encourage participation in park work and to build pathways to employment and leadership roles. Existing relationships with park businesses are being placed on a more commercial basis, and web-based bookings and payments are being introduced to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

We are actively pursuing better monitoring and reporting of the results of managing both World Heritage Areas. A great diversity of partnerships with research and educational institutions contributes greatly to a better

understanding of park values, the key threats to these values, and to cost-effective ways to improve management outcomes for these outstanding national and international treasures.

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### **Biography**

Peter Cochrane has been the Director of National Parks and head of Parks Australia since 1999. In this capacity he sits on the Boards of Management for both parks.

# Protecting Icy Islands – The Territory of Heard and McDonald Islands

Tony Fleming  
Sandra Potter

At 53°S and 73°E, Heard Island and the McDonald Islands are Australia's most remote and least-visited World Heritage Area. In the period since their inscription in 1997 – for their outstanding natural heritage values – these icy sub-Antarctic outposts have been observed by satellite more often than by people on the ground.

The Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI), and its surrounding marine reserve of 65 000 km<sup>2</sup>, are an IUCN Category 1a Protected Area (Strict Nature Reserve) managed by the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

HIMI was inscribed on the World Heritage list for both its geological and biological processes. The nomination notes that Heard Island is a place of spectacular beauty that contains outstanding examples of physical processes – providing valuable indicators of the role of crustal plates in the formation of ocean basins and continents and of atmospheric and oceanic warming. It is the only subantarctic island with a continuously active volcano. Heard Island is also considered to be one of the largest 'biologically pristine' islands in the world. Therefore the prevention of introductions through human activity is a major consideration in the planning and authorisation of visits. The Territory also provides crucial habitat for large breeding populations of marine birds and mammals including Southern Elephant Seals, Fur Seals, Petrels, Albatrosses, Prions, an endemic Sheathbill and Cormorant, and King, Gentoo, Macaroni and Rock Hopper Penguins.

## Visitors

HIMI is some 4000 km south-west of the Australian mainland, 4700 km south-east of Africa and 1000 km north of Antarctica. HIMI is therefore afforded a degree of natural protection through its very remote location with the Territory is distant from large human population centres and shipping lanes. The maritime setting of the islands leads to low seasonal and daily temperature ranges, persistent and generally low cloud cover, frequent precipitation and strong winds and is a challenging environment in which to work and recreate.





It has been little occupied since the conduct of sealing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the operation of an Australian Government research station between 1947 and 1955.

Relatively few privately-organised visits and in the order of twenty public-sector visits have been made to HIMI since the 1980s. The first and last winter occupation of Heard Island since 1955 was in 1992. The most recent scientific expedition was in 2003/04.

In 2002 the AAD commissioned an independent (external) study of the probability of introduction of non-indigenous species. The threats posed by scientific expeditions were assessed as greater than those arising from tourism – on account of the considerably larger volumes of material taken ashore, assumptions about the greater potential for unobserved/unreported breaches of conduct, and the often fewer restrictions placed on researchers' intra-island travel (Chown, 2003).

### Biosecurity

As is the case for other remote sites, by the time an introduction is discovered and identified as an issue, control or eradication may be difficult if not impossible to achieve. Excepting behaviours by those with a deep ethical commitment, the practical attention given to cleaning footwear and other gear of seeds and soil is influenced by the degree of convenience attached to taking the action and the degree to which individuals are compelled to act (Barr, 2004; and the author's observations). It is therefore highly desirable – perhaps essential – to have inspectors verify the compliance of companies and individuals with the suite of quarantine requirements detailed in recent and forthcoming management plans for the area. In turn, the compliance of AAD activities as an operator and regulator is determined through the contracted assistance of Quarantine Tasmania.

Unlike most other sub-Antarctic islands for which numerous introduced species are recorded, only four 'aliens' are known to have established on Heard Island – thrips, mites, earthworms and annual meadow grass – none directly as a result of human activity (AAD and Director of National Parks, 2005).

### Change

The steepness of HIMI's dominant mountain – Big Ben, reaching 2745 m over a horizontal distance of about 10 km – and high snow precipitation at high altitudes mean that Heard Island's glaciers are fast-flowing and sensitive reactors to climate change. Glaciers that once terminated at sea level now terminate more than a kilometre from the coast; between 1947 and 1988 the

area occupied by glaciers has decreased by more than 10% (Ruddell, 2006). Such recent and dramatic retreat has created new potential habitat for plants and other biota, while ameliorating temperatures will likely provide scope for the spread of species, with or without direct human aid.

McDonald Island, while not glaciated, has undergone its own massive change. Volcanic activity in the 1990s resulted in it doubling in size.

It is these features, and HIMI's high level of freedom from human disturbance, that make this World Heritage Area an outstanding location for researching climate change and plant colonisation processes.

### Remote technologies

Whereas expedition members documented some thirty eruptions of Heard Island's volcano between 1947 and 1955, satellite imagery now records these events, and an automated camera installed at Atlas Cove records expedition members as they move about the site.

Remote sensing, image analysis and GIS techniques are proving invaluable aids to mapping and monitoring. Such techniques cause few or no environmental impacts, can provide information that is not visible with the naked eye or in aerial photographs, cost less than field surveys, and offer methods that are robust, objective and repeatable (Lucier et al., 2009). These techniques are also assisting in presenting HIMI to the global community.

### The outlook

The outstanding universal value of the area appears to have been little-impacted since the Territory's inscription. The presence of humans is evidenced only by scattered sealing industry artefacts, the foundations and localised detritus of the old station buildings (currently undergoing assessment for the possible presence of asbestos prior to future clean-up actions), and field huts and equipment used to support Australian research activities. Today, a system of management zones establishes wilderness and heritage areas; visitor access and main use areas to concentrate scientific and non-government activity; and areas in which access is only allowed for monitoring and other compelling purposes. Although extractive industries are banned outright, the fundamental determinant of whether activities may be undertaken in HIMI is the potential of the activity to detract from the Territory's values, rather than the activity's purpose.

The administration of the Heard Island and McDonald Islands World Heritage Area is funded from within the Australian Government's appropriation to the AAD. Most





Big Ben viewed from Sealers Corner, Heard Island. The blubber pots are evidence of the sealing days. Photo © Karl Rollings/Australian Antarctic Division

protection obligations will continue to be implemented through biosecurity and other conditions attached to the permits that are needed to enter the Territory. Future management activities – research to support conservation, and the clean-up of debris associated with the old station – will most likely be supported by patrols undertaking surveillance for illegal fishing, and the diversion of government-chartered vessels travelling to and from Australia's Antarctic stations.

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- <http://www.heardisland.aq/>
- <http://www.antarctica.gov.au/>

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## Biographies

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Dr Sandra Potter currently leads the Australian Antarctic Division team responsible for the administration of Australia's Antarctic and sub-Antarctic territories. She has more than 20 years' experience in protected area management planning and the conduct of activities in sites of high conservation value. Dr Potter is a member of the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee and an Honorary Research Associate with the University of Tasmania's School of Geography and Environmental Studies.

# Managing the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

Andrew Maclean  
Max Chappell

The Wet Tropics of Queensland was inscribed on the World Heritage list on 9 December 1988 on the basis of all four natural heritage criteria<sup>1</sup> established under the World Heritage Convention.

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area extends over 894,420 ha of mainly tropical rainforest in Far North Queensland. It includes most of the coastal ranges and extends 450 km from near Townsville in the south to near Cooktown in the north. The World Heritage Area (the Area), comprises diverse land tenures including national parks and other protected areas, public land used for other community purposes and leasehold and private land.

It is a particularly beautiful region with spectacular scenery as coastal mountains ranges with rivers, gorges and waterfalls meet tropical waters. The Daintree River valley is one of the largest rainforest wilderness areas in Australia and near Cape Tribulation the rainforest edges the beach and coral reefs fringe just off shore – a combination which is rare in the world. The World Heritage status largely derives from the fact that the Wet Tropics rainforests contain an almost complete record of the major stages in the evolution of plant life on earth (DSEWPaC, 2013).

This paper focuses on the legislative and strategic measures in place to maintain the outstanding universal value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

## Legislation

The Area is unique in Australia in that it is protected under a legislative regime established specifically to support its World Heritage status.

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<sup>1</sup> The Wet Tropics is currently inscribed on the World Heritage List for its natural heritage values only. The Australian Government has recently added the World Heritage Area to the National Heritage listing for its Aboriginal cultural heritage values and Rainforest. Aboriginal people have indicated an interest in pursuing World Heritage listing for these values.





The Wet Tropics lush forests provide sanctuary for Australia's greatest diversity of animals and plants. Photo © Colin Tottenham, Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWRPaC)



Under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (the Act), the Queensland Parliament, 'recognises that Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention is to ensure the protection, conservation, presentation, rehabilitation, and transmission to future generations, of the natural heritage values of the Area'. Under the Act, it is also, 'the intention of the Parliament that the Area should be established and maintained as a World Heritage Area of the highest standard'. Four key elements under the Act in relation to identification and protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Area are:

- the establishment of the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority), its Board and its functions in relation to protection and management of the World Heritage Area
- the requirement for the Authority to perform its functions in a way that is consistent with the protection of the World Heritage Area's natural heritage values
- the requirement for the preparation and administration of a statutory management plan, the *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998* (the Wet Tropics Plan)
- the requirement to prepare an annual report on the state of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area to both the Australian and Queensland Parliaments.

The Wet Tropics Plan regulates activities inside the World Heritage Area that have the potential to adversely affect the integrity of the Area and its OUV. Activities regulated include: destruction of native plants; disturbances to earth and watercourses; keeping of undesirable animals or plants; building of structures or roads; and use of motor vehicles.

The principles and guidelines against which permit applications must be assessed recognise the most important consideration in deciding an application is the likely impact of the proposed activity on the Area's integrity<sup>2</sup> and that the Authority must decide an application in a way that minimises the likely impact of the proposed activity on the Area's World Heritage values<sup>3</sup>. Importantly, the Wet Tropics Plan requires that the Authority have regard to potential cumulative impacts of proposals on the Area's integrity.

The Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) comes into play when matters of national environmental significance are potentially threatened. The Authority liaises with the Commonwealth with respect to environmental impact assessment requirements and any permit conditions for development proposals inside the Area that trigger the EPBC Act. Application of the EPBC Act outside the boundaries of the Area provides an administrative protection 'buffer' limiting the risk of significant impacts on the integrity of the Area from developments around its boundaries.

### Other measures for maintenance of outstanding universal value

In addition to its statutory functions, the Authority and its community and industry partners engage in a variety of activities in support of the OUV of the World Heritage Area.

One of the most important foundations for all of the Authority's work is its broad program of community engagement. The Authority, based within the wet tropics region, works hard to ensure it remains connected with and responsive to community views about the World Heritage Area. The Authority places a particular priority on the rights and aspirations of Rainforest Aboriginal people, and the interests of the conservation and tourism sectors. To ensure decision-making is well grounded in evidence, the Authority also supports a scientific advisory committee comprising leading scientists from a wide range of disciplines.

The *Wet Tropics Conservation Strategy* (WTMA, 2004) identified the major priorities required for action over the next decade, in and around the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, to conserve the Area's integrity and its OUV. The Strategy was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders with interests in conservation of the wet tropics. The Strategy continues to influence the priorities of land managers within the World Heritage Area, such as the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, in addition to the priorities of the Authority itself. A recent review of the Strategy found that its priorities still remain relevant. However, the need for more targeted prioritisation regarding biosecurity and habitat connectivity was identified.

<sup>2</sup> While consistent with the meaning of 'integrity' as described under the Operational Guidelines for the *Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 2012*, 'integrity' in this instance is defined under Schedule 3 of the *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998*.

<sup>3</sup> 'World Heritage values' are defined under the *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998* as meaning 'things comprising the Area's natural heritage enabling it to meet the requirements, under the Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention, for listing as a world heritage property'. This means the Area's Outstanding Universal Value and the integrity of the Area.





The striped possum has an elongated fourth finger to extract insects from bark.  
Photo © Mike Trenerry, Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPaC)

Climate change is recognised as a particularly serious threat to the values of the wet tropics (for example, UNESCO, 2007; Williams et al, 2012). The Authority addressed the issue in its *Climate Change in the Wet Tropics – Impacts and Responses*, State of Wet Tropics Report (WTMA, 2008). The report concludes that the best way to make the forests of the wet tropics more resilient to the anticipated adverse impacts of climate change is to ensure that they are healthy and in good condition. This means reducing or eliminating other pressures on forest health such as weeds, feral animals and disease; fragmentation; inappropriate fire regimes; and other impacts of human use in and around the World Heritage Area. The Authority, in partnership with other community and government organisations, actively seeks resources to support projects that help to

enhance the integrity of the Area and improve forest health. An example of this is the Authority's \$660,000 Commonwealth-funded project on the Atherton Tablelands supporting improved landscape connectivity in an area identified as an important focus for climate change adaptation.

The Authority influences the practices of infrastructure agencies and land managers through the publication of best environmental practice guides. Examples include guides for road maintenance (Goosem *et al*, 2010), electricity infrastructure (QESI, 2008), and water infrastructure (WTMA, 2001). In some cases, initial work conducted by the Authority has influenced the development of Codes of Practice for road maintenance and electricity infrastructure now applied throughout Queensland.

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area exists in the context of a wider agricultural and urban landscape. The Authority advises local government and other planning authorities to encourage maintenance of the OUV of the Area. A recent example was the preparation of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031

4 Regulatory provisions supporting the plan were repealed in October 2012. The plan remains an important strategic influence on local government planning.



by the Queensland Government (DIP, 2009), which is a comprehensive strategic land use plan for the region supported by state planning regulations<sup>4</sup>. Initiatives of particular value in the plan include mapped definition of the urban footprint; mapping and provisions for maintaining areas of high ecological significance and improving ecological connectivity; and limits on development on steep hill slopes that could diminish the aesthetic values of the adjacent World Heritage Area. The Authority continues to work closely with local government to ensure their planning schemes are consistent with the protection of the World Heritage Area.

The Authority's analysis contributing to Australia's 2012 periodic report on the conservation of World Heritage properties, submitted to the World Heritage Committee, identified invasive species as one of the most serious threats to the outstanding universal value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Biosecurity was also the subject of the Authority's 2010/11 State of the Wet Tropics Report to the Queensland and Australian

Parliaments. Unfortunately serious biosecurity failures continue to be evident. The Authority's focus is on minimising the risk of new incursions and to prevent them from becoming established as many pests in the wet tropics are now established and are not likely to be eradicated with current technologies (e.g. pigs). The rapid spread of myrtle rust from the central coast of New South Wales to the wet tropics over a period of less than two years and infestation of the edge of the World Heritage Area by yellow crazy ants are two examples of particular current concern. In each case, state and national biosecurity systems and investment has been lacking in effective and timely response to these serious environmental threats.

## Conclusion

In the 20 years since its establishment, the governance and regulatory regime for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area has proven to be largely effective in balancing community needs for infrastructure and other developments with the maintenance of the outstanding

Overview of Missionary Bay and Hinchinbrook Island.  
Photo © K. Trapnell, Wet Tropics Images





universal value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The integrity of the World Heritage Area has been maintained and, with the recovery of protected forests from historical disturbance (e.g. logging), has in many respects improved.

The distinctive regulatory and governance system for the wet tropics helps to ensure the Area's World Heritage status and associated outstanding universal value plays a prominent part in all decision making. This system supports a tenure blind, ecosystem based approach to management that achieves very high standards of protection and management. Importantly, governance, collaborative and consultative arrangements underpin high levels of community and stakeholder support for the World Heritage Area.

However, effective as the regional scale legislative and policy framework for the Area may be, maintenance of its outstanding universal value also depends on effective environmental management programs and investment at the State and national scale; and coordinated implementation. Climate change, pests, weeds and disease stand out as particularly serious ongoing threats to the outstanding universal value of the Area demanding more effective and better resourced responses.

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# Managing Fraser Island World Heritage Area

Angie Stringer

As the largest sand island in the world, stretching for 122 km along the Queensland coast, Fraser Island undoubtedly lives up to its World Heritage status. Fraser Island is most commonly recognised for its perched freshwater dune lakes, dingo population, high sand dunes and the unique phenomenon of extensive areas of tall rainforest growing on sand.

Fraser Island is an iconic Queensland attraction drawing around half a million tourists a year. The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Fraser Island World Heritage Area includes examples of ongoing biological, hydrological and geomorphological processes including immense sandunes that are part of the longest and most complete age sequence of coastal dune systems in the world, and are still evolving.

Examples of significant on-going ecological and biological processes, such as the vegetation associations and successions represented on the Island which display an unusual level of complexity, occur over very short distances with major changes in floristic and structural composition. Fraser Island is also listed for its superlative natural phenomena and areas of exceptional natural beauty in a diverse and varied landscape that includes more than 40 kilometres of strikingly coloured sand cliffs and over 250 kilometres of clear sandy beaches.

Known as K'gari by the indigenous Butchulla people, the island was first occupied at least 5000 years ago. K'gari holds a special place in Butchulla culture, with the island's lakes being an integral part of their dreaming (NPRSR, 2012).

## Achieving the Conservation of Fraser Island

Perhaps the greatest conservation outcome for Fraser Island since receiving World Heritage listing is the properties enhanced conservation status which resulted from the vast majority of the island being converted from a state forest to national park in 1998. Prior to the majority of the property gaining national park status, which did not occur until six years after World Heritage inscription, Fraser Island's rich natural resources were subject to a number of extractive industries that operated on the island for nearly 130 years.









Fraser Island is the largest sand island in the world. Its dunes rise to 240 meters.  
Photo © Paul Candlin, Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPaC)

The island was initially visited by pioneering timber getters in the early 1860s in search of Giant Kauri, Turpentine and Hoop Pine trees. The early logging years saw the building of supporting infrastructure and the beginning of the introduction of foreign plants and animals onto the island. Logging continued to be the major industry on the island until 1991 (FIDO, 2013). This timber extraction was also the beginning of the deterioration of the Butchulla people's traditional way of life (McNiven et al., 2002). The Aboriginal inhabitants were placed in reservations on the island and, by the early 1900s all but a handful had been forcibly removed from their homeland.

In the 1960s, mining exploration had begun, and minerals such as rutile, zircon and monazite were

discovered on the island (Sinclair, 1997). In the early 1970s and amidst significant controversy, sandmining commenced. Following a major national public campaign opposing mining on the island, and involving a number of court cases, all mining leases were relinquished by 1984.

In 1990, a Commission of Inquiry into the Conservation, Management and Use of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region was set up by the Queensland Government (Fitzgerald, 1990). The inquiry was a catalyst for stopping logging activities on the island, and also for recommending proceeding with a World Heritage nomination. In 1992, Fraser Island, including a 500 meter perimeter out from low water mark, was inscribed on the World Heritage list.





Although freehold land and small townships are still present on Fraser Island, the island's World Heritage listing under criterion vii (exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance), has assisted in limiting inappropriate development. This has helped to ensure that the island continues to remain aesthetically pleasing and an area of exceptional natural beauty.

### Community involvement

Community involvement in the management of Fraser Island has been supported by three advisory committees established to provide advice on the identification, preservation, conservation, protection and transmission to future generations of the OUV of the property. The community and scientific advisory

committees were established in the late 1990s and the Indigenous advisory committee, consisting of representatives from eight Butchulla clan groups, was established in 2005.

The committees have been successful in putting the case for additional funding for monitoring and protection of the property's values, assisting to have Indigenous people working as rangers on the property, and identifying potential extensions to the World Heritage boundary. Importantly, committees such as these involve a broad range of stakeholders representing many different community interests and help to give the property's heritage '*a function in the life in the community*' as outlined in the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 1972).

The Federal government has assisted the State of Queensland in establishing the committees. There are specific obligations to allow for community involvement in management of World Heritage properties, as stated in the Australian World Heritage Management Principles established in Schedule 5 of the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*.

## Challenges

Fraser Island is renowned as a tourism destination and as an iconic, diverse and beautiful island; it is one of the 'must sees' for tourists to south-eastern Queensland.

With around 500,000 visitors a year, ranging from free and independent travellers to organised 'tag along 4wd tours', visitation pressure is one of the challenges for management in terms of maintaining the property's OUV. There are management limits on commercial operator numbers and visitor permits help to manage the volume of visitors on the island during peak times.

Management challenges are well demonstrated at the perched dune freshwater lakes – an integral part of the World Heritage nomination bid due to their number, elevation, beauty, unique wildlife and unusual morphology and hydrology (Arthington et al., 1986). These lakes, particularly Lake McKenzie, the most prominent lake on the island, are extremely popular recreational spots for tourists. Managing the effects from high density visitation such as infilling of lakes, vegetation loss and maintaining water quality, while allowing visitors to experience the natural beauty of the island, is an ongoing challenge.

One of the most high profile and emotive issues for Fraser Island has been dingo management. Believed to be the purest strain of dingo on the east coast of Australia (UNESCO, 2013), it is an icon of the island's wildlife. However attacks on people occurring over the last 13 years, including a tragic fatal attack, have focussed management of the species on minimising human/dingo interactions while trying to maintain a viable healthy dingo population on the island. Management measures include dingo-deterrent fencing, fines for visitors and residents who directly or indirectly feed dingoes, and extensive education campaigns to protect people and to help the dingoes retain a natural way of life (QPWS, 2011). However the challenge for managers remains to strike a balance between enabling tourists to see the iconic species, and keeping any interactions as natural and safe as possible.

The island also faces environmental issues similar to other protected areas such as threats from introduced species, prominent amongst which are feral cats, cane

toads and lantana. Potential impacts from climate change and sea level rise have been identified as major long-term issues. Further research into climate change impacts on the island's lakes, dunes and biodiversity is needed (DEWHA, 2009) to be able to anticipate and plan for climatic events such as increased storm activity and sea level rise.

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Angie Stringer is the Principal Project Officer of the World Heritage Unit in the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. After graduating in 2005 with a degree in Environmental Science and Management, Angie has worked for a range of environmental organisations in Australia and Europe. Angie's current role involves overseeing seven community, scientific and indigenous World Heritage advisory committees and the strategic planning and policies in relation to establishing, administering and managing three of Queensland's five World Heritage properties, which are all listed for their natural values.

Fraser Island's pure dingoes are valued but create challenges for management.  
Photo © Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPaC)



# World Heritage in Western Australia

Jess Mann

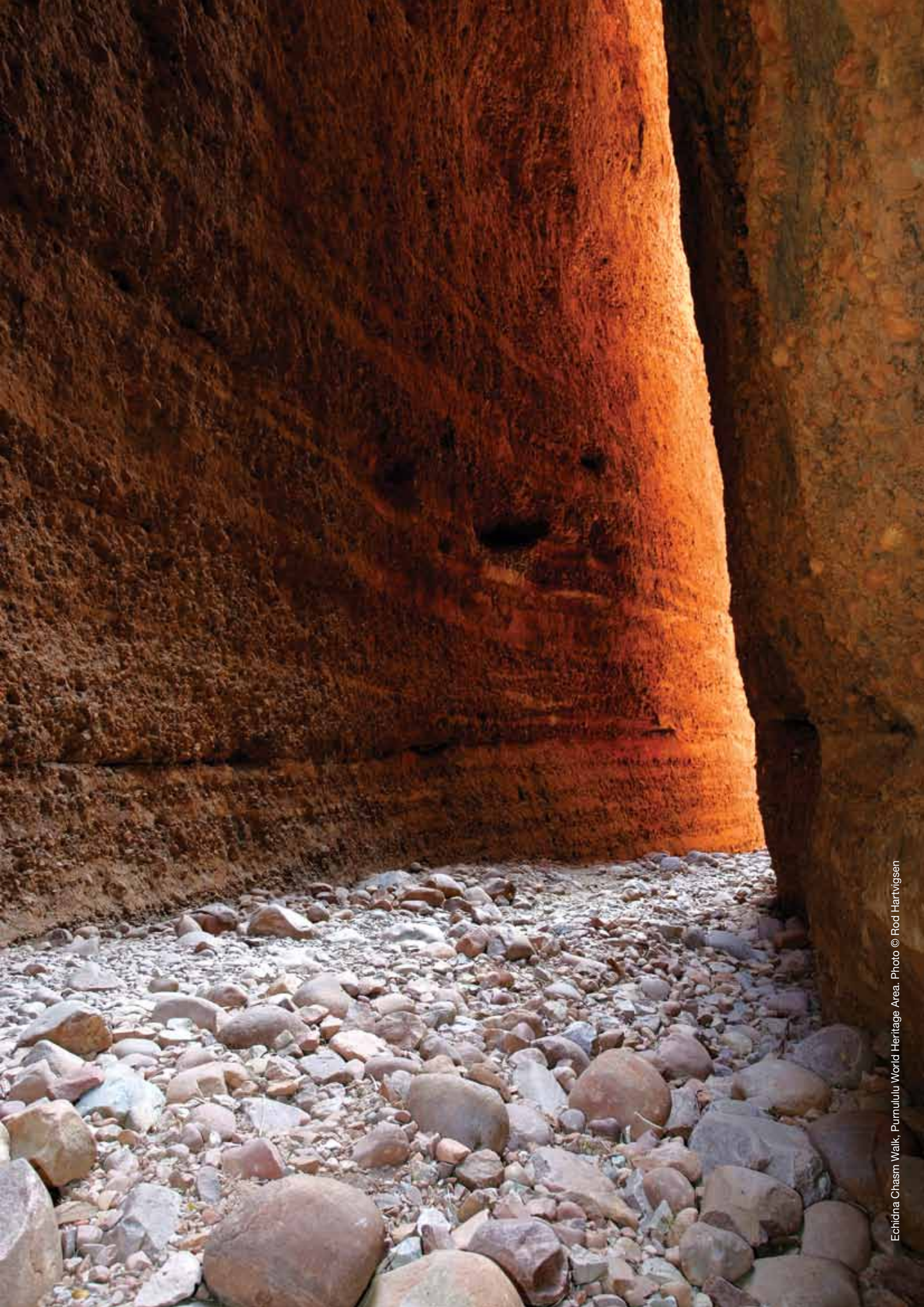
Western Australia has four areas inscribed on the World Heritage List. The day-to-day management of three of these sites, inscribed for their natural Outstanding Universal Values (OUV), is the responsibility of the Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC, 2012). Fremantle Prison is Western Australia's fourth World Heritage Area, inscribed in July 2010 as one of 11 sites that make up the World Heritage Australian Convict Sites and represent Australia's rich convict history. Listed for its cultural values, the management of Fremantle Prison lies outside the scope of this paper.

The Shark Bay World Heritage Area, located in the Midwest region of Western Australia, encompasses around 2.3 million hectares of multiple tenure land including marine and terrestrial conservation estate. Shark Bay World Heritage Area includes 1,500 km of coastline and is one of the few properties inscribed for all four natural criteria for outstanding universal value. It was the first property in Western Australia to be listed, inscribed in December 1991. This property contains an outstanding example of the Earth's evolutionary history with its microbial communities, particularly the rock-like stromatolites, structures built by single-celled cyanobacteria.

Shark Bay is the transition zone between major ecological marine and terrestrial zones, and has a high number of endemic species and others at the limit of their range. The bay's isolation means some species of flora and fauna have evolved into distinct subspecies of species found in other parts of Australia and five of Australia's 26 most threatened mammal species have their major populations in this World Heritage property. The vast seagrass meadows of Shark Bay have significantly influenced the region's marine environment, contributing to the natural aesthetic beauty of the Area. The Area provides a haven for vulnerable animals such as the Humpback Whale and Green and Loggerhead turtles and supports one of the world's largest and most stable Dugong populations.

Located in the north-east of the State, in the Kimberley region, the Purnululu National Park World Heritage Area was inscribed in 2003 for its natural beauty and significant geological processes and landscape evolution. Covering approximately 240,000 hectares, the remote Purnululu National Park World Heritage Area includes the iconic Bungle Bungle Range, the predominant feature of the World Heritage Area.







This sandstone karst system of unparalleled scale and grandeur is an outcome of geomorphic processes involving 20 million years of weathering by wind, rain and water. Dark horizontal bands, formed by cyanobacteria, create a striking contrast with the lighter sandstone, giving the range its banded appearance (Environment Australia, 2002). Purnululu sits between the hot dry deserts of Western Australia's arid zone to the south and monsoonal areas to the north. As a result of this overlap, there is a rich diversity of species, some endemic, on the limit of their habitat found here (Environment Australia, 2002).

Further south, in the Pilbara region of Western Australia lies the State's most recently listed World Heritage Area. The boundary of the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area, encompassing approximately 604,500 hectares, includes both marine and terrestrial conservation estate (DEWHA, 2010). Inscribed in June 2011, this area is recognised for its natural beauty and biological diversity in particular the aesthetically striking contrast between the arid Cape Range and the vibrant Ningaloo Reef and the exceptionally high diversity of terrestrial and marine flora and fauna found in the area. The Ningaloo Coast is internationally recognised for its superlative underwater scenery, enhanced by the abundance of marine fauna ranging from the brightly coloured reef invertebrates to the majestic megafauna (DEWHA, 2010). The Ningaloo Reef supports one of the largest reliable Whale Shark aggregations in the world and is an important turtle rookery for threatened turtles such as the Loggerhead, Hawksbill and Green Turtles.

On behalf of the Government of Western Australia, DEC ensures that effective and active measures are taken to protect, conserve and share the values of these World Heritage Areas. This is done through cooperative and legislative arrangements between the Commonwealth and State Government, local government agencies, property owners/site managers and traditional owners. In addition to the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), Western Australia's comprehensive suite of legislation, policies and programs supports the obligations that come with being recognised as a World Heritage property.

### Key achievements and changes since World Heritage listing

While each of the World Heritage Areas described above varies in geographical location, ecology, geology and biodiversity, there are some similarities in what has been achieved since World Heritage listing. Some of the most significant accomplishments relate to better protection and long-term conservation as a result of

State, national and international commitment to the World Heritage Convention and funding partnerships to monitor, manage and protect World Heritage values.

Funding contributions from the Commonwealth and State Governments have enabled each World Heritage Area to appoint a full-time Officer (two in Shark Bay) to support the day-to-day management of each property. Their role includes the establishment and executive support for area-specific World Heritage advisory committees. They also lead the development and implementation of communication and education strategies, in consultation with key stakeholders including other land owners within the Area, to achieve an integrated approach to management. The Commonwealth and State have also collaborated the purchase of significant pastoral lands in the World Heritage Area for conservation purposes.

In 1991, a bold conservation project, entitled Project Eden, was initiated to improve some of the Shark Bay World Heritage Area's outstanding ecological values by removing feral animals and reintroducing native wildlife while undertaking research and education to improve knowledge and raise awareness of the project. Since its inception, the project has been successful with the near or total eradication on the Peron Peninsula of introduced foxes and goats and the ongoing control of feral cats.

For Shark Bay, there has been no discernible change in visitation levels following World Heritage inscription (Gillespie Economics and BDA Group, 2008), however anecdotal evidence suggests tourists are staying longer in the area and accommodation options have improved because listing has raised the tourism profile of the region. Using the World Heritage branding and imaging has provided the tourism industry the ability to value add and broaden their marketing focal point, to include the whole Area rather than rely heavily on niche products such as the Monkey Mia dolphin experience. In support of this goal, the Western Australian Government, with assistance from the Commonwealth, constructed and furnished the \$8 million Shark Bay World Heritage Discovery Centre in Denham. As part of the Australian National Landscapes Program, both the Shark Bay – Ningaloo area and the Kimberley will also benefit from the increased international exposure resulting from this initiative and the promotion of the superlative nature based tourism experiences available within these landscapes.

To assist in meeting the international, national and state obligations for the World Heritage Area, the *Shark Bay World Heritage Property Strategic Plan 2008-2020* has been developed, providing a planning framework for





Shark Bay shelters an abundance of marine fauna including dugong, dolphins, sharks, rays, turtles and fish including the famous Monkey Mia dolphins.  
Photo © Ian Anderson (DEC)

managing the area. This plan complements other management documents produced for the Shark Bay area, including the *Shark Bay Terrestrial Reserves and Proposed Reserve Additions Management Plan*, released in May 2012.

DEC works closely with neighbours to ensure that their management practices are complementary to the protection of the OUV for which Purnululu National Park was inscribed. The impact of hot, dry season fires on the distinctive cyanobacteria banding of the Bungle Bungle Range is a significant threat both to the Purnululu National Park World Heritage Area as well as to the cultural values of the area, as fire causes erosion to Aboriginal art sites and exfoliation of the distinctive banding on the massif. Caring for Country funding from the Commonwealth Government has enabled DEC to prepare a fire management strategy in collaboration with Traditional Owners and neighbouring land managers to reduce the instances of late season bushfires impacting on the values of the World Heritage Area. The project benefits other nature conservation values in the property by assisting in the creation of a fine-grain fire mosaic which is more akin to traditional Aboriginal burning practices.

An investment has also recently been made to reduce the risk of erosion and vegetation damage by undertaking road and walk trail improvements.

The re-routing of existing paths and construction of boardwalks will significantly reduce the impact of visitors on the fragile vegetation and soils of Purnululu National Park World Heritage Area.

Increasing opportunities for traditional owners has been both a major point of focus and achievement for the Purnululu National Park World Heritage Area. Currently DEC employs four assistant rangers from the Djaru and Kidja traditional owner groups and funding for the road and walk trail improvement project will contribute to the employment of additional Aboriginal trainee rangers or ranger's assistants.

Since inscription in June 2011, achievements for the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area have centred on the recruitment of a World Heritage Area Program Manager and promoting the benefits and opportunities of World Heritage listing, through local publications and consultation with the community and key stakeholders. The Program Manager has also begun developing a communication and interpretation strategy for the property and establishing the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee. It is anticipated this group will have its inaugural meeting in mid 2013.

A Feral Animal Control Officer for Ningaloo has been employed following inscription, funded by a Caring for Our Country grant, to develop and implement an



integrated control program to reduce the impact of feral animals on threatened species and habitats on the Ningaloo Coast.

DEC has been working with the Shire of Exmouth and commercial tourism operators to begin developing and incorporating World Heritage interpretive and promotional material into brochures, websites and tourist signage at major tourist attractions including the Vlamingh lighthouse, with significant upgrades to the Milyering Visitor Centre to follow.

The Whale Shark is one of the most internationally renowned icons within the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area. The annual aggregations of Whale Sharks attract thousands of visitors each year, with visitation steadily increasing over the last 10 years. However, little is known about Whale Shark biology and ecology. A Caring for Our Country funded project to review the Whale Shark management program has been initiated to manage increasing pressures on this key species and provide a blueprint for future research and monitoring requirements.

## World Heritage challenges and threats

While each of Western Australia's World Heritage Areas experience threats unique to that property, there are several common challenges faced in protecting outstanding universal values. One example of this has been gaining community and stakeholder support for World Heritage inscription and addressing myths about World Heritage that may rise, and may be misinformed (Lukeman, 2005). Historically, World Heritage successes have been largely environmental, with the socioeconomic benefits less tangible and often more contentious (Jones and Shaw, 2008). However, with the growing awareness that World Heritage sites can stimulate tourism activity in the Area, and indeed the State in which they are located, as well as protect the natural values for which they are listed, community attitudes are evolving (Gillespie Economics and BDA Group, 2008).

The establishment of Area specific World Heritage advisory committees is one potentially effective way of actively involving key stakeholders groups and community in local World Heritage related matters,

Stromatolites at Hamelin Pool<sup>1</sup> Shark Bay represent one of the oldest forms of life on Earth. Photo © John Cleary (DEC)





however negotiating agreed outcomes between the overarching management body and advisory committee members with a diverse range of backgrounds and interests, can be a challenge (Jones and Shaw, 2008).

This highlights the need and ongoing challenge for DEC; to ensure adequate and effective community and stakeholder engagement takes place so that World Heritage values and management decisions are communicated effectively in order to foster community and stakeholder support and understanding.

In the Purnululu National Park World Heritage Area, community engagement and establishing an advisory committee have been difficult issues due to the remote location of the property, given Purnululu is 300 kilometres by road from the regional town of Kununurra and 3200 kilometres from the capital city (Gillespie Economics and BDA Group, 2008).

Purnululu has had additional challenges establishing an effective advisory group due to unresolved native title claims and local community dynamics. As a result of this, the original Purnululu Park Council, established in 2002, was disbanded in 2007 when it ceased to

function effectively. DEC continues to work towards the establishment of an advisory committee, with representation from local Aboriginal groups, to ensure all relevant traditional owner groups are represented on the committee. One of the desired outcomes of this committee will be appropriate recognition and management and World Heritage inscription for the cultural values of the property (Levitus, 2008).

An additional challenge for all three DEC-managed World Heritage Areas is managing visitor and tourism pressures on World Heritage values. At both Shark Bay and the Ningaloo Coast, remote coastal camping and access, and unmanaged recreational activities present management challenges. In Purnululu National Park, increased visitation has prompted an investment into road improvements and boardwalk construction, in order to protect fragile soils and vegetation and places of cultural importance.

In accordance with the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*, management plans are prepared on behalf of the Conservation Commission and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority of







The western barred bandicoot is now found in the wild only on Bernier and Dorre Islands in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area. Photo © Babs and Bert Wells, DEC

Western Australia, to identify and guide long-term management directions and strategies for protected areas in the State. Management plans in place for the terrestrial, and where applicable, marine, conservation reserves associated with the three World Heritage Areas detail strategies for the sustainable management of visitors, provision of recreation facilities and activities, as well as the facilitation of nature-based tourism opportunities and are an important tool in protecting World Heritage values. These management plans are prepared in consultation with the community and stakeholders (such as other World Heritage landowners) and are an important tool in establishing and maintaining positive relationships to ensure the implementation of integrated management practices that are complementary to the protection of World Heritage values.

Mining and resource industries with the potential to affect the Shark Bay and Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Areas are subject to the provisions of both State and Commonwealth legislation, aimed at protecting the OUV from significant adverse impacts. In Shark Bay, mineral sands extraction is currently proposed to occur outside of, but adjacent to, the southern terrestrial portion of the World Heritage boundary. Although exploration permits extend into the Area, they are the subject of a 'no-mining' condition. The development of these mining leases will be monitored to ensure World Heritage values are protected.

A variety of basic raw materials such as gravel, sand, limestone, gypsum and shell grit are extracted from the Shark Bay World Heritage Area and primarily used in local construction activities, such as road construction. Proposals to access basic raw materials are assessed by relevant agencies to determine the level of impact to World Heritage values and are referred under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* if required. Shell mining and salt production in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area are also managed to ensure that there are no significant adverse impacts on the World Heritage values.

Along the Ningaloo Coast, the expansion of the oil and gas industry, and the potential impact of an oil spill on marine life are being addressed. These issues will be monitored by DEC to ensure there is no significant environment impact to World Heritage values. DEC is also facilitating discussions with stakeholders about oil spill response plans.

Feral animals, weeds and bushfires are a constant management challenge for DEC. DEC management plans, including those relating to the three World Heritage Areas, include key performance measures, targets and reporting requirements for protecting native flora, fauna and ecosystems as well as managing the detrimental effects of weeds, introduced animals and inappropriate fire regimes. Commonwealth and State partnerships to fund specific programs such as Project Eden, are also vital to the effective management, understanding and awareness of these threats.



The World Heritage listing of Shark Bay, Ningaloo Coast and Purnululu National Park provides Western Australia, and DEC, with a significant opportunity to promote and protect the Outstanding Universal Value of these Areas, in addition to providing tourism and economic benefits through increased international exposure and affiliation with this world renowned Convention.

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## Links

More information about Western Australia's World Heritage sites can be obtained from:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/.world.html>

<http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/parks-and-recreation/key-attractions/world-heritage-areas.html>

<http://www.sharkbay.org>

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The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has the lead responsibility for protecting and conserving the State's environment on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

DEC also contributes to national and international programs, such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the National Heritage Trust, and to the implementation of international environmental and conservation treaties in Western Australia.

## Biography

Graduating from Murdoch University with a Bachelor of Science (Environmental Restoration) in 2005, Jess Mann has been employed with DEC since 2006, commencing with the Department's Organisational Learning and Development section where she coordinated DEC's award winning Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme. In 2010, Jess joined the Parks and Visitor Services Division working in the areas of native title and Aboriginal heritage, before commencing her current role of Policy and Planning Officer in 2012. As a part of her current role, Jess liaises with DEC's World Heritage Officers and SEWPac to ensure the successful promotion, protection and management of DEC's World Heritage Areas.

# Managing Australia's World Heritage in the Greater Blue Mountains

Jacqueline Reid

The Greater Blue Mountains Area (GBMA) is a deeply incised sandstone tableland that encompasses 1.03 million hectares of eucalypt-dominated landscape just inland from Sydney, Australia's largest city, in south-eastern Australia. Spread across eight adjacent conservation reserves, it constitutes one of the largest and most intact tracts of protected bushland in Australia. It also supports an exceptional representation of the taxonomic, physiognomic and ecological diversity that eucalypts have developed: an outstanding illustration of the evolution of plant life. A number of rare and endemic taxa, including relict flora such as the Wollemi pine, also occur here. Ongoing research continues to reveal the rich scientific value of the area as more species are discovered.

Its exceptional biodiversity values are complemented by profound Indigenous as well as post-European-settlement cultural values. It also holds strong geodiversity, water production, wilderness, recreation and natural beauty values.

Former GBMWhA Advisory Committee Chair Joan Domicelj AM who was the editor of the nomination document in 1998 explained that "the area represents an extraordinary story of natural antiquity, diversity, beauty and human attachments... This vast and beautiful area of upland reserves, inhabited by Indigenous people over millennia, stands adjacent to the largest metropolis in Australia...the Greater Blue Mountains exemplify the links between wild places and human aspirations." (NPWS and EA, 1998).

The GBMWhA is the catchment and lungs of the Sydney basin, providing a wide range of essential ecosystem services, with over 65% being declared wilderness (DECC and DEWhA, 2009). The GBMWhA consists of eight connected conservation areas including Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Kanangra-Boyd, Gardens of Stone, Nattai, Thirlmere and Yengo National Parks and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve. It extends 220 km from the Southern Highlands in the south to the Hunter Valley in the north, and reaches to within 60km of the centre of Sydney westward to the farming tablelands beyond The Great Divide.

The GBMWhA also has a rich cultural history which supports the continuing integrity of all its values. The six Aboriginal language groups (Darkinjung, Darug, Gundungurra, Tharawal, Wanaruah and Wiradjuri) all foster a connection with Country. Post-European exploration and settlement have also affected the integrity and condition of the GBMWhA natural environment.





Govett's Leap plunges into the Grose valley. Photo © Ian Brown, OEH NSW



The over-arching GBMWHa Strategic Plan (DECC and DEWHA, 2009) provides management principles for the property as a whole, with a framework for its integrated management, protection, interpretation and monitoring for all levels of government, agencies and communities,

The GBMWHa *Statement of Outstanding Universal Value* provides further summary information (DSEWPaC, 2012).

### Achievements

At the time of World Heritage listing in 2000 the global significance of the cultural associations, aesthetic, scenic and geodiversity values of this extraordinary place were not formally recognised. However, the Ministers' foreword to the Strategic Plan (2009) agreed that "protection of these values is an integral component of managing the GBMWHa". This is wholeheartedly supported by the GBMWHa Advisory Committee who will provide expert advice, referencing and contacts for a range of important additional values including Indigenous culture, geodiversity, aesthetics, historic and contemporary connections and biodiversity to assist with reassessment of the GBMWHa for the National Heritage List. This may lead to a future re-nomination to the World Heritage Committee for these additional values.

Stone Pagodas above Wolgan Valley are part of the rich geodiversity of the Mountains. Photo © Ian Brown, OEH, NSW

Some examples of how these values are reflected in diverse community connections and an expanding scientific knowledge base across the Greater Blue Mountains are given below.

### Community

Acknowledgement, recognition and celebration of the Aboriginal people of six language groups connected to this Country and its spirits has grown from the 'Living Country' programs and a commitment from government to co or joint-management since listing. Encouragement from the GBMWHa Advisory Committee has allowed an aspiration identified by the Aboriginal community to be fulfilled through the creation of an Aboriginal Reference Group. The Group and Parks Service have hosted a series of annual 'Living Country Culture Camps' across the GBMWHa since 2008 where Indigenous and non-Indigenous gather to embrace culture, share stories and celebrate Country.

An example of the community's connection to European cultural layers of the Mountains is demonstrated by the extraordinary heritage conservation works along the 100 year old National Pass, with its thousands of steps trodden by thousands of visitors. This project was rewarded in 2008 with a UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award of





Distinction as an example of outstanding cultural heritage conservation, as described in Domicelj's *Authentic?* Essay (Domicelj, 2009).

Community connections were strengthened during the celebrations of the '10<sup>th</sup> birthday' of the GBMWH in 2010. The overall aim of the 10th anniversary celebrations was to inspire people living in the middle of the World Heritage Area and those on its doorstep with a greater appreciation of the area's world heritage status and to encourage ongoing conservation of cultural and natural sites. A community celebration was held on 29 November, the actual birthday (with cake), was enjoyed by a diverse crowd of people who cherish and manage this place, including the NSW Governor who invited local 10 year olds to become 'World Heritage Guardians'. The community were invited to make 'wishes for World Heritage', some of which have been since incorporated in the review of relevant National Parks Plans of Management.

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society, a key regional NGO, celebrated the extraordinary community commitment to conservation across the Greater Blue Mountains over the last 80 years and 10 years since World Heritage listing by creating the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience. It consists of

30-40 interactive images with audio from across the area linked via an interactive map (BMCS, 2010-11).

A partnership between managers and local tourism, the Greater Blue Mountains Drive initiative, led to the Greater Blue Mountains area being included as one of Australia's National Landscapes (Tourism Australia 2012), a national program for a long-term strategic approach to regional tourism development and conservation. The Greater Blue Mountains Exhibition Centre, constructed in the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden on the fringe of the Area and the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre (recently opened in Katoomba, the home of the famous Three Sisters which enjoy 4 million visitors each year) are two tangible examples of the importance of partnerships in delivering sophisticated interpretation for local and visiting community alike.

### Scientific

The knowledge base of the biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural associations of the GBMWH has expanded since the time of listing, alongside, and in some ways because of, the community connection to the extraordinary values of this wild, yet accessible place.



Many more sites of Indigenous occupation have been recorded in recent years. From local Aboriginal community groups caring for Country by recording sites and mapping Country to the acclaimed 're'-discovery of major rock art images at Eagles Reach in the wilds of the Wollemi National Park by archaeologist Paul Tacon and colleagues (Tacon, 2005) the evidence of ancient occupation and contemporary cultural association continues to increase and provides substantial support for renomination for cultural associations

Since listing in 2000, vegetation surveys have been undertaken across the GBMWhA and Hager and Benson (2012) conclude that the 96 Eucalypts (species of the genera *Eucalyptus*, *Angophora* and *Corymbia* in the family *Myrtaceae*), can "trace the changing nature of the Australian environment – from geological shifts and climate variations, through to the impact of Aboriginal settlement and European colonisation".

The *Vegetation, Fire and Climate Change in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area* booklet by Kate Hammill and Liz Tasker summarises the fire regimes and vegetation of the GBMWhA, as well as exploring some of the possible impacts of climate change on its plant diversity. It provides the first complete vegetation map coverage for the GBMWhA, compiled from numerous pre-existing mapping studies completed in recent years, and outlines results from scientific studies of the region's plant ecology, fire regimes, and climate change projections (Hammill and Tasker, 2010).

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is a founding member of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, brokering and facilitating interdisciplinary research and community engagement based on projects, workshops and forums in the key program areas of natural and cultural heritage and sustainable development. Partnership projects and forums include 'Managing Ecosystem Change in the GBMWhA', 'Dieback in the GBMWhA' and 'The role of *Phytophthora*' and 'Mapping Country'.

## Challenges

In common with many protected areas, the GBMWhA faces a range of threats to its heritage and integrity. These threats vary greatly in scale from incompatible land use on adjoining properties, ridge-top development and a transport corridor through the heart of the site, large exposure to 'edge effects' though a convoluted large perimeter and hydrological impacts from mining in the region, through to global climate change.

The Strategic Plan also identifies uncontrolled or inappropriate use of fire; inappropriate recreation and tourism activities, including the development of tourism

infrastructure, (under increasing pressure from Australian, overseas and commercial ventures); invasion by pest species including weeds and feral animals; loss of biodiversity and geodiversity at all levels; and lack of understanding of heritage values (DECC and DEWHA, 2009).

These challenges are formidable but the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is a very special place which can generate a major commitment to its future. As the Ministers' foreword to the Strategic Plan said, "This magnificent tract of country occupies a special place in the hearts and minds of very many people, for many different reasons, and this places a special responsibility on all levels of government to ensure that it is managed with care and diligence, and that decision-making is soundly based on science and guided by public consultation." (DECC and DEWHA, 2009). This challenge can be addressed by a tangible, realistic and ongoing commitment by government to provide funding and resources to strengthen community connections and build on the scientific knowledge base.

The ultimate challenge for management and for the community, in 'keeping the outstanding exceptional' is in no way unique to the Greater Blue Mountains. It is the broad societal recognition of what Joan Domicelj has stated - that we are involved in a global gift exchange, where we promise to look after this extraordinary place in perpetuity for the whole of humankind.

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Waterfall Blue Mts National Park. Photo © D. Finnegan, OEH NSW

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### Links

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/protectedareas/GreaterBlueMountainsWorldHeritageArea.htm>

<http://www.greaterbluemountainsdrive.com.au/>

<http://www.australia.com/campaigns/nationallandscapes/GreaterBlueMountains.htm>

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### Biography

Jacqueline Reid, BLMC (Hons) is the Executive Officer for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area who with a diverse background in research, policy, marketing and community engagement works for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service with support from the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. In her role she provides support to the GBMWHA Advisory Committee and liaison between three levels of government, tourism organisations, community and conservation groups and neighbours. Jacqueline is passionate about Aboriginal Co-management, assists with implementation of on-ground projects and is inspired and committed to progress re-nomination for the cultural associations, geodiversity and aesthetic values of this vast and spectacular landscape.

# Managing Australia's World Heritage in the Willandra Lakes Region

Harvey Johnston  
Richard Mintern

The Willandra Lakes Region (Region) is a series of dry lakes in southwest New South Wales, Australia, set within a semi-arid landscape. The region covers some 240,000 hectares and was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981. A fundamental characteristic of the Willandra Lakes Region is its dual listing; the region is inscribed on the World Heritage List for its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) under both cultural heritage (iii) and natural (viii) criteria.

The World Heritage listing (listing) recognises both the Region's unique late Pleistocene Aboriginal cultural heritage, and its natural values that provide an example of a major stage of the earth's evolutionary history, particularly before and during the last glacial maximum. The Region represents a key archive for the interpretation of late Pleistocene climates in south-eastern Australia and the southern hemisphere. Extensive archaeological evidence in the form of Aboriginal burials, shell middens, fireplaces, fauna, stone artefacts and quarries exist from ca. 47,000 years BP through to recent times (OEH, 2010).

## Mungo Woman & Mungo Man

The Willandra Lakes, and more specifically the Walls of China at Lake Mungo, were propelled into archaeological fame in March 1969 with the discovery of one of the world's oldest cremated remains, now known as Mungo Woman. The discovery, early in 1974, of another Pleistocene burial, Mungo Man (Bowler and Thorne, 1976), surrounded by ochre stained sands further enhanced the reputation of the region as an outstanding location for understanding the patterns of life, death, ceremony and burial within Australia's earliest Aboriginal people. The antiquity of Mungo Woman and Mungo Man has been hotly debated (Thorne et al., 1999; Bowler & Magee, 2000; Bowler et al., 2003) but the dating of these burials appears resolved at 41-42,000 years BP (Olley et al., 2006). This age indicates the skeletal remains of Mungo Man and Mungo Woman are amongst some of the earliest modern *Homo sapiens* outside Africa. For Aboriginal people these remains elevate the region as a key place of symbolic value in their claims for self identity, assertions of native title, and ancestral ownership and occupation of Australia (McBryde, 1995).





Tanya Charles, Robert Ritchie and Ernest Mitchell inspecting artefacts at cultural site on Walls of China. Photo © Simon Hughes, OEH NSW

Aboriginal burials are given high priority for conservation and management. This approach acknowledges the spiritual and cultural significance Aboriginal Elders place on burials. The continuous cultural link and association between Elders and ancestral remains is expressed in acceptance of responsibility to care for, and protect the burial grounds of their ancestors. Aboriginal Elders have a conservative and cautious view on interfering with, or excavating, ancestral remains and the agreement of the Elders is a prerequisite for any such actions under both the Willandra Lakes Region Plan of Management (DEST, 1996) and *National Parks and Wildlife Service Act 1974* (NSW). Of continuing concern is the unresolved custodianship of the many human fossil remains removed from the Region particularly during the 1970s, which gives impetus to repatriation efforts.

## Management

Since World Heritage inscription the region has been transformed. Plans of Management (POM) have been developed at the regional, property and individual archaeological site level. Mungo National Park (Park) has expanded significantly to now encompass many of the key archaeological sites. Between 1995 and 2011 the percentage of the Region managed for conservation rose from 4.2% to 29.9%. Grazing continues on private lands in the Region but the pattern of land use in these areas has been extensively modified to reduce impacts on the fragile soils and the archaeological values they contain.

Since 1993 the Region has been managed by a Community Management Committee (CMC) which receives advice from a Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC), the Mungo Joint Management Committee (MJMC) and a Traditional Tribal Groups Elders Council (TTG). The CMC, TSAC and MJMC are made up of landholders, Aboriginal Elders, scientists and local, state and federal government representatives.

The Region's first POM, *Sustaining the Willandra*, was prepared in 1996, 15 years after listing, after extensive consultation and input from landholders (DEST, 1996). This was a difficult journey. The 1981 listing was done without consultation with local landholders or Aboriginal people, and these key stakeholders therefore began to participate from a position of scepticism and distrust. Over the period from 1993 to 1998 extensive resources and efforts were put into winning trust and creating a positive view of the future for these stakeholders.

Today, the traditional tribal groups for the area, the Paakantyi, Mutthi Mutthi and Ngylampaa tribes, are represented on each committee and through their direction the Park has seen an expansion of Aboriginal employment, an expanded Aboriginal Discovery Rangers' program that provides guided tours of the Park, and extensive changes to visitor information via new educational displays and a website (OEH, 2010). The website portrays the human elements of the Region, including interviews with Elders, time lines, and reconstructed environmental history covering the last 100,000 years. Other initiatives supported by Elders include the biennial Mungo Youth Project and the inclusion of Mungo on the National History Curriculum.

The expanse of Lake Mungo at twilight. Photo © I. Oeland, OEH





## Individual Property Plans

Willandra Lakes posed a number of challenges in terms of the existing land use and the conservation of cultural heritage values due to the region's susceptibility to erosion. Stock movements over fragile lunettes can accelerate erosion and disturb or expose archaeological values. Thus, the development of Individual Property Plans (IPPs) with landholders has provided critical direction for the management of the Region over the last 17 years. These allow sustainable multiple land uses while conserving the World Heritage values through agreed management practices such as fencing sensitive sites, pest control and moving water points away from fragile landforms. The IPPs have also allowed landholders to manage private lands with certainty and with long term planning. They have allowed sustainable grazing through implementation of a more equitable distribution of fences and watering points across the landscape, thereby reducing stock impacts on sensitive landforms.

## Visitor Impacts

Grazing and erosion are not the only factors that adversely impact archaeological sites. Illegal artefact collection is an on-going management concern within the Park, and while tourists access only a small part of a very large conservation reserve, their impacts cannot be underestimated. In recent years the pattern of tourism at the Walls of China has been modified to mitigate these impacts; the main visitors' area is now open only to guided tours and park information reinforces the message that collection of artefacts damages the values of the Region. Educating visitors to understand the cryptic values of the Region and the importance of preserving a fragile landscape remain high priorities.

## Research

The initial study and collection of ancestral remains in the Region was conducted with little, if any, involvement of Aboriginal people. However, the ways in which science and archaeology are conducted have changed dramatically since the 1960s, and extensive Aboriginal Elders consultation, field participation and project direction now takes place in all research.

The most exciting recent program of research is a large and systematic project aimed at documenting and increasing understanding of the Region's environmental and cultural record. Cooperative research projects between NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, (NPWS) the Australian National University, La Trobe University and the Traditional Tribal Groups funded by the Australian Research Council promise to radically

expand our understanding of the late Pleistocene environment and Aboriginal society in the Willandra Lakes Region. (Stern, in press; Stern et al., in press; Turney, 2011; Kelly, 2011).

## Future Challenges

Security of funding has been a longstanding concern. The Region is funded primarily by the Australian Government through competitive funding bids applied for and implemented by NSW NPWS. Successful bids have funded projects broadly concerned with protection, presentation, and mitigation of threats to the outstanding universal value of the Region. Damage through erosion from extreme weather events, and the impact of pest species such as rabbits and goats are ongoing concerns which require more strategic management approaches.

Partnerships and co-operative working arrangements with key stakeholders, particularly landholders and Traditional Tribal Groups have been central to the successful implementation of planning and project initiatives. Nevertheless, erosion of the landscape and dispersal and damage to the fragile archaeological features continues to occur. The Traditional Owners' vision for the future is to..." conserve the world of our ancestors and ensure the future of our children' (Sunraysia Environmental, 2008). To achieve this, there is a fundamental need to continue to work in partnerships that allow increased monitoring and research as mitigation actions, including increased recording and collection of vulnerable and eroding archaeological features.

Predominant in the aspirations of the Traditional Owners is the desire to bring Mungo Man and a large number of other human fossil remains from the Willandra Lakes 'back to Country'. Planning is underway with the support of the Foundation for National Parks, NSW to design and seek funding for an iconic keeping place to be built within the Region. When realised, this facility will provide a respectful final resting place for the remains of Australia's oldest citizens, a hub for research endorsed by the Elders and an opportunity for immersion in Australia's deep history.

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Sunset over the Walls of China whose eroded dunes carry the story of human life in the Ice Age. Photo © Simon Hughes, OEH

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The dunes of Willandra Lakes once surrounded lakes where Indigenous people thrived during the Ice Age 40 – 50,000 years ago. Photo © Mark Mohell, Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPaC)

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## Biographies

### Harvey Johnston

Harvey is a member of the Willandra Lakes Technical and Scientific Committee. He has worked as an archaeologist in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, and has been employed as a archaeologist in various NSW government agencies including the NSW National Parks

and Wildlife Service. He is currently with the Office of Environment and Heritage, and has more than 20 years experience in the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area. His work has involved working closely with many Aboriginal communities on the management, conservation, study and interpretation of archaeological materials at a wide variety of locations in western and southern NSW.

### Richard Mintern

Richard Mintern is the Executive Officer of the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area and is responsible for coordination, cooperative management, inception and implementation of the Region's plan of management. He has a long history of working with indigenous groups on natural resource and cultural heritage initiatives, and is a founding member of the National Centre for Sustainability. In recent years he has created long term employment opportunities for traditional owners and improved the range and quality of cultural heritage interpretation for the Willandra Lakes. He is now working to realise the Elders aspiration to build a Keeping Place to house cultural material and facilitate the return to Country of Mungo Man's remains. He lives in Mildura on a small farm with a donkey, two alpacas and a carpet python.

# Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area – remnants of our primeval past

Tricia Waters

The Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area (Gondwana Rainforests) is a serial cross-jurisdictional property comprising the major remaining areas of rainforest in southeast Queensland and northeast New South Wales. It is located largely on the Great Dividing Range and eastern escarpment, extending from Main Range National Park in southeast Queensland to Barrington Tops National Park in northeast New South Wales.

The property comprises 41 reserves (or parts thereof) with a combined area of some 366, 500 hectares. Almost all of the reserves are within the protected area estate, primarily managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The Gondwana Rainforests was inscribed on the World Heritage list as it contains natural heritage of outstanding universal value representing outstanding examples of major stages of the Earth's evolutionary history, ongoing geological and biological processes, and exceptional biological diversity. A wide range of plant and animal lineages and communities with ancient origins in Gondwana survive in this collection of reserves. The Gondwana Rainforests also provides the primary habitat for many threatened species of plants and animals which find sanctuary in the rugged high rainfall ranges and deep valleys.

The property was first inscribed in 1986 when sixteen rainforest reserves in New South Wales were listed as the Australian East Coast Subtropical and Temperate Rainforest Parks World Heritage Area. More key areas in Queensland and New South Wales were added in 1994 under the name of the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia World Heritage Area. The name Gondwana Rainforests of Australia was adopted in 2007.

*The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value* provides further summary information (DSEWPaC, 2012).

## Snapshot of achievement

Establishing the arrangements for cooperative management for this serial cross-jurisdictional property has been a significant achievement. In 1993, a Coordinating Committee comprised of on-ground





Waterfall in the New England Group of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia. Photo © Colin Totterdell, Commonwealth of Australia





Rainforest Glade Picnic Area in Dorrigo National Park, NSW. Photo © OEH

managers from the respective state agencies and the Australian Government was established to facilitate the cooperative management of the property at an operational level.

In 2000 a *Strategic Overview for Management for the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia* (now Gondwana Rainforests) World Heritage Area was published. This overarching document is a major element in guiding cooperative management by the three Governments in relation to the identification, protection, conservation, rehabilitation and presentation of the Gondwana Rainforests. A steering committee of senior agency representatives work together towards agreement on matters of policy and funding as outlined in the *Strategic Overview for Management* (DEH, 2000).

A Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee and a Community Advisory Committee, both established in 2002, play a key role in providing advice about the management of the property. This cooperative engagement has proven to be effective in providing technical and scientific input into management and supporting community engagement. The recent publication developed by the advisory committees, *Remnants of Gondwana, a natural and cultural history*

*of the Gondwana Rainforests* (Kitching et al., 2010), is a key example of the initiative, energy and skills brought to the management of the property by these advisory committees.

Recent projects funded under the Commonwealth Caring for Our Country program highlight the cooperative nature of management approaches. Threat mitigation actions were identified by the Coordinating Committee in consultation with advisory committees, then joint submissions were prepared and after funding was secured a number of the successful threat mitigation projects have been managed cooperatively. These projects include on-ground management of weeds and pathogens, along with research and monitoring to support the adaptive conservation management of key World Heritage values, including rainforest communities and relict frog and mammal species.

### Challenges

Management challenges for this property are similar for all protected areas across Australia with a number of additional aspects requiring innovative approaches. Key threats to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of



the property include inappropriate fire regimes, weeds, pathogens and ecosystem imbalances, including overabundant native species. Threats which operate on a more localised scale include impacts from recreational use (DSEWPaC, 2010). Threat management is undertaken by both the New South Wales and Queensland managing agencies. Funding is augmented by grants from the Australian Government under the Caring for Our Country program for specific threat mitigation activities.

Additional challenges arise from the fragmented nature of the property, both physically and administratively. Many of the key habitats within the Gondwana Rainforests have contracted over millennia, resulting in the fascinating patterns of speciation that contribute to the OUV of the property. The popular management approach of enhancing connectivity through cross tenure corridors does not necessarily address these isolation issues as linking areas of native vegetation does not equate to linking habitats. For example, the Hip-pocket frog has very specific habitat requirements and cannot travel through the intervening landscape and hence remains in isolated populations.

Action to address the threat posed by inappropriate fire regimes is challenging in light of the need to balance community concern regarding the impacts of wildfire risks on life and property with the ecological requirements of different species and vegetation communities. Research is underway to assess the potential impacts of fire on Cool Temperate Rainforest communities. In addition New South Wales is monitoring the impacts of prescribed burning on vegetation communities, including outcomes for biodiversity values and the effectiveness in reduction of risks associated with wildfire.

Recent work investigating pathogen management, funded by the Caring for Our Country program, has investigated the distribution of the root fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi* across the property. The pathogen has been confirmed as widespread across the property and quarantine and other hygiene measures are now under review. The critical need for cross-tenure coordinated management of weeds and pathogens has become increasingly clear, particularly following the recent outbreak of myrtle rust which has profound implications given the number of rainforest species which are vulnerable.

In order to address the impacts of these threats in a strategic manner, monitoring of key indicators and ecosystem processes is needed. Cross-jurisdictional reporting has been achieved through combining Queensland reporting data into the NSW State of the

Parks database enabling collation of information for the 2010 Periodic Report. Queensland and New South Wales are investigating data collation models that will allow for the effective measurement of both the state and condition of values and trends in their conservation.

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## Biography

Tricia Waters, B.Sc. M Nat. Res. is currently the Executive Officer for the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area undertaking a diversity of roles including the provision of executive and secretariat support to both management and advisory committees for the WHA. She has a strong background in operational management of protected areas having worked as a National Parks and Wildlife Service Ranger in a variety of locations in northern NSW including the Ramsar-listed Macquarie Marches Nature Reserve, the National Heritage listed Warrumbungle National Park and parts of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia WHA including Barrington Tops National Park. Particular areas of interest include adaptive, strategic management; enhancing community appreciation of heritage; and strengthening community participation in conservation management.

# The Australian Fossil Mammal Sites: Riversleigh/Naracoorte

Deborah Craven-Carden  
Angie Stringer

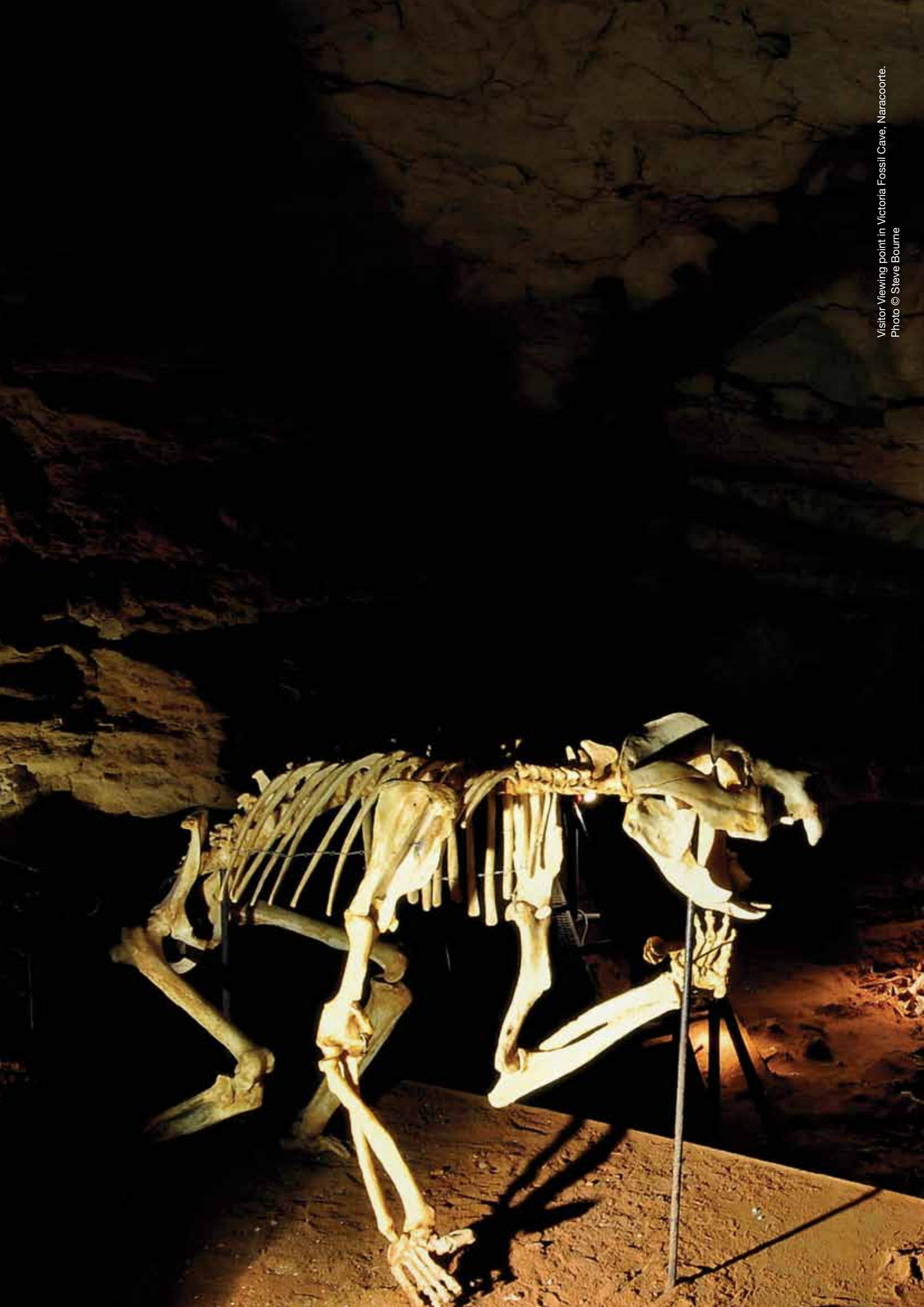
The Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (AFMS) World Heritage Area consisting of South Australia's 'Naracoorte caves' and Queensland's 'Riversleigh Fossil Fields,' was the first property to be inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994 as a serial property with two distinct geographical areas that are thematically linked (Luly and Valentine, 1998). The two sites, over 2000 kilometres apart, are outstanding illustrations of the key stages of the evolution of unique wildlife of Australia over the last 30 million years, a continent where the evolution of mammals has been the most isolated and distinctive in the world (DSEWPaC, 2013a).

Riversleigh is 100 km<sup>2</sup> in size and located in rugged limestone country in north west Queensland within Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park approximately 200 km north of Mt Isa. Riversleigh boasts an outstanding array of fossils from the Oligocene to Miocene (10-30 million years ago) periods and showcases Australia's mammals evolving during the period of Earth's greatest diversity of plants and animals. In terms of the extent to which fossil mammal assemblages have increased knowledge about the biodiversity of a continent, few, if any, have been as illuminating as Riversleigh (EPA, 2002). Here the remains of unique Australian prehistoric plants and animals from the last 25 or so million years have been superbly preserved in the limestone outcrops. Among these are marsupial lions, carnivorous kangaroos, diprotodontids, huge pythons, and early ancestors of the Tasmanian tiger, platypuses, crocodiles and bats (EPA, 2002).

Naracoorte is a much smaller site at 3 km<sup>2</sup>, and is located in the Naracoorte Caves National Park (the Park) in the south-east of South Australia, also a rich limestone region. Naracoorte's more recent story is found in rich deposits of vertebrate fossils from the glacial periods of the mid-Pleistocene to Holocene (170,000 to 18,000 years ago). Naracoorte fossils show Australia's extinct megafauna shrinking and disappearing during later climatic changes and around the appearance of humans in Australia around 50,000 years ago (DSEWPaC, 2013b).

Naracoorte was included in the AFMS nomination to cover the Pleistocene period as there was not a good record for this period at Riversleigh at the time of nomination. It was felt that this time frame was important to include as it was when the megafauna were reigning and especially as a counterpoint to the Riversleigh rainforest environments. The Pleistocene





Visitor-Viewing point in Victoria Fossil Cave, Naracoorte.  
Photo © Steve Bourne





The dry savannah of north-western Queensland is the unlikely home of one of the world's most important and abundant fossil deposits – Riversleigh.  
Photo © Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

was a period of aridification from which the Australia we see today and all the desert adapted plants and animals evolved (Dr. H. Godthelp, pers.comm., 7 March 2013).

### Snapshot of achievement

Prior to World Heritage listing both sites were already afforded protection within their respective national parks. However listing has assisted to ‘boost’ both areas profiles and has been leverage for enhanced community and traditional owner involvement in the management and interpretation of the areas.

The fossils of Riversleigh were first discovered by an American palaeontologist in the 1960s and the known area of fossil bearing limestone was significantly increased in 1983. Ongoing research over the next two decades paved the road towards World Heritage listing. Extraction of the fossil material is imperative to realising the full potential of the site's Outstanding Universal

Value (OUV). Since 1976 around 150 researchers, predominantly from the University of New South Wales have spent several weeks a year during the dry season at Riversleigh. Fossil fauna material has been extracted from over 200 localities at Riversleigh (Archer *et al.*, 2006). The extracted material is then taken back to either a laboratory in Mount Isa or Sydney, where it is placed in an acid solution that dissolves the surrounding hard limestone, yet does not harm the fossils. To date, the UNSW team led by Professor Mike Archer have extracted many tens of thousands individual fossils.

Prior to listing, Riversleigh had no interpretation or infrastructure. However, the dedication of the researchers, national park site managers, local community, local government and advisory committee members has contributed to the enhancement of such facilities and promotion of the property. More work needs to be completed to bring the interpretation and



tourism opportunities up to a good standard and with assistance from State and Federal Governments work has begun to help present, conserve and transmit the OUV of the site.

Riversleigh is also valued for its human history. The Waanyi people are the area's Traditional Owners who have lived, looked after, and were sustained in the area for tens of thousands of years, adapting to considerable climatic change over that period. The Waanyi people have recently had their native title rights formalised, which includes Riversleigh and the wider national park. The managing agencies will continue to work with the Waanyi people to manage the property.

### Management frameworks

On ground management of Riversleigh is carried out by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, with strategic and policy directions managed by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's World Heritage Unit. The Riversleigh Community and Scientific Advisory Committee (RCSAC) provides advice and assistance to the Queensland and Australian Governments on the development of on-ground projects and to identify management actions to address threats associated with the protection and conservation of the property's OUV. The RCSAC also provides a conduit for community groups, traditional owners, researchers and local government input for management of the World Heritage Area. As with other World Heritage properties in Australia, the Chair of the RCSAC represents Riversleigh at the more strategic level through their membership on the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) established by the Australian Government in 2009.

Naracoorte Caves National Park and World Heritage Area (NCNP WHA) is managed by the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR). Naracoorte does not have an advisory committee and the day to day responsibility lies with the Site Manager who reports to the Group Executive Director, Partnerships and Stewardship of the Department, through the Director of Commercial Services. The on ground staff engage with key stakeholders on an 'as-needs' basis.

NCNP WHA has been in strategic planning mode for three years, determining the future direction of the site with input from key stakeholders. Its education program was reviewed, a visitor strategy and branding strategy were approved and an interpretive framework and a master plan will see the current round of strategic planning conclude in 2012/13.

Stakeholders at Naracoorte cross a spectrum of international, national, state, regional and local communities; and the Friends of Caves is an active volunteer group. Other groups engaged with the site include Flinders University, South Australia Museum, South Australian and Victorian caving groups and the South East Aboriginal Focus Group. The site has an active partnership with the Naracoorte Lucindale District Council. Naracoorte's business community supports the NCNP WHA's Advocacy Program promotion – supporting the site in various ways. An example of the town's support is Naracoorte's town entrance sculptures which reflect the sculptures at the Park entrance, linking the town and the site. Initiatives with and by Council will continue to engage community support for the site.

### Challenges

Threats to the integrity of fossil sites include natural events such as extreme weather events or fires that are hard or impossible to control. Human actions can generally be managed, but have their challenges with threats such theft and desecration of the fossils remaining an issue for management. Management response to potential impact by people is to control access (by permitting and fencing) and provide interpretation on the site's scientific, conservation and aesthetic values. At an area such as Naracoorte, which is not as remote as Riversleigh and where cave entrances can be locked, it is much easier to control untoward visitors and thieves.

Riversleigh however is large, open and remote, with the hard limestone rock that contains the fossils being their only protective element. Riversleigh is located in an area of active mining exploration and extensive fossil deposits are also found outside of the property. However, it is protected from development and unpermitted fossil removal under both the State *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The extracted fossil material from Riversleigh resides at the Queensland Museum, the University of NSW and the Riversleigh Fossil Centre in Mount Isa. Research plays an integral role in understanding the property's importance. This includes the use of explosives to aid excavation. Researchers and managers actively manage and plan to ensure there is no significant impact on the area's OUV and to also take into account intergenerational equity issues to enable unexcavated areas to be left for research to occur well into the future.

Naracoorte's fossil deposits are within the property and the most valuable have not been disturbed. While the

surficial boundaries of NCNP WHA do not match those of its subterranean deposits, the entrances to the caves are protected. There is no formal buffer zone around NCNP WHA - adjacent landowners include forestry, farming and vineyards. In 2011 many small reserved areas adjacent to NCNP WHA were incorporated into the Park, adding a further measure of protection.

Flinders University has had a long term research and teaching role at Naracoorte lead by Professor Rod Wells, one of the discoverers of the fossils in Victoria Fossil Cave in 1969. Since his retirement, palaeontologic investigations have continued by Flinders staff, fostered by DEWNR.

Excavation is regulated under State legislation and the EPBC Act and impact is controlled through these

mechanisms. The investigative research provides information and assists presentation and transmission of the World Heritage values to present and future generations. Research results are incorporated into interpretation and education programs.

For both sites, extracted material remains the property of their respective states' museums.

Challenges for the property include:

- adequate funding for research;
- storage of fossils and fossil related material in relation to space and security;
- displaying fossil material;
- ongoing security at the sites as the demand for fossil trade for private collections increases; and
- interpreting and presenting the World Heritage values at extremely remote location such as Riversleigh.

Caring for our Country Research in Blanche Cave, Naracoorte.  
Photo © Steve Bourne





Being a serial World Heritage property also presents it challenges in terms of communication and collaboration. As far as World Heritage Committee requirements go the AFMS is considered as one, and the periodic reporting carried out every seven years reflects this. This can prove a challenge as the two sites are vastly different in terms of potential impacts on OUV, remoteness, access and size. The Australian Fossil Mammal Sites does need to work on improving its collaboration between the two areas in order to enhance funding opportunities, help improve management and to assist in the identification of potential extensions to the property.

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## Links

[www.naracoortecaves.sa.gov.au](http://www.naracoortecaves.sa.gov.au)

[www.environment.sa.gov.au](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au)

[www.eoearth.org/article/Australian\\_Fossil\\_Mammal\\_Sites,\\_Australia#gen11](http://www.eoearth.org/article/Australian_Fossil_Mammal_Sites,_Australia#gen11)

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/fossil-mammal-sites/index.html>

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22 years conservation management, New Zealand;  
3.5 years at Naracoorte.

Experienced in a range of operational management disciplines, specialising in caves and karst management. Fellow of Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association (ACKMA). Involved in NZ World Heritage (*Te Wahi Pounamu* South West World Heritage Area) and at Naracoorte Caves World Heritage Area, SA.

Angie Stringer is the Principal Project Officer of the World Heritage Unit in the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

After graduating in 2005 with a degree in Environmental Science and Management, Angie has worked for a range of environmental organisations in Australia and Europe. Angie's current role involves overseeing seven community, scientific and indigenous World Heritage advisory committees and the strategic planning and policies in relation to establishing, administering and managing three of Queensland's five World Heritage properties, which are all listed for their natural values.

# Operationalising the Outstanding Universal Value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area: addressing some challenges raised by the World Heritage Committee

Jon Day

As the world's most extensive coral reef ecosystem, the Great Barrier Reef is unique in its size. It is also a significant global resource, particularly in terms of its ecosystem services but also due to the fact it generates over AUD\$5 billion for the Australian economy every year. Whilst coral reef, mangrove and seagrass habitats occur elsewhere on the planet, no other World Heritage property contains such biological diversity.

The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) was declared a World Heritage property in 1981, internationally recognised by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (the Committee) as being of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The GBRWHA was listed as it met all four natural World Heritage criteria (criteria) for OUV, which in 1981 were summarised as:

- major stages of earth's evolutionary history
- superlative natural phenomena or exceptional natural beauty
- significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment
- habitats where populations of rare or endangered species still survive.

Today there are ten criteria used to define whether a property is of Outstanding Universal Value. The wording of the four 'natural' criteria differ from that applied in 1981 and they have also been re-numbered so today they are known as criteria (vii)-(x); the other six criteria are considered to be the 'cultural' criteria. Some properties are considered to be 'mixed' sites being listed for both their natural and cultural values.

Table 1 lists the sixteen World Heritage properties in Australia (as at 2012) that have natural values recognised as being of OUV as part of their listing.





Aerial view of Heron Island and Heron Reef, with the edge of Wistari Reef visible on right.  
Photo © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

## The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area

While coral reefs initially made the area famous, reefs comprise only about seven per cent of the overall GBRWHA (GBRMPA, 2009). The balance is an extraordinary variety of other marine habitats and communities ranging from shallow inshore areas and non-reef areas, including seagrass beds, to deep oceanic areas over 250 km offshore and deeper than 2000m. The exceptional biodiversity over such a latitudinal range and cross shelf variation makes the GBRWHA one of the richest and most complex natural ecosystems on earth (Australian Government, 2012).

To date the GBRWHA is one of only a handful of the 188 natural and 29 mixed World Heritage properties listed globally (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2012) that have been inscribed on the World Heritage List meeting all four natural criteria (the Tasmanian Wilderness, Wet Tropics and Shark Bay World Heritage Areas are three other examples). North Queensland is also one of only a few places in the world where two properties abut – the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area abuts the GBRWHA and provides an important ‘upstream’ buffer for part of the GBR.

The area of the GBRWHA is 348 000 km<sup>2</sup>, extending from the top of Cape York to just north of Fraser Island. The western boundary of the property follows low water mark on the Queensland coast and extends seaward to the outer boundary of the Marine Park, beyond the edge of the continental shelf. As of mid-2010, the GBRWHA was no longer the world’s largest World Heritage Area (today two others, both marine, are larger); the GBRWHA remains however one of the best known World Heritage properties and arguably one of the most comprehensively managed.

Over 99 per cent of the GBRWHA is within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, which is under Federal jurisdiction. It includes some 1050 islands and their surrounding waters that occur within the outer boundary, but only 70 of these are Commonwealth islands and therefore form part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (the remaining 980 islands are under State jurisdiction). The GBRWHA also includes all port areas and Queensland internal waters that are seaward of low water mark along the mainland coast, and these areas are also under State jurisdiction.

Management of the Reef is therefore jurisdictionally complex and involves a range of Australian (Federal) and Queensland (State) government agencies, with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) being the primary adviser to the Australian Government for the care and development of the both Marine Park and the GBRWHA.

## Evolution of the criteria for OUV and its significance for the Great Barrier Reef

Table 2 shows how the numbering and the wording of the four ‘natural’ World Heritage criteria have evolved since 1981 and how they differ from the wording and numbering of the criteria which appear in the ‘Operational Guidelines’ today (IUCN, ICOMOS, ICROM and World Heritage Centre, 2010).

Understanding the wording of the criteria at the time of inscription is fundamental for most properties but is of particular significance for the Great Barrier Reef. The specific wording in the approved Retrospective Statement of OUV under criteria (ix) that refers to “Man’s interaction with his natural environment” is of particular significance to Indigenous people who have lived in the area for 40,000 years and have strong connections to what we know today as the Great Barrier Reef.

Despite the fact the retrospective wording for the Statement of OUV has been formally approved, the reference to Indigenous interests in the Great Barrier Reef is often overlooked as it no longer forms part of the current ‘natural’ world heritage criteria and, in other properties more recently inscribed, has evolved into the concept of a “cultural landscape”.

The numbering of the criteria in the approved Statement of OUV refers to the contemporary numbering in use today (to facilitate comparisons with other World Heritage properties) but it is important to recognise the wording in the statement is based on the criteria in place at the time of inscription.

## Recent concerns raised by the World Heritage Committee

In 2011 the UNESCO World Heritage Committee considered the GBRWHA following concerns raised by NGOs about developments occurring along the Queensland coast. The Committee’s 2011 decision expressed “extreme concern” about one such area of development (Curtis Island near Gladstone) and included a request that Australia undertake a strategic assessment of developments and invite a joint reactive monitoring mission of IUCN and UNESCO to the GBRWHA (World Heritage Committee, 2011). The mission occurred in March 2012 and investigated first-hand the issues affecting the property.

In July 2012 the Committee considered a further State of Conservation report for the GBRWHA which led to a subsequent decision relating to the property. This 2012 decision comprised eleven parts, many of which were recommendations requiring implementation, including consideration of all the recommendations in the mission report (World Heritage Committee, 2012).



One of the key challenges arising from the 2012 Committee's decision includes the need to establish the OUV of the GBRWHA both as *"a clearly defined and central element within the protection and management system"* ... and as *"the principal reference for all plans and legislation relating to the protection and management of the property"*.

Outlined below is an approach developed by the GBRMPA to 'operationalise' OUV; this approach has now been recognised as being of relevance for other world heritage properties.

### Outstanding Universal Value

The term Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is the fundamental cornerstone for many aspects of World Heritage including nominations, periodic reporting, etc. OUV is defined in paragraph 49 of the 'Operational Guidelines for Implementation of the World Heritage Convention' (the Guidelines) as *"cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity"* (UNESCO, 2008).

OUV is used around 90 times in the Guidelines and is central to the credibility of the World Heritage system. To be deemed to be of OUV, *"a property must also meet the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity and must have an adequate protection and management system to ensure its safeguarding"* (s. 78 of the Guidelines, but emphasis added). Terms like 'integrity' are also defined in the Guidelines.

Given the centrality of OUV, all World Heritage properties are required to have a Statement of OUV (the Statement). Given the GBRWHA was listed prior to the requirement for such a statement, a Retrospective Statement of OUV for the GBRWHA was developed and approved by the Committee in 2012 (Australian Government, 2012). This Retrospective Statement for the GBRWHA was prepared, in accordance with advice from IUCN and the World Heritage Centre, using the criteria that were in place in 1981 rather than those in place in 2012 (See Table 2).

Today few managers have utilised the Statement for their properties effectively; many managers consider the Statement is somewhat high level and nebulous, or do not understand how it might assist or help to prioritise their planning and management efforts.

To assist in 'operationalising' the Statement in the GBRWHA, the first task was to break the complex Statement of OUV into smaller more understandable components. This involved breaking down the full approved Statement text into smaller 'excerpts' for each of the four natural criteria and integrity; once this had been done, then the approach was to sequentially:

- identify key examples of values or attributes against each Statement excerpt
- identify the factors affecting those values
- prioritise the highest priority threats
- consider what are the priority management needs to address the highest priority threats

An example of applying this format for the GBRWHA is given in Figure 1.

Red-and-Black Anemonefish (*Amphiprion melanopus*) amongst anemone tentacles on Agincourt Reef, Photograph © Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)



2008 criteria	Excerpt from SoOUV for GBRWHA	Example of values/ attributes in GBR (Most appro. 'indicator' value shown in U/case and bold)	CURRENT STATUS of indicator value	KEY FACTORS AFFECTING VALUE	KEY ACTIONS to address factors	Possible Trigger levels? (note most should be considered in a cumulative manner not as singular issue)
(viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;	(a) globally outstanding example of an ecosystem that has evolved over millennia	<b>REEF BUILDING</b>	Outlook 2009 – <b>GOOD</b> “the rate of reef building may be beginning to slow”	Climate change espec ocean acidification	Build resilience by reducing other key pressures	
	(b) area has been exposed and flooded by at least four glacial and interglacial cycles, and over the past 15,000 years reefs have grown on the continental shelf	<b>SEA LEVEL CHANGE</b>	Outlook 2009 – <b>Currently OK but likely to increase</b> “Sea levels have risen and are projected to rise further” “...rising at near the upper end of projections” Significant for shallow habitats that are strongly influenced by sea level	Combination of thermal expansion of ocean and the addition of water volume to the ocean from melting glaciers and ice sheets (Greenland and Antarctica)	Increase stakeholder and community awareness	Increasing beach erosion or inundation in known turtle nesting sites?
	(c) today the GBR forms the world's largest coral reef ecosystem... including examples of all stages of reef development...	inshore reefs mid-shelf reefs <b>OUTER REEFS</b>	Outlook 2009 – <b>GOOD</b> “Some inshore habitats (such as coral reefs) have deteriorated... this is likely to have affected species that rely on these habitats”	Climate change espec sea level rise	Build resilience by reducing other key pressures	
	(d) processes of geological and geomorphological evolution are well represented, linking continental islands, coral cays and reefs	<b>OCEAN ACIDITY</b> Coral cays	Outlook 2009 – <b>Almost certain to affect different groups/species</b> “..the world's oceans are becoming more acidic affecting the growth of corals” “Acidification of all GBR waters .. is an emerging serious issue which is likely to worsen in the future”	Climate change espec ocean acidification and increasing water temperature stress	Build resilience by reducing other key pressures espec in inshore areas  Increase stakeholder/ community awareness	

Figure 1 – Format developed to operationalise OUV in the GBRWHA as applied to part of the 'criteria (viii)' of the Statement of OUV

Discussions with managers in other World Heritage properties have indicated such a structured approach helps them more readily identify the key values or attributes for their property and prioritise their management actions. Advisory Committee members at three other properties have also supported the approach recognising it helps to directly link the property's values to management operations, clarifies

the research priorities for the property and ensures that the committees themselves are focussing on the World Heritage values of the property when giving advice.

Building on this approach, a draft assessment approach has also been developed in the GBRWHA assessing the current condition and trends for excerpts that collectively comprise the Statement of OUV for the entire property (Day, in prep).



The following statements were used to provide a grade for the current condition of each of the individual excerpts:

- **Very Good** - All elements necessary to maintain the OUV are essentially intact, and their overall condition is stable or improving. Available evidence indicates only minor, if any, disturbance to this component of OUV.
- **Good** - Some loss or alteration of the elements necessary to maintain the OUV has occurred, but their overall condition is not causing persistent or substantial effects on this component of OUV.

- **Poor** - Loss or alteration of many elements necessary to maintain OUV has occurred, which is leading to a significant reduction in this component of the OUV.
- **Very poor** - Loss or alteration of a majority of elements necessary to maintain the OUV has occurred and has caused a major loss of the OUV.

This grading system is based on one initially applied in the 2009 Outlook Report (GBRMPA, 2009) but refined by IUCN to assess natural World Heritage sites (IUCN, 2012) and further adapted by GBRMPA as part of the Strategic Assessment process currently underway.

Excerpt from Statement of OUV	Summary	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
<i>One of the richest and most complex natural ecosystems on earth, and one of the most significant for biodiversity conservation</i>	The Great Barrier Reef remains a complex ecosystem, rich in biodiversity. Some key values are under pressure.		↓		
<i>Tens of thousands of marine and terrestrial species, many of which are of global conservation significance.</i>	Populations of most species appear to be intact. Some populations (dugong, sharks, seabirds and marine turtles) are known to have seriously declined		↓		
<i>The world's most complex expanse of coral reefs... Contain some 400 species of corals in 60 genera</i>	There remains over 400 species of hard coral and at least 150 species of soft corals, sea fans and sea pens, living in a complex reef system. There has been a serious decline in coral reef health in the southern inshore area.		↓		
<i>Large ecologically important inter-reefal areas. The shallower marine areas support half the world's diversity of mangroves ...</i>	The Region's mangrove forests remain very diverse with at least 39 mangrove species and hybrids recorded.		↔		
<i>Large ecologically important inter-reefal areas. The shallower marine areas support ... many seagrass species</i>	Seagrass diversity remains; however, there have been recent severe declines in abundance and community composition in southern inshore areas.			↓	
<i>Waters also provide major feeding grounds for one of the world's largest populations of the threatened dugong</i>	The northern population of dugong remains healthy. There has been a substantial decline in dugongs in waters south of Cooktown since the 1960s.			↓	
<i>At least 15 species of whales occur here</i>	Most whale species appear to have intact populations although there is limited monitoring of most species		↓↑		
<i>At least 16 species of dolphins occur here</i>	There is limited information for most dolphin species, but two inshore dolphin species are known to be at risk.			↓	
<i>A significant area for humpback whale calving</i>	The humpback whale population is recovering strongly after being decimated by whaling.	↑			
<i>Six of the world's seven species of marine turtle occur in the Great Barrier Reef.</i>	Populations of five of the six species of marine turtle have declined. Although the populations of some species are appear to be no longer declining or are now increasing, there remain serious concerns about declines in other less common species.			↓	
<i>The world's largest green turtle breeding site at Raine Island, the Great Barrier Reef also includes many regionally important marine turtle rookeries</i>	The nesting component of some species is increasing or stable. Nesting may be in decline for the northern green turtle stock and hawksbills.			↔	
<i>Some 242 species of birds have been recorded in the Great Barrier Reef. Twenty-two seabird species breed on cays and some continental islands, and some of these breeding sites are globally significant</i>	Current evidence suggests that for at least some, and possibly the majority, of seabird species, significant Great Barrier Reef breeding colonies are in decline.			↓	
<i>The continental islands support thousands of plant species, while the coral cays also have their own distinct flora and fauna.</i>	Plant diversity is generally well protected with about half the islands within national parks		↓		

Figure 2 – 'Report card' format developed to assess current state and trends of OUV for the GBRWHA – example shown has been applied to excerpts from criterion (ix) within the Statement of OUV

Assessment of current condition and trends of OUV has now been drafted for all components of the Statement of OUV for the GBRWHA. Part of the draft assessment for Criterion (ix) is shown in Figure 2 with the grades shown in the four columns on the right hand side.

The overall trend when comparing the 2012 situation with the baseline of 1981 (date of inscription of GBRWHA on the World Heritage list) is shown in Figure 2 by the direction of the arrows. It is also apparent that only one excerpt in Figure 2 is considered as 'Very good' when its current condition is benchmarked against 1981, six excerpts are 'Good' but an equal number (6) have been graded as 'Poor'.

When the grades are averaged over the entire GBRWHA for each of the components of the Statement (i.e. the four criteria and integrity), the assessment varies for the various components of OUV:

- Only one criterion has been assessed overall as **'Very Good'** i.e. *outstanding examples representing the major stages of the Earth's evolutionary history* [Criterion (viii) today]
- Two criteria as well as Integrity are all considered overall to be **'Good'** i.e.
  - *unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features or areas of exceptional natural beauty, such as superlative examples of the most important ecosystems to man* [Criterion (vii) today]; and
  - *outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment* [Criterion (ix) today]
- One criterion is considered to be of **'Poor'** i.e. *habitats where populations of rare or endangered species of plants and animals still survive* [Criterion (x) today].
- Despite the fact that four of the five average gradings that collectively make up the entire OUV have been assessed as 'Very Good' or 'Good', of greater concern in the GBRWHA is the fact that some 54 per cent of the excerpts assessed (i.e. indicative of the five key components of OUV) are showing a deteriorating trend compared to the 1981 baseline (Day, in prep)].

GBRMPA is currently preparing a Strategic Assessment for the GBRWHA and will soon be preparing the next Outlook Report, so it is intended that this approach for OUV will also be applied within those documents. In the Strategic Assessment, further information is provided for each excerpt of the Statement indicating:

- a confidence level regarding the information used to justify the grade (this has been adapted from the 2012 *National State of Environment* reporting with some amendments to the definitions applied); and
- an indication in the level of knowledge today for each element compared to 1981.

### Other challenges in the recent World Heritage Committee decisions

Some of the other challenges emerging from the Committee's decisions for the GBRWHA include the need to:

- better address cumulative impacts
- develop and adopt (at Ministerial level) clearly defined and scientifically justified targets
- adopt a strategic approach instead of individual decision-making
- when a development is proposed in or adjacent to a World Heritage property:
  - to consider all elements of OUV in the decision making processes
  - to demonstrate the proposal will lead to net benefits for the property
  - to undertake detailed assessments of alternative options for all proposals, including the environmental, social and economic costs
  - to ensure development is undertaken consistent with highest internationally recognised standards of best practice.

### Some lessons learned

- OUV should be considered as being distributed throughout the whole of the property, rather than being found at discrete locations unevenly distributed throughout the property (as Lucas *et al.* point out, this concept means that "losing a single blade of seagrass does not result in the OUV of the property being significantly impacted"! (Lucas, Webb, Valentine and Marsh, 1997).
- Using a four-point grading system is best for an assessment of OUV; it stops 'fence-sitting' in the middle forcing a grade on either side of the mid-point.
- To provide the most effective assessment of the elements of the Statement, the grade should relate to the entire element rather than just the indicative value that has been chosen.
- Given that the World Heritage values of a property are assessed in sum total, protection and management which truly implements the intention of the World Heritage Convention should focus upon the property as a whole - as distinct from focusing just on one specific or particular value in only one location.





The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area is a vital stronghold of marine turtles with six of the seven species of marine turtles found in its waters. Photo © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

Date Inscribed	Area/property	Criteria for OUV									
		i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
1981	Great Barrier Reef										
	Kakadu National Park (ext 1987, 1992)										
	Willandra Lakes Region										
1982	Tasmanian Wilderness (ext 1989)										
	Lord Howe Island Group										
1986	Gondwana Rainforests of Australia (ext 1994)										
1987	Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (ext 1994)										
1988	Wet Tropics of Queensland										
1991	Shark Bay, Western Australia										
1992	Fraser Island										
1994	Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh / Naracoorte)										
1997	Heard and McDonald Islands										
	Macquarie Island										
2000	Greater Blue Mountains Area										
2003	Purnululu National Park										
2011	Ningaloo Coast										

Table 1 – Australia's natural World Heritage properties and the criteria for which they were listed

1981 criteria and numbering (wording applicable to GBRWHA)	Equivalent 2008 criteria and numbering (wording to be applied to a new WH property today)
<b>(i)</b> - be outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history	<b>(viii)</b> be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
<b>(ii)</b> - be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment	<b>(ix)</b> be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
<b>(iii)</b> - contain unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features or areas of exceptional natural beauty, such as superlative examples of the most important ecosystems to man	<b>(vii)</b> contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
<b>(iv)</b> - be habitats where populations of rare or endangered species of plants and animals still survive	<b>(x)</b> contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

Table 2 - Comparison of how the criteria for OUV have changed since the GBRWHA was inscribed in 1981 (from ICOMOS, ICROM and World Heritage Centre, 2010)



- OUV is singular, so it is not appropriate to refer to 'Outstanding Universal Values'. It is, however, appropriate to refer to the 'heritage values' or the 'natural values' for which a property has been inscribed.

## Conclusions

The interest shown by the World Heritage Committee in the GBRWHA in recent times has increased the focus on many aspects of management applying to all Australian World Heritage properties, not the least being the application of OUV, what it actually means and how it might be more effectively applied.

The request from the Committee for OUV to be "... a clearly defined and central element within the protection and management system" has led to the development of several new and innovative approaches in the GBRWHA. These approaches are helping to contextualise the OUV and focus the efforts of the managers and advisory committee members on the priority issues facing the property.

Discussions with managers from World Heritage properties elsewhere in Australia and internationally, indicate these approaches, even though they are still evolving, are assisting them to better understand the role OUV plays in their properties.

There is a continuing need to consider OUV in a holistic way for each property (rather than a narrow focus on, say, just corals for the GBRWHA) and the grading statement approach, building on that developed for the 2009 Outlook Report, provides such a broader contextualisation while also allowing a quick visualisation or 'report card' of the current condition and trends of a property.

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## Biography

Jon Day is currently Director for Planning, Heritage and Sustainable Funding within GBRMPA. Since 1986, Jon has undertaken a variety of planning and management roles in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Jon has long been associated with world heritage having also worked for four years in Kakadu WHA, helped develop the current Periodic Reporting process used in all WH properties, and represented Australia on the World Heritage Committee

## Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Government or the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

# Managing Australia's World Heritage: A Summary of Key Questions and Expert Responses

Penelope Figgis AO

A major session of the symposium was built around managing World Heritage. The session commenced with a case study of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and how the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority) is addressing the issues raised by the UNESCO Great Barrier Reef Mission Report (UNESCO, 2012), (see Day chapter). This was followed by short presentations from a series of Australian World Heritage senior managers highlighting both achievements and challenges in honouring their World Heritage commitment. The session then discussed the questions below. The following is an edited synthesis of the breakout session responses.

## **How do you establish the OUV of a property as “a clearly defined and central element and management system within the protection for the property”?**

- The starting point is the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SoOUV) when the property is inscribed on the World Heritage List. The retention of the qualities outlined in the Statement needs to be the guiding force of all management.
- Before the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) can be properly reflected in any management system the Statement needs to be broken into its component parts - that is the key values and attributes. This has in fact been done by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (see Day).
- While the OUV identifies global significance, its components need equal emphasis ensuring no key value is lost or overlooked.
- Other values of the World Heritage Area (WHA), which are not directly identified as subcomponents of the OUV, but are integral to the property, should also be identified.
- Once identified these values and components need to guide the development of a Management Plan or other system of management. The content of the Plan will be the identification of what processes and actions are needed to protect all components of OUV and other key values of the property.
- A Management Plan should:
  - identify indicators of successful outcomes;
  - identify triggers or decisions that affect OUV;
  - identify triggers or decisions that affect other values;
  - identify thresholds for significant impact or cumulative impacts.







Crimson Rosella, Blue Mountains, Photo © P. Figgis

- identify threats and critical interventions to address threats.
- develop systems for managing, monitoring and adapting interventions.
- be integrated into all relevant planning instruments and legislative frameworks for surrounding or buffer zones to try to mitigate threats beyond the ‘boundary’ or influence of the property.

#### How might properties develop “clearly defined and scientifically justified targets for the condition of the OUV”?

- In developing ‘clearly defined and scientifically justified targets’ there was agreement on the need to disaggregate the OUV into measurable components and develop targets for each.
- OUV itself is an intergenerational concept and therefore targets need development as steps towards long term goals.
- It is also necessary to decide what is the ‘end goal’ - what condition are we aiming to achieve, and what is the baseline? The original inscription criteria and date of World Heritage listing should be taken as a primary reference baseline, but with acceptance that restoration of parts of the property may still be needed on the basis of research into past condition.
- In developing targets there is a need to acknowledge that ‘condition’ usually reflects many factors requiring a need to prioritise interventions.
- Urgency factors, such as the arrival of a new invasive species threat, need to be planned for with rapid assessment and action responses identified.
- Targets need to be developed in the context of improved evaluation of cumulative impacts given most environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures and regulatory frameworks are inadequate.
- The following key principles were identified. Targets should:
  - be part of maintaining the ‘authenticity and/or integrity’ of the property as a whole;
  - be based on baseline data gathered before inscription;
  - identify the presence or absence of particular elements;
  - determine if the target ‘condition’ is restoration or remediation;
  - determine when considering goals for components whether the aim is quantity or quality;
  - be developed through multi/interdisciplinary processes;
  - include not only scientific but socio/cultural advice and input;
  - involve managers and advisory committees with stakeholders and local communities;
  - appreciate sociocultural differences in stakeholder values and perceptions;



- ensure stakeholder awareness and understanding of OUV through community engagement, participation, education programs and empowerment;
- incorporate changes in Indigenous community values;
- be part of periodic reporting and adaptive management.

### **How might properties measure the condition, trends, threats and prospects for the OUV of the property, including integrity?**

- Integrity was interpreted as meaning ‘everything needed to make the property complete, properly managed and to retain its identified values’.
- In understanding ‘condition’ there was a vital role for traditional cultural knowledge and practices as this knowledge can provide a more holistic understanding of ‘condition’ and integrity.
- The managing authority should:
  - identify relevant measurable criteria against each of the natural or cultural values which are reflected in the OUV;
  - enhance capacity of partners to monitor the property through building partnerships with and between universities, non-government organisations (NGO) and government agencies and groups who operate community observation networks;
  - include both traditional knowledge management systems and scientific management systems equally in identifying the targets;
  - ensure Traditional Owners who know and understand the country have a strong role in monitoring;
  - incorporate consideration and processes to measure condition outside the boundaries as this will almost always affect the condition within property boundaries.

### **How might cumulative impacts on the OUV be assessed?**

- As the primary means of addressing the vexed question of cumulative impacts there was strong support for strategic planning at a scale that also includes lands or seas which could impact on the property itself.
- Strategic plans should enable the assessment of impacts at relevant ecological scale to both values and threats. It would also allow for more adequate multi-layered and synergistic impacts to be factored into planning.

- This form of planning should gather expert opinion from scientific, traditional and cultural knowledge, to understand complex interactions and inform scenarios. It should also use modelling technology when and if available.
- Any assessment of cumulative impacts needs to identify a base line, which should be the date of inscription as a minimum.
- The Plan should wherever possible identify ‘no go’ zones or clearly prohibited activities to permanently exclude unacceptable proposals from being made at all and/or to assist decision makers to resist pressure for inappropriate developments.
- Such ‘no go’ zones might be facilitated by the uses of “Limits of Acceptable Change” (LAC) indicators for early warning and avoidance of further problems. These LAC thresholds should be social/cultural as well as ecological. A good example would be the issue of tourists climbing Uluru where the objection is not based on ecological damage but the undermining of cultural values and perceptions.
- In considering development proposals the ‘precautionary approach’ is essential given the importance of Australia’s World Heritage Areas.

### **How might properties determine what might be “a net benefit to a property as a whole” when considering proposals for development applications?**

- Participants were somewhat sceptical that it is possible in many cases to ensure a true ‘net benefit’ from certain developments. They held that there needs to be acceptance by society that certain values are irreplaceable and cannot be ‘offset’ if destroyed or damaged. This is true of both natural and cultural values – once damaged or destroyed they are lost forever, and are therefore a loss to all generations and defy the purpose of the Convention.
- There are also major threshold issues. If a key value, say the presence of an endangered species, is vulnerable then it may be appropriate that no development should occur.
- One suggestion to enhance public understanding and scientific assessment was to apply the concept of a ‘total budget’ of a WHA. For example, for the Great Barrier Reef coral cover is a key component of OUV. Having lost 50% of the available coral cover ‘budget’, the benchmark becomes that no development should be permitted which would result in more loss of coral cover.
- The concept of ‘integrity’ is also important in considering if it is possible to generate a benefit from developments. Developments may not be on a large

scale but may be the 'scratch on the face of the Mona Lisa', depending on their siting and impacts.

- Any development – port, town, resort, pipeline etc. should be required by law and policy to follow 'World's Best Practice' (WBP) in avoidance of negative impacts.
- Offsets, where appropriate, should be in addition to the best possible development practices. Various principles were advanced for offsets:
  - There must be real benefits to the OUV of the WHA, not only to industry public relations or other benefit. False offsets and community buy-offs must be prevented.
  - Net benefits need to be outcomes-based not process-based. An example would be an offset which generated a measurable and significant area of reforestation, as opposed to a public education campaign, which may or may not have real outcomes.
  - When considering the 'development' to be offset, impacts which flow directly from the development, such as increased shipping, should also be subject to both WBP and offsets. For example in the case of the Great Barrier Reef, the Queensland oil and gas developments will necessitate major increases in shipping. Offsets might cover compulsory pilots or a levy on all ships which could be returned to the management of the WHA.
  - Offsets could be sited outside the WHA e.g. in catchments, if they yield clear benefits to OUV within the WHA.
  - A multi-participatory process is needed to develop an acceptable offset.
  - For offsets it must be the World Heritage property manager who establishes the offset threshold, not the development proponent.
  - Cultural offsets need to be determined by the affected community – they are the only ones that can establish if any net benefit is possible and what that might be.

### **How do properties incorporate the social, cultural and economic context in supporting and sustaining the OUV?**

- Overall good inclusive governance structures and processes were seen as the key determinants of how social, cultural and economic values are taken into account in management of the OUV.
- Aspects of good governance include: adequately resourced engagement structures, protocols and practices to facilitate dialogue with stakeholders and communities; especially Traditional Owners.

- Genuine community engagement requires commitment to facilitate equitable participation through early and frequent communication and the commitment to share research and knowledge across all sectors.
- Inclusive processes require the provision of adequate resources and staffing levels at property, state and national World Heritage management levels.
- It was seen as vital for all parties in World Heritage management to acknowledge and promote Indigenous lands/seas, 'Healthy Country, healthy people' and vice versa to deepen the understanding of links between environmental values, a strong economy and community wellbeing.
- World Heritage properties themselves should not be 'bubbles', but managed as integrative parts of landscapes which have strong associations for many people and cultures.
- Stories, from all cultural perspectives, need to be retained and valued as part of management knowledge.
- Managers need to invest in long term relationships with Indigenous owners as more stable links will improve the capacity of managers to listen, hear and understand all the voices and will enhance more robust management arrangements.
- The principle of 'free, prior and informed consent' of Indigenous landowners to World Heritage declarations on their country was supported as a key principle in management arrangements and implementation.
- The obligation to consider World Heritage values needs to be inserted in many other planning and compliance documents.
- All government departments need to be 'educated' on the meaning of World Heritage so that it is seen as a deep national commitment.

### **How might "sharing best practises and success stories" be undertaken?**

- A key requirement for the sharing of good practice is to provide confirmed, consistent resourcing for the existing national consultative bodies – the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) and the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN). These committees hold the potential to both generate and distribute best practice and success stories.
- AWHAC and AWHIN need real commitment to continuity and stability of resourcing and staffing to build trusted relationships for both property advisory committees and national structures.





Stone pagodas in the rain. Photo © P. Figgis

- All agencies should develop strong extension and interpretive programmes to tell the stories and engage with the broader society.
- We need to continue enhancing the role of the tourism industry in telling the stories about the values of World Heritage through programs such as National Landscapes.
- Programs to engage younger generations to become active in on ground World Heritage management should be developed to generate ownership and a sense of ongoing responsibility.
- Education and communication efforts need to be monitored and adapted to remain effective and also acknowledge the different ways communities form values.

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## Biography

Penelope Figgis AO is the Director, Australian Committee for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (ACIUCN) and Vice Chair, Oceania of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas.

Penelope has made significant contributions to environmental policy in Australia through governance of NGOs, writing, policy development, advocacy and public speaking. She was the national lobbyist of the key national NGO, the Australian Conservation Foundation in the 1980s and later served seventeen years as Vice President of the governing Council.

Penelope has served many years on government and non-government bodies including the boards of Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park, Australian Tourist Commission, Environment Protection Authority of New South Wales, Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee, Landcare Australia, Australian Bush Heritage Fund, Nature Conservation Council of NSW and the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust.

She has been awarded Member of the Order of Australia (1994), Centenary Medal (2000), Officer of the Order of Australia (2006) and the Sir Edmund Hillary Parks Award (2010) for her work in conservation.

# Engaging Indigenous Communities in World Heritage declarations: processes and practice

Leah Talbot

Australia became one of the first nations to ratify the World Heritage Convention in 1974. Since then, nineteen Australian sites have been inscribed on the World Heritage List, including four sites for natural and cultural outstanding universal values; Kakadu National Park, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Willandra Lakes and Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Areas (DSEWPaC, 2012a).

While these four properties alone have been recognised as having both outstanding universal natural and cultural values, to many Indigenous Australians<sup>1</sup> all of Australia is a cultural landscape alive with tradition, custom and history. Indigenous Australians have been occupying, managing and caring for this country, Australia, for well over 60, 000 years (DSEWPaC, 2012b). Australian Indigenous peoples make up approximately 2.5% of the total population; that is an estimated population of 517,200 of Australia's residents (ABS, 2006). Of Australia's 7.7million square kilometres, the estate of Indigenous Australians covers 1.7million square kilometres or 22% of Australia (Altman, 2012). For traditional custodians and owners of these homeland estates, customary lore and obligations and the management and protection of country, culture, language and traditions are intrinsically linked. This link innately connects Indigenous Peoples and country and is core to their existence.

At a national level, Australia uses a number of tools to identify, categorise and manage our unique Heritage. In particular, there are four clear categories of heritage which are relevant to Indigenous Australians; they are:

- World Heritage: heritage that is of outstanding universal value and is (or should be) included on the World Heritage List (DSEWPaC, 2012c, d).
- National Heritage: natural and cultural places of outstanding heritage value to the nation and which could or should be on the National Heritage List (DSEWPaC, 2012d).

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this paper, Indigenous Australians refer to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.





- Indigenous Heritage: an important part of Australian heritage; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a long historical and ongoing link with the land (DSEWPac, 2012b).
- Commonwealth Heritage: natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places on Commonwealth lands and waters or under Australian Government control (DSEWPac, 2012e).

The engagement of Australian Indigenous Peoples in World Heritage declarations and or nomination processes gives rise to some concerns and questions. In my view, some aspects and arrangements in the four Australian sites inscribed on the World Heritage List for natural and cultural values were inadequate. Specifically there has been a lack of appropriate recognition and inclusion of Indigenous Australians' traditional knowledge, rights and obligations to country. The four sites have mixed and different management arrangements (jointly and other) and varying degrees of decision making roles by the traditional Indigenous owners of the properties.

Currently, in Cape York Peninsula, there is a process in its early stages for consideration of a potential World Heritage nomination. The original intent of the nomination process is to meet two key conditions; first that the nomination includes both natural and cultural values of appropriate areas that meet World Heritage criteria; and secondly, that the potential nomination will only proceed if it has the consent of the Traditional Aboriginal owners of the region (Australian Labor Party, 2007; Queensland Labor Party, 2009; Burke, 2012). However, the change of State Government in Queensland in March 2012 has seen the Queensland Government withdraw from the current negotiations and discussions with the Federal Government and the wider community stakeholder groups. However it has vowed not to stand in the way of a potential World Heritage nomination if the Traditional Aboriginal owners and local community want the nomination to proceed (Elks, 2012; Powell, 2012).

If this nomination succeeds and reflects both of these conditions, then satisfies the World Heritage Committee, it will be a first for Australia and a unique international example that can demonstrate respect for Indigenous Peoples ownership, rights and responsibilities to their traditional country. Further, it is anticipated that it would also reflect, support and respect the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular the principle of free, prior and informed consent by the traditional Aboriginal Peoples (UNDRIP, 2008).

On the international stage, there have been several attempts to include the involvement of Indigenous Peoples and cultural heritage formally at the World Heritage Convention level. For example, the World Heritage Committee held the first ever World Heritage Indigenous Peoples Forum in 2000. The forum highlighted continued concerns for the "lack of involvement of Indigenous Peoples in the protection of their knowledge, traditions and cultural values which apply to their ancestral lands within all comprising sites now designated as World Heritage area" (Tichen, 2002). A key recommendation from this forum was to establish a World Heritage Indigenous Peoples Council of Experts – WHIPCOE. However, when the World Heritage Committee met in 2001 it did not support the establishment of WHIPCOE (Tichen, 2002). More recently, discussions have gradually continued to explore options for further involvement and recognition of Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge, traditions and cultural values into World Heritage dialogues.

Similarly, Australia, under the Environment Protection and Heritage Council of Ministers (EPHC), established a World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) to provide advice to the Commonwealth and State and Territory Ministers on "issues of a national, cross-cutting nature that affect Australia's World Heritage sites" (DSEWPac, 2012f). This committee also includes two representatives from the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN) which provides direct advice on Indigenous perspectives of management of Australia's World Heritage properties (DSEWPac, 2012f). However, neither AWHAC nor AWHIN have current or ongoing Commonwealth funding. AWHAC has met only three times; the last time in 2010 and is now compelled to confer by teleconference (DSEWPac, 2012f).

The World Heritage Convention aims "to promote co-operation among nations to protect heritage around the world that is of such outstanding universal value that its conservation is important for current and future generations" (DSEWPac, 2012c). Over many years Australia has played a role as a member of the World Heritage Committee, in achieving this aim and to further its own role and commitment to World Heritage (DSEWPac, 2011a). According to Australia's World Heritage Committee Term Report for 2007 – 2011, Australia prides itself on how it "cemented its reputation as an international leader and noted itself as a champion of operational reform" (DSEWPac, 2011). This may be so, but the leadership does not apparently extend to Indigenous heritage. The term report for 2007 – 2011 does not mention the word 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal People' once throughout its 17 pages.



Furthermore, within existing management arrangements within Australia's constitutional provisions and State, Territory and Commonwealth jurisdictions – how do Australian Indigenous traditional owners become more than just 'stakeholders' on an advisory committee discussing their culture, traditions and country - the core of their whole world view and existence.

There is now increasing evidence in Australia of significant biological diversity occurring in areas where Indigenous Australians' traditional ecological knowledge, rights and obligations to country are most strongly reflected (Altman, 2012). Natural resource management, maintenance of biodiversity values and Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge are interlinked, and the existence of these overlapping values should be no surprise (Altman, 2012). The Australian Government recognise that; "all levels of government, recognising the high biodiversity and other environmental values of Indigenous management lands, have responded to caring for country initiatives through funding, partnerships and other support" (DSEWPaC, 2011b).

As a signatory to the World Heritage Convention, Australia still has a long way to go, to provide its Indigenous Peoples with more appropriate resourcing, support, involvement and recognition of their role in protecting and managing Australia's natural and cultural resources. Australia is unfortunately not exceptional, inadequate engagement of the Indigenous Peoples and little recognition for Indigenous cultural knowledge and local Indigenous organisations are common issues among many of the Worlds' Indigenous peoples whose traditional country lies within a World Heritage area (Disko, 2012).

Key recommendations that would support and achieve better engagement of Indigenous People and communities with respect to World Heritage declarations and or nominations include:

- real and strategic involvement in the protection of cultural and natural values;
- real and strategic involvement in the management and decision making of the area;
- support and recognition for and of self-determined processes and protocols that enhance cultural governance arrangements; and
- true partnership arrangements that reflect joint approaches for seeking and administering resources and assistance with financial management.

Furthermore a key recommendation identified in the recent State of the Environment 2011 Report states: "Overall, the outlook for Australia's heritage will depend on government leadership and two key factors: firstly,





willingness to undertake thorough assessments that lead to comprehensive natural and cultural heritage inventories, and truly representative areas of protected land; and, secondly, our ability to respond to emerging threats through improved resourcing and more flexible heritage management approaches and processes” (State of the Environment 2011 Committee, 2011, 16).

Australia needs to recognise the importance of Indigenous cultural heritage values to the broader Australian nation. We as Australians need to realise that the most effective protectors, conservationists, educators and interpreters of our outstanding Indigenous cultural heritage values are the Aboriginal people themselves.

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Recognition for Indigenous cultural knowledge is critical in the future of Australia's World Heritage areas. Photo © K. Trapnell, Wet Tropics Images





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At the time of the conference Leah was an Australian Conservation Foundation staff member and it was in this role she participated in the World Heritage Symposium and submitted this chapter. She now works for CSIRO.

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## Biography

Ms Leah Talbot is a descendant of the Kuku Yalanji People from the Bloomfield River area in Cape York Peninsula. Since 2003 she has worked with the Australian Conservation Foundation as the Cape York Program Officer. Leah has experience in environmental management, high level Indigenous negotiations and developing collaborative Indigenous research methodologies, participative planning with Indigenous communities. Her employment history also incorporates extensive time working with Indigenous community organisations in the areas of native title, cultural heritage, oral and community history, and natural and cultural resource management. Generally, her interests have always included social justice issues, Indigenous peoples strive for recognition of rights and responsibilities, environmental issues, protection of cultural and natural resources, and finding ways and methods to develop a better future for our planet and people. Leah has a Masters of Science (with an Indigenous Land Management Techniques Thesis) and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies.

# Bringing the community into World Heritage through biocultural diversity – issues and policy implications

Dr Rosemary Hill

Cultural landscapes represent the interface between nature and culture and exist due to the complex interactions between people and the environment over time. Since 1992, the World Heritage Committee has recognised ‘cultural landscapes’ as a category of site within the Convention’s Operational Guidelines. This addition marked a new approach that recognises the linkages between natural and cultural diversity, and acknowledges traditional and local management systems as appropriate forms of protection for globally significant heritage (Rössler, 2005). Eight-six properties, including five trans-boundary properties and one de-listed property have now been included as Cultural Landscapes on the World Heritage List.

Global analyses have now established that areas of high natural diversity co-occur with areas of high cultural diversity. This association between cultural and natural diversity is encapsulated in the term “biocultural diversity”, defined as the total variety exhibited by the world’s natural and cultural systems (Gorenflo et al., 2012). The term denotes three key concepts: (1) the diversity of life includes human cultures and languages; (2) biodiversity and cultural diversity share common links; and (3) these links have developed over time through mutual adaptation and possibly co-evolution. Biocultural diversity recognises that the communities in many world heritage sites are integral to shaping and maintaining biodiversity values—and exclusion of these communities may result in degradation of these values (Loh & Harmon, 2005). Nevertheless, the inter-linkages are not well understood—correlations between natural and cultural diversity could result from co-evolution, asymmetric causation, or other factors affecting both simultaneously. Further insight into these inter-linkages and the biocultural diversity produced through the culturally-embedded practices of associated communities is required to ensure the outstanding values of World Heritage sites are protected into the future.

## Biocultural diversity in the Australian continent

In Australia, Indigenous peoples continue to practice land and sea management, often referred to as “caring for country” through a wide range of environmental and cultural heritage management activities. These activities reflect the holistic relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies and their customary land and sea estates that have existed for at least 50,000 years (State of the Environment Committee, 2011; Hill et al., 2012a). Remote parts of Australia that have been





Tommy George Senior at Giant Horse Gallery Laura Sandstone Escarpment. Photo © Kerry Trapnell





Cassowary plum (*Cerbera floribunda* K. Schum.), recognised by Rainforest Aboriginal people as a vital food source for cassowary © Wet Tropics Images

little modified by industrialisation, once considered “wilderness”, are now recognised as Indigenous cultural landscapes (Hill & Figgis, 1999). The “Vegetation Assets, States and Transitions” framework classifies vegetation by degree of human modification as a series of states, from intact native vegetation through to total removal (Lesslie et al., 2010). Those parts of Australia considered to contain residual native vegetation are shown in Figure 1. Apart from Australia’s southern territories (Macquarie and Heard Islands) that appear to have been unoccupied prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, all of Australia has been shaped, and continues to be in many areas, by Indigenous occupation and management practices. The areas shown as residual native vegetation on Figure 1 are more properly considered residual biocultural diversity.

Indigenous peoples in Australia have long argued that continuation of their presence, and their cultural practices, is vital to the health and well-being of both the land and sea (Rose, 1996). The Australian Government’s funding for Indigenous land and sea management, through programs like the Working on Country Rangers, and the Indigenous Protected Areas, is supporting a renaissance in Indigenous activities to protect and restore biocultural diversity. Indigenous groups all over the continent have responded to opportunities to apply for funds to support their

activities on country (Figure 2). Indigenous people are leading collaborative approaches that support the integration of scientific and Indigenous knowledge in new, effective “two-way” management systems that address contemporary and emerging threats, including climate change and invasive species (Ens et al., 2012). Indigenous governance arrangements are critical here. Indigenous governance systems connect knowledge with rights—knowledge of story (such as dance, song, ceremony) points to the rights and relationships between the knowledge-holder and the country to which the story refers. Indigenous governance provides for the exercise of customary law authority that enables Indigenous peoples to develop innovation that deploys their Indigenous ecological knowledge while maintaining its integrity (Hill et al., 2012b). Therefore managing biocultural diversity and cultural landscapes requires both Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous governance.

### Biocultural diversity in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

Within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA), Aboriginal people have occupied the forests and shaped their biodiversity for at least 8000 years (Cosgrove et al., 2007). Twenty distinct tribal groups are recognised as holding traditional connections to the



WTWHA: Bandjin, Djabugay, Djiru, Girramay, Gugu-Badhun, Gulnay, Kunggandji, Jirrbal, Koko Muluridji, Eastern Kuku-Yalanji, Ma:Mu, Mbabaram, Ngadjon-jji, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Warungnu, Western Yalanji, Yidinji, Yirrganydji and Wulgurukaba peoples. The biocultural inter-linkages are mediated under Indigenous governance through belief systems, social and economic relations, modes of subsistence, knowledge, material culture and languages (Hill et al., 2011a). This landscape of Indigenous biocultural diversity is imbued with deeply significant spiritual meaning, traditional ecological knowledge, human history, cultural sites, useful plant and animal resources, and languages, stories and songs that reflect the bird-songs, insect-calls and other animal voices of the forest.

Collaborative research with Kuku-Yalanji people, traditional owners of the northern third of the WTWHA has identified that their fire practices produce a fine-scale patterning on the heterogeneity of vegetation patterns over both space and time. These Indigenous fire management practices protected both fire-prone and fire-sensitive species, attracting animals, stimulating fruiting of plants, and making food sources abundant, convenient and predictable all year round (Hill et al., 1999; Hill et al., 2004). The influence of Kuku-Yalanji fire management is discernable in small patchers of open forest that would otherwise be rainforest, in yam availability in rainforest margins protected from fires, in clusters of tree nuts species (e.g. *Beilschmedia bancroftii*) on water courses and close to campsites. Disruption to these Indigenous fire management practices is reflected in rainforest incursions in the previously fire-maintained open forest patches, reducing the overall landscape and plant species diversity. The reapplication of Indigenous knowledge and practices is required to reverse this trend (Hill & Baird, 2003).

### Biocultural diversity: implications for World Heritage areas

World Heritage Cultural Landscapes recognise linkages between natural and cultural diversity, and acknowledge traditional and local management systems as appropriate forms of protection for globally significant heritage (Rössler, 2005). Recognition of biocultural diversity is consistent with cultural landscapes but with a nuanced difference: traditional and local management systems are identified as not just *appropriate* but *essential* to maintain globally significant heritage. Currently, few of Australia's World Heritage Areas recognise both cultural and natural outstanding universal values (these include Kakadu, Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Willandra Lakes). Australian World Heritage sites that are known to have been densely occupied by

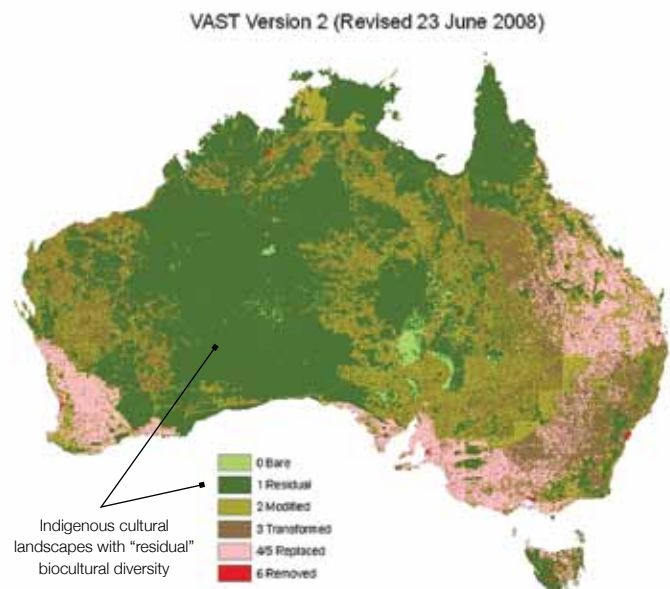


Figure 1: Vegetation Assets, States and Transitions (VAST) classification of Australia showing areas with potential residual Indigenous biocultural diversity (Source: Lesslie et al. 2010). Map re-printed with permission of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

Indigenous peoples for millennia, whose associations continue today, include the Wet Tropics, Great Barrier Reef, Ningaloo Coast, Purnululu, and others. An assessment of these sites from the perspective of biocultural diversity is clearly critical to identify inter-linkages and potential inter-dependencies between the “natural” heritage being protected, and the cultural practices of the associated Indigenous peoples. Ongoing attrition of the very “natural” values for which the sites are listed may result from a lack of appropriate support for the Indigenous-driven cultural-natural inter-linkages that shape these landscapes.

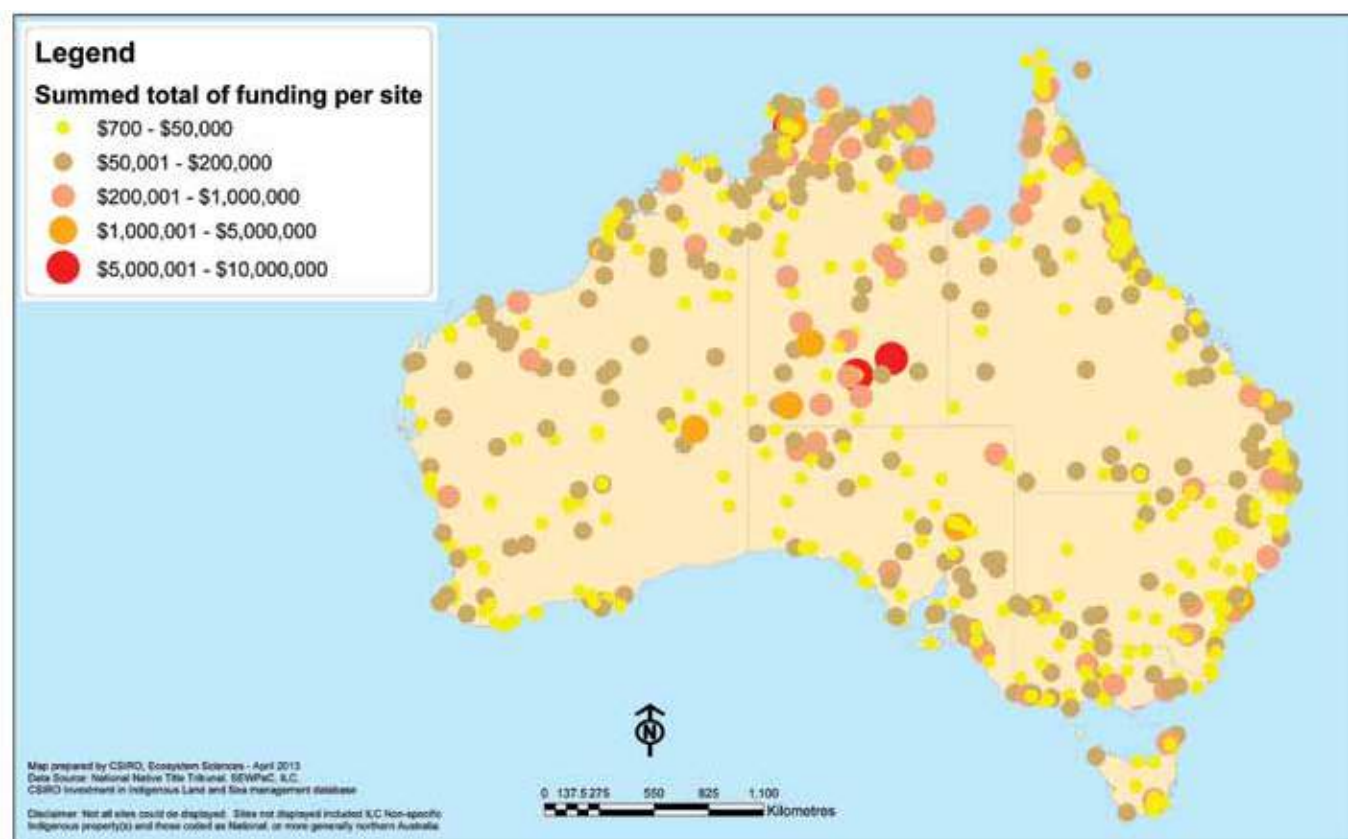
Biocultural diversity assessment is a growing area of endeavour. Traditional Owners in north Queensland, together with CSIRO, the Queensland Government and James Cook University have recently established the Tropical Indigenous Ethnobotany Centre to support Indigenous-driven applications of Indigenous cultural knowledge and practices (Hill et al., 2011b). Globally, biocultural community protocols are gaining recognition as providing a positive framework for assessments of biocultural diversity (Argumedo and the Potato Park Communities, 2011). Assessment and Indigenous-driven knowledge integration activities are a critical first step in understanding the relationships between biocultural diversity and protection of outstanding universal values in world heritage sites. However, protecting biocultural diversity requires appropriate Indigenous governance arrangements that will enable engagement of Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices into environmental management. Indigenous co-governance in World Heritage, through Indigenous

Protected Areas and other effective collaborative approaches that recognise Indigenous peoples' rights, interests and roles are necessary to underpin biocultural diversity management (Hill et al., 2011a).

### The future: keeping the outstanding exceptional

Biocultural diversity adds a new perspective on World Heritage Cultural Landscapes; one that requires a shift from accepting traditional and local management systems as not just *appropriate* but potentially *essential* to maintain globally significant heritage. Excitingly, biocultural diversity is now being recognised as a key contributor to local processes of innovation through biocultural design that can explicitly meet communities' contemporary aspirations for sustainable development (Davidson-Hunt et al., 2012). Biocultural diversity assessment and management is potentially a creative arena for catalysing synergies between protecting natural and cultural values, and meeting the pressing development needs of local and Indigenous peoples who inhabit virtually all sites of high natural heritage value globally. We recommend further investigation of biocultural diversity assessment and Indigenous co-governance, as a key means of keeping the outstanding exceptional in World Heritage Areas for now and the future.

Figure 2: Investments in Indigenous projects on-country 2002-03 through to 2011-12, predominantly funded by the Australian Government with the balance from Queensland government and philanthropic sources. (The project investment figures underestimate total investment as the data were sourced only from online sites and documents, and data was not readily available for state/territory investments, other than Queensland, and for other potential investment sources across corporate, research and private providers). Source: Hill et al. 2012a



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## Biography

Dr Rosemary (Ro) Hill is a human geographer who specialises in adaptive governance and collaborative planning research with communities at multiple scales to foster sustainability. She has a particular focus on Indigenous peoples' environmental knowledge and management systems. She joined CSIRO in 2006 as a senior scientist, and is currently Site Leader of CSIRO Cairns, and an Adjunct Associate Professor at James Cook University.

Ro is a member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the Commission on Economic, Environment and Social Policy. She was appointed by the Australian Minister for Agriculture to the Australian Landcare Council in 2010 and by the Queensland Environment Minister to the Board of the Wet Tropics Management Authority in 2012. She is Vice-President of the Australian Conservation Foundation and a Board Member of Ecotrust Australia.

# Engaging the community as volunteers – the case of Lord Howe Island World Heritage Area

Stephen Wills

The Lord Howe Island Group (LHIG) is an area of spectacularly beautiful island landscapes and rich terrestrial and marine ecosystems located 760 kilometres north east of Sydney, Australia. It is justly famous for the dramatic scenery of its large turquoise coral lagoon nestling beneath the soaring 875 metre sheer volcanic pinnacles of Mt Gower and Lidgbird. In 1982, the LHIG was inscribed on the World Heritage List under the United Nations World Heritage Convention in recognition of its superlative natural phenomena and its rich terrestrial and marine biodiversity as an outstanding example of an island ecosystem developed from submarine volcanic activity.

The LHIG World Heritage Property covers an area of 146,300 hectares comprised of Lord Howe Island, and 28 smaller islets and rocks and 145,000 hectares of marine environment. Lord Howe Island, the largest island in the group, has an area of 1,455 hectares and is the only island within the group on which settlement has occurred with a permanent population of approximately 380 residents. Prior to its discovery in 1788 and subsequent settlement in 1834, Lord Howe Island and the other islands in the group remained isolated from human influences.

Feral animals and introduced plants have had a significant impact on the island. Pigs and goats, which were introduced to Lord Howe Island in the 1800's for food, caused extensive damage and threatened populations of native species. Rats arrived on the island in 1918 and have since been responsible for the extinction of five bird species and up to ten species of endemic beetle.

Since the 1970's the Lord Howe Island Board (the Board), with the support of the NSW and Australian Governments, has successfully eradicated a range of invasive species from the island, including cats and pigs (DECC NSW, 2007). The Weed Eradication Program commenced in 2004 and is an island-wide program to eradicate priority invasive weeds from the Island.

## Biodiversity and Threats

The island was inscribed on the World Heritage List in recognition of its superlative natural phenomena and its rich biodiversity. Typical of remote oceanic islands, Lord Howe supports a high number of endemic species. There are 239 species of indigenous vascular plants recorded, of which 113 (47%) are endemic, including five endemic vascular plant genera (Hunter, 2002).









Rainforest, Mt Gower. Photo © Michael Legge Wilkinson

Also characteristic of such islands the terrestrial vertebrate fauna is dominated by birds. One hundred and eighty two species of birds are recorded, of which 20 are resident land birds, 14 are breeding seabirds, 17 are regular visitors and 120 are vagrants (McAllan et al., 2004). Lord Howe Island is reputed to have more sea bird species breeding in higher numbers than anywhere else in Australia (P. Fullagar, in Hutton, 1998).

The terrestrial invertebrate fauna of the Group is characterised by relatively high species richness and high endemism with up to 60% of some groups comprising endemic species. More than 1600 terrestrial invertebrate species have been recorded to date (Cassis et al., 2003).

Islands, due to their evolution in isolation, are more vulnerable to alien plant invasions and more likely to suffer catastrophic biodiversity loss as a result of invasions (de Poorter et al., 2005). The island group has suffered significant species loss due to the impacts of human activities and exotic species introductions. Nine species of land bird and one species of sea bird have disappeared from Lord Howe Island (Hutton, 1991), while two species of plants are presumed to be extinct.

Several invertebrate species, including two threatened species (Lord Howe Island Wood-feeding Cockroach and Lord Howe Island Phasmid) are locally extinct on the main island and are now confined to offshore islands.

Weed invasion is a major issue for the islands' biodiversity, and affects all vegetation communities to some extent. There are over 670 species of introduced plants on the island, and approximately 40% (271) of these can be defined as weeds. Thirteen species are classified as very invasive and pose a serious threat to habitats (Smith, 2002).

### Weed Eradication Program

In recognition of the threat posed by weeds the Board commenced an island-wide weed eradication program (program). It has grown into an interesting example of how human engagement can assist in management. Commenced in 2004, the program is guided by a Weed Management Strategy prepared in 2006 and a Biodiversity Management Plan prepared in 2007. The program will run for 30 years, requiring significant resources in the first ten years to remove dense infestations of priority weeds.





The Island has been mapped into 414 management blocks over nine main landscapes. The program requires the systematic grid search and control of weeds from each management block. The aim is to treat each block every second year to prevent weeds growing to maturity. Follow up visits will continue until soil seed stores are exhausted.

Priority weeds targeted for eradication include bridal creeper, cherry guava, climbing asparagus, ground asparagus, ochrea, glory lily, lantana, bitou bush and small-leaved privet. Significant progress has been made to date. For example, over 645,000 cherry guava plants, recognised as one of the top 100 invasive species on the IUCN Global Species Database, have been removed from the Island to date. Species that have been eradicated so far include cats claw creeper and tipuana.

### **Volunteers**

The program has grown into an interesting example of how human engagement can assist in management. Over \$4 million has been invested in the program since 2004. Funding has been provided by the NSW

Environmental Trust, the Commonwealth Government's "Caring for our Country" grant program, the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and the Lord Howe Island Board.

Volunteers have contributed substantially to the program, with over 35,000 hours being volunteered, through the Board volunteer program and the Friends of Lord Howe Island.

### **Lord Howe Island Board Volunteers**

The Board's volunteer program provides an exceptional opportunity to actively participate in the protection of the Island's unique environment. The volunteer program is run throughout the year with the Board supporting up to ten volunteer positions per year with additional positions supported through external grants. Volunteers are generally required to commit to a minimum of 20 days work over a 28 day period. The volunteers work a standard working day alongside the Board's professional weed team.

Interested volunteers are requested to submit an application which is assessed to determine suitability to participate in the program. As the work is physically





Lord Howe Island is the southernmost nesting island in the world for Masked Booby. Photo © Michael Legge Wilkinson, Lord Howe Island Board)

demanding volunteers are required to demonstrate a high level of fitness, confidence in working at heights and an interest in the conservation of the Island's environment.

In return the Board provides return airfares from the mainland, a basic food allowance and shared accommodation at the Island's Research Facility. All volunteers are also provided with an induction which sets out safe work practices, weed identification and weeding techniques.

Since 2004, approximately 150 volunteers have made a significant contribution to weed eradication, having dedicated over 16,000 hours of effort towards the program.

### **Friends of Lord Howe Island**

Tourism is the main economic activity on the Island and is based on the island's World Heritage listed environment. Lord Howe Island Nature Tours, operated by Mr Ian Hutton, has developed a tourism product that includes high quality environmental tourism experiences

and the opportunity to contribute to programs protecting the island's environment.

The first tour, held in 1995, was based around a conventional tourism product which also included a limited weeding component. Strong interest in opportunities to contribute to the Island's environmental programs resulted in the weed volunteer program becoming a permanent component of the week-long tours.

In 2001, a community based group, the Friends of Lord Howe Island, was formed to coordinate the volunteer input from the tourists and locals. Since that time the popularity of these tours has resulted in up to five tours annually. Each morning of the week long program is dedicated to weeding specific blocks while afternoons are allocated to traditional tourist activities included guided walks, tours and opportunities to explore the Island. The Friends of Lord Howe Island and the Board work cooperatively in the planning and implementation of on ground works.



The Friends of Lord Howe Island group has contributed over 23,000 volunteer hours to the weed eradication program. The tours have injected over \$4 million into the local tourism industry and helped reduce the threats posed by invasive species to the World Heritage listed environment.

## Conclusion

The island-wide weed eradication program has significantly benefited from volunteer input. To date the Board volunteers and Friends of Lord Howe Island have contributed over 35,000 volunteer hours to the program.

The Weed Management Strategy effectively guides the application of volunteer effort and results in maximum benefit to the overall eradication program. Close cooperation between the Board, Lord Howe Island Nature Tours and the Friends of Lord Howe Island has enabled effective use of volunteers.

The integration of volunteers into the weed eradication program has introduced new skills, knowledge and enthusiasm in the Board's professional weed team. The involvement of volunteers in the program also fosters a strong commitment to weed eradication and enhances their understanding of conservation of World Heritage areas.

This engagement also speaks to the commitment of World Heritage managers to give "cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community" (UNESCO World Heritage Convention) as all who participate in the program become effective ambassadors for the outstanding beauty and importance of this isolated jewel in the Pacific.

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## Biography

Stephen Wills is the Chief Executive Officer of the Lord Howe Island Board. The Board is a NSW statutory authority responsible for the care, control and management of Lord Howe Island. Stephen represents the Lord Howe Island World Heritage Area on the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee. Stephen is a member of the Lord Howe Island Marine Parks Advisory Committee and Lord Howe Island Tourism Association.

In 2011 Stephen co-founded the Australian Small Island Forum a national body representing the interests of island communities and promoting communication and exchange between islands. Previously Stephen worked for the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service as Manager Assets & Rehabilitation in southern NSW managing large scale ecological restoration projects. Stephen also has extensive project management experience with the private sector in the engineering and construction industry.

## Links

Lord Howe Island Board [www.lhib.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lhib.nsw.gov.au)

# World Heritage in the Life of Communities: An Analysis from the Wet Tropics of Queensland

Dr. Lea M. Scherl

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area is a region of spectacular scenery and rugged topography with fast-flowing rivers, deep gorges and numerous waterfalls. Mountain summits provide expansive vistas of the oldest surviving rainforest in the world.

The exceptional coastal scenery combines tropical rainforest, white sandy beaches and fringing reefs just offshore; a unique feature on a global scale (WTMA, 2010). The World Heritage Area covers nearly 900,000 hectares from Townsville to Cooktown in northern Queensland. It is predicted that some 270,000 people will live within the Wet Tropics region by 2016.

Prior to World Heritage listing in 1988, the rainforests of the Wet Tropics region were extensively harvested for timber. This unsustainable logging was opposed by the environment movement and others creating a lot of conflict in the region. Despite the challenging start, more than 20 years later, the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area is totally entrenched in the communities of this region. Community support for its listing has grown from 50% in 1996 to over 80% in 2007 (Carmody and Prideaux, 2008). Similarly there is strong support for its protection, with almost all of the respondents (92%) of a study supporting the general level of protection afforded by the listing (Bentrupperbäumer et al., 2004). Residents view the World Heritage Area as an integral part of their landscape and lifestyle and feel a strong sense of collective ownership and responsibility (Bentrupperbäumer and Reser, 2006; Carmody and Prideaux, 2008). Its outstanding natural environment is also widely recognised and supported in the Australian community and elsewhere and is translated into actual visitation levels and economic contribution (Gillespie Economics and BDA Economics and Environment, 2008).

## Addressing a function in the life of the community in the World Heritage Convention

The World Heritage Convention (the Convention) obliges State Parties to the Convention to identify, protect, conserve, rehabilitate, present and transmit to future generations, the natural and cultural heritage of the World Heritage properties within its territory (Article 4). The Convention also obliges State Parties to, *'adopt general policies which [aim] to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into*





The beauty and diversity of the Wet Tropics afford a wealth of experiences for both tourists and residents. Photo: Courtesy Queensland Tourism Industry Council



comprehensive planning programs' (Article 5 (a)) (UNESCO, 2011).

However, the operational guidelines to implement the Convention do not provide specific guidance on what is meant by the 'function of a World Heritage Area in the life of the community' (UNESCO, 2011). There are a number of paragraphs that refer in general terms to aspects of it including reference to participation of a wide variety of stakeholders, and local and Indigenous people (paragraph 12,123); potential partnerships (paragraph 40); human activities, including those of traditional societies and local communities (paragraph 90); and development of educational materials, activities and programmes (paragraph 219). However, in practice implementation and monitoring related to providing a 'function in the life of the community' is left largely to the discretion of each property.

### A framework for analysis of the 'function of World Heritage Areas in the life of the communities'

This paper presents an overall framework for analysis of the 'function of World Heritage Areas (WHAs) in the life of the communities', Figure 1. The overall 'function' is the combination of those dimensions and their linkages depicted in the figure. Insights from a systematic analysis of how the dimensions of this framework manifest themselves within the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area, follows.

Community in this chapter is used in its broader sense; not only the people that live in and around the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area),

but also people and communities living throughout Australia and the world who value and have an interest in the protection and management of the Area.

### The function in the life of communities of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area: Summary results of implementing the framework

Following is a summary of the function of the Area in the life of the community adopting the analytical framework presented in figure 1.

#### Involvement, participation and collaboration

##### Communities and stakeholders

With more than 2500 individual blocks of land neighbouring its 3000 kilometre boundary, the active involvement of neighbours and landholders is crucial to the management of the Area. Wider representation for community engagement comes through a number of committees attached to management agencies and natural resource management organisations. Locally-based community groups are also active participants in the Area's conservation and land care.

A clear example of the positive results of this engagement was the establishment of cassowary feeding stations after Cyclone Yasi damaged large parts of the Area in February 2011. Community support was quickly enlisted through social networks in the region. At the peak of the crisis 105 feeding stations were established and supplied with an average 3000 kg of fruit each week, largely prepared by community volunteers. Supermarkets supported this community effort by donating fruit (QNPWS staff, personal communication).

##### Indigenous peoples

*'Over the last 20 years I have seen the World Heritage listing raising the wider community's appreciation of our country to that which it deserves. The listing seemed to formalise what we, as Traditional Owners, already felt toward the land and we are now working hard to have our land formally recognised for its cultural values'* (WTMA, 2009, p. 53).

The Area is culturally rich, comprising the traditional lands of 18 Rainforest Aboriginal groups. Since the World Heritage listing, regional Rainforest Aboriginal representative arrangements have evolved through Indigenous organisations and committees attached to management agencies and natural resource management organisations into an independent regional alliance. During this evolution a *Wet Tropics Regional Agreement* (WTMA, 2005) represented a considerable effort in fostering collaboration for Indigenous peoples'

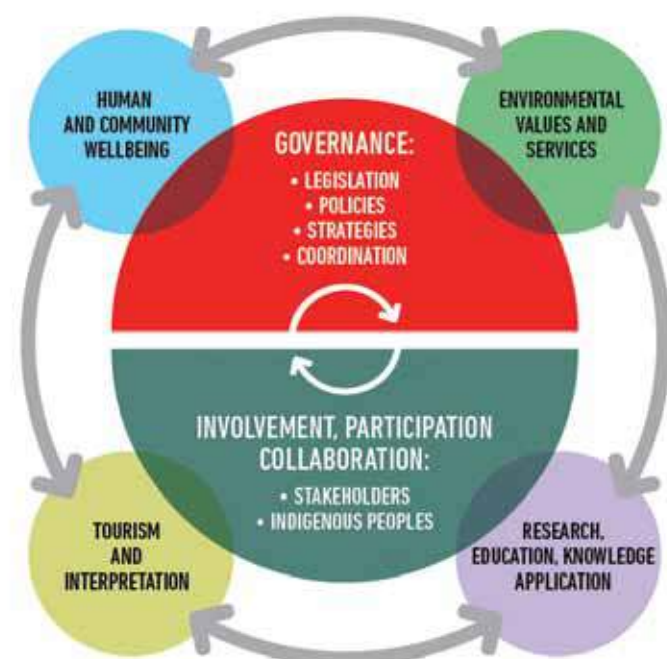


Figure 1: The Function of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area in the Life of the Community



effective participation and self-determination in the Wet Tropics region. This agreement provided an overall framework for the involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal People in the management of the Area amongst WTMA, the State and Commonwealth governments and the 18 Rainforest Aboriginal groups.

There is also widespread support for other forms of engagement with Indigenous peoples through negotiated Indigenous Land Use Agreements and the creation of Indigenous Protected Areas. The Eastern Kuku Yalanji Indigenous Land Use agreement – a cooperative approach to land ownership, use, management and community development is one such example.

## Governance

Concerted efforts towards collaborative management are a feature of the Area. As a multi-tenured protected area that includes private landholders and different government-held tenures, its governance necessitates complex and vibrant community partnerships that build on and provide social capital for the Wet Tropics region.

For example, the *Wet Tropics Conservation Strategy* developed by the Authority (WTMA, 2004) in collaboration with numerous partners, promotes actions to achieve the conservation, rehabilitation and transmission to future generations of the Area and the broader Wet Tropics bioregion. A broad range of landscape management priorities identified in the Strategy are reflected in the Terrain NRM Regional Plan and the Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031. These agencies and organisations also work closely with community groups, with the value of the Area being an important driver of their collaboration. Such inclusion directly reflects Article 5 of the World Heritage Convention.

## Human and community well-being and environmental values and services

There are many quality of life benefits derived by the community from the Area. Figure 2 describes environmental values and services and their links to human and community well-being. However, the nature and strength of the links between environmental values and services from the Area and human and community well-being are incompletely understood. Clean air, good water quality, water supply from the forest in the dry season, the aesthetic beauty of the surrounding green mountains to cities and towns throughout the region are all part of these services. Opportunities for walking, camping and other recreation activities also provide an important connection between the Area and the community. Each of those contributes to human and

community well-being benefits related to health, greater social cooperation, spiritual customary practices and income generation.

For example, the annual 'Cassowary Awards' - to recognise individuals and groups who have made outstanding contributions towards the conservation and presentation of the Area - allows for the expression of a variety of ways people interact with the Wet Tropics environment. This initiative contributes to a sense of place, community pride and social cohesion, all part of wellbeing.

Many environmental services generated by the Area also benefit communities. For example, cloud stripping in the high altitude rainforests of the Area contributes greatly to annual precipitation and feeds stream flow and water supply. Coffee plantations in the region derive pollination benefits from the Area's birdlife (Stork et al., 2008).



Figure 2: The Link between Environmental Values and Services and Human and Community Wellbeing in the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area

## Research, education and knowledge application

### *Research*

The Wet Tropics region has benefited from a succession of Commonwealth investments in support of regionally-based integrated research programs. The interdisciplinary nature of research has been greatly influenced by the existence of the Area and active management agencies needing information for management. The value of the Area as a living laboratory has been outstanding demonstrated by the research funding and output of publications, and transfer of knowledge to management in the region and elsewhere. Publications summarizing years of research have provided a great exposure of learning from this region in a contribution to rainforest management worldwide (Stork et al., 2008). Consistent with a regional community goal of being recognised as a source of expertise in tropical knowledge, the region is often visited by leaders from developing countries to learn and consider application of practice from the Area in their own countries.

### *Education*

Schools and academic institutions benefit greatly from being in the Area. Educational materials have been developed to assist in the delivery of Wet Tropics themed teaching in schools with many schools taking field trips. Academic institutions such as the James Cook University have a strong focus on teaching tropical ecology, natural resources management, sustainable development, ecotourism and conservation sciences. Staff from agencies and organisations in the region play a significant role in transferring knowledge about the Area and its management to these many different learning contexts.

### **Tourism and Interpretation**

The outstanding beauty of the Wet Tropics makes it one of the premier tourism attractions in Australia. The tourism industry plays an important role in connecting communities and economies. It is a key regional partner in delivering better understanding of World Heritage through interpretation and presentation. Aiding in such delivery is the region's first online training program for tour guides, raising the bar for World Heritage tourism in North Queensland. The Wet Tropics is one of Australia's National Landscapes, providing the opportunity to reach a global audience and strengthening regional collaborations within the tourism industry.

## Conclusions

Analysis such as the one above, can lead to understanding needs for improvement in management, collaboration, communication, research, education, and industry practices at any given World Heritage Area. This understanding contributes towards ensuring that the overall function of a World Heritage Area in the life of the community can accommodate new social, cultural and economic trends and policy requirements.

From the analysis of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area many opportunities exist for further enhancing the function of the Area in the life of the community. Amongst those it is worth noting:

- supporting collaborative governance for conservation and management through strong leadership and dialogue across levels;
- supporting Indigenous people's aspirations and contributions to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area through strengthening of Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' representative bodies, bolstering their capacity to participate in management and the development of co-management arrangements;
- and promoting understanding of the links between environmental services and values and human and community well-being with clear communication about such links to the wider community.

World Heritage Area property managers would benefit from more guidance with respect to the obligations of the Convention goal of properties providing a 'function in the life of the community'. From this analysis of the Area, some aspects requiring particular consideration are:

- the need to establish a consistent analytical framework such as presented in this paper;
- the need for on-going long-term monitoring with respect to how the 'function in the life of the community' manifests itself in each property;
- the greater appreciation and understanding of the broader social, economic and cultural context as part of such a 'function' and therefore its crucial role in sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value of any property in the long-term.
- the need to address the issue of 'function in the life of the community' in the assessment, nomination and management of a World Heritage Area, which in turn will recognise the opportunity that exists within the World Heritage Convention itself to integrate biodiversity and cultural considerations within the broader social, economic and cultural context of each property.



## Links

This paper is mostly a summary of the 'State of the Wet Tropics Report 2011-2012'. Please refer to the acknowledgement in the full report for all the support and contribution provided in its preparation: [www.wettropics.gov.au/site/user.../wtma\\_annrep\\_2011-2012\\_a4qld.pdf](http://www.wettropics.gov.au/site/user.../wtma_annrep_2011-2012_a4qld.pdf)

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## Author

**Dr. Lea M. Scherl**

Community Engagement Manager  
North Queensland Dry Tropics

## Biography

Dr. Lea M. Scherl is an environmental and social psychologist who has been addressing the nexus of conservation, natural resource management and social development for over 20 years. She has worked extensively with government, NGOs and indigenous and local community organizations both in Australia and in many countries overseas in the Asia, Africa, Latin America and Pacific regions. She has contributed for many years to IUCN technical commissions including as a member of global steering committees. She is an Adjunct Associate Professor at the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at James Cook University and a member of the Wet Tropics Management Authority Scientific Advisory Committee.

# The Role and Importance of the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN) in achieving Best Practice Management of World Heritage in Australia.

Allison Halliday  
Hank Horton  
Alastair Birtles

Although only a handful of Australian World Heritage sites are listed for a mixture of their natural and cultural heritage and the three cultural listings celebrate post-settlement heritage, almost all of Australia's most special places are living cultural landscapes with deep ongoing connections with Australia's Indigenous people.

Australian governments have very diverse approaches to the engagement of Traditional Owners in the management of their Country. It has become increasingly evident that best practice management of the natural and cultural heritage of Australian properties would benefit from more extensive Indigenous participation and a national perspective about such complex issues (see also Grant and Talbot chapters).

One response from the Australian Government was to support the formation of an Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN) which met in 2002 and 2004. Inactive for several years, it was resurrected in October 2007 in the lead up to 2nd National Indigenous Land and Sea Conference in Cardwell.

Subsequent restructuring of Australian World Heritage governance arrangements in 2008 established the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) to advise the Environmental Protection and Heritage Council and included formal membership on AWHAC of two AWHIN representatives.

AWHIN's early years have been characterised by lack of funding and administrative support and hence difficulties in getting together face to face to deliver on its objectives and the aspirations of its participants. The Network appears to have an uncertain future – but the need has never been greater for a strong national voice for Australia's Indigenous peoples in management of their World Heritage properties.





Australia's World Heritage Areas are strongholds of species like the saltwater crocodile.  
Photo © Michelle McAulay, Commonwealth of Australia

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in 2007 and the growing emphasis on the centrality of the principle of ‘free, prior and informed consent’ of indigenous people in the management of World Heritage (Larsen, 2012) has given added impetus for more appropriate engagement by Indigenous Australians in such matters.

### Who is involved in AWHIN and what is its role?

The Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network exists to provide a voice for Traditional Owners and facilitate appropriate Indigenous involvement in the management of Australian World Heritage Areas. Its membership includes at least two Indigenous leaders drawn from every World Heritage property in Australia with Traditional Owner groups.

The scope and importance of AWHIN’s role is exemplified by its Terms of Reference. An interim set were endorsed by the October 2008 AWHIN meeting held at Katoomba, NSW and after further property-based discussion lead by their AWHIN representatives, the original six goals were revised at the 2010 Broken Hill AWHIN meeting.

A Preamble indicates that AWHIN supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by General Assembly Resolution 61/295 on 13 September 2007.

AWHIN is a network of Traditional Owners of Australian World Heritage properties whose overall goal is to provide and promote:

- An Indigenous perspective on management of Australian World Heritage properties and advice on how best to incorporate Indigenous traditional knowledge into management.
- A forum to discuss Indigenous issues and share information and experiences relating to Australian World Heritage properties.
- Recognition of Indigenous rights and interests for Australian World Heritage properties and to foster culturally appropriate engagement of Indigenous people in the management of Australian World Heritage properties.

AWHIN will provide this by:

- Networking and mentoring opportunities for AWHIN representatives.
- Disseminating and facilitating the flow of information, discussion and feedback between AWHAC, Traditional Owners, communities and government agencies.

- Establishing formal linkages with the Indigenous Advisory Committee and other relevant Indigenous advisory mechanisms.
- Advising on research, monitoring and other information requirements of relevance to TOs
- Provides this perspective to the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (or its successor) through the nomination of two AWHIN representatives to the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC)

Amended in a closed session, the TOR indicated AWHIN should meet “on Country” at least once a year plus up to four teleconference meetings. The resource implications of this and the defined roles of the DSEWPaC secretariat support resulted in the Draft Final Minutes showing an Action for the Heritage Division and AWHIN to finalise these at the next AWHIN meeting.

### AWHIN's relationship with AWHAC

AWHIN was in existence for six years prior to the formation of AWHAC but once the latter was formed, it clearly need Indigenous advice and guidance and was fortunate to be able to “adopt” AWHIN to deliver this vital element to its activities.

The AWHAC changes to their own TOR about Indigenous Protocols at their first meeting in Sydney in 2009 were a strong indication of the members’ view that Indigenous involvement in World Heritage management in Australia was to be a key focus. Right from the start, the input from AWHIN members of AWHAC, combined with the strong concerns/ involvement of the other members ensured that Indigenous matters received a very high priority in the business of the Committee. This approach was warmly championed by both Joan Domicelj, as the inaugural Chair and by her successor Prof. Richard Mackay.

After reviewing its priorities for action, AWHAC set up three Working Groups which included one on Indigenous Engagement and Protocols.

AWHAC regularly made representations on behalf of AWHIN with EPHC through Minutes and Reports and directly with Minister Garrett through a meeting with the Chair and Deputy Chair in October 2009.

### AWHIN and the Future

The lack of funding to ensure the continued existence of AWHIN and facilitate its members to meet face to face must be addressed if AWHIN is to deliver consistently and in a timely way on its objectives. The lack of such support led the two Indigenous authors to present a paper at the ACIUCN Symposium entitled “AWHIN –





Indigenous engagement in World Heritage issues in Australia is central to the future  
Photo © K. Trapnell, Wet Tropics Images

Effective Indigenous Management – We must be Dreaming”.

The paper highlighted the incredible value we had found in sharing our experiences (both positive and negative) with other Traditional Owners of World Heritage Areas through a national network and the inspiration and empowerment that the TOs received from being listened to and having their views respected at the highest levels of World Heritage governance in Australia. However, it also argued that lack of progress over changes at property level have led to frustration for TOs and for us as their representatives. The lack of consistent financial support for an effective national voice through AWHIN has led to a growing sense of powerlessness and some skepticism about its future. Our presentation summarised the priorities of the TOs of World Heritage Areas as the need for support for: protecting and managing our cultural heritage; looking after Country through real employment opportunities in conservation management; building sustainable businesses; and securing our place in all levels of governance.

It concluded that AWHIN could play a very positive role in assisting with this, and therefore in ‘Closing the Gap’.

The hosting of the World Indigenous Network Conference in Darwin in May 2013 by the Department

of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has provided the impetus for the provision of Indigenous Heritage Program funding of \$80,000 to support the attendance (including conference registration, travel and accommodation costs) of up to two Indigenous Network representatives from each World Heritage property.

The approval by Minister Burke of this funding has provided AWHIN with the welcome opportunity to meet face to face again for the first time in nearly three years. Indigenous engagement in World Heritage issues in Australia will be greatly enhanced by this and Australia stands to benefit significantly as a nation, both directly in developing best practice World Heritage management - and also in how it is viewed internationally.

#### **Appendix 1.** **The Origins of AWHIN and a Timeline of its activities**

**2002.** The inaugural AWHIN forum, was organized by the then Department of the Environment and Heritage at the Australian World Heritage Managers (AWHM) workshop hosted by the Greater Blue Mountains WHA.

**2004.** A second forum was conducted at the AWHM in Cairns.



**2007.** WTMA facilitated two AWHIN meetings associated with the 2nd National Indigenous Land and Sea Conference (8th October at the Mercure Hotel, Cairns and 12th October at the Lyndoch Motor Inn, Cardwell). These meetings were attended by over 50 people including 37 TOs from 11 WHAs (Tasmanian Wilderness, Riversleigh, GBR, Shark Bay, Purnululu, Fraser Island, Greater Blue Mountains, Gondwana rainforests, Kakadu, Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Wet Tropics) and Government representatives from the Commonwealth (DEWR), Queensland, Tasmania, NSW and the NT. They provided a significant opportunity to share stories about Indigenous WH management issues and substantial progress was made towards developing the structure and role of AWHIN that we see today.

**2008.** 2nd AWHIN Meeting in Katoomba, Greater Blue Mountains (Fri 24th and Mon 27th October). Thirteen resolutions passed including: (i) adopting AWHIN's draft TOR as Interim TOR; (ii) request to Minister Garrett for support for annual face-to-face meeting for AWHIN; (iii) Margaret Freeman (WT) and Hank Horton (Tasmania) nominated as the two AWHIN representatives on AWHAC (two additional representatives were requested); (iv) delegates greatly appreciated the input

of Tom Calma, ATSI Social Justice Commissioner and Race Discrimination Commissioner and were particularly struck by his advice about the importance of international treaties to the work of AWHIN; (v) expressed thanks to the organisers of the weekend at the Living Country Culture Camp at Dunns Swamp and emphasised the importance for AWHIN of meeting on Country to ensure its effectiveness.

**2009.** AWHIN only able to meet in teleconference. WTMA applied for funding under Caring for Our Country program to host the administration of AWHIN for four years, but was unsuccessful.

2009. 1st AWHAC Meeting, Sydney Opera House (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> April) attended by AWHIN representatives Margaret Freeman (WTWHA) and Hank Horton (TWWHA).

2009. 2nd AWHAC Meeting, Uluru, (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Sept) (attended by AWHIN representatives M. Freeman and H. Horton).

2010. 3rd AWHAC Meeting Lamington N.P., Gondwana WHA, (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> August). Attended by AWHIN representatives Allison Halliday (WTWHA - replacing MF) and H. Horton.

AWHAC and two AWHIN representatives meet at Uluru. Photo © Alistair Birtles





**2010.** 3rd AWHIN Meeting, Broken Hill (30<sup>th</sup> Oct – 1<sup>st</sup> Nov). Held in conjunction with 3rd National Land & Sea Management Conference, this meeting was attended by TOs from seven WHAs and was particularly focused on finalizing the AWHIN TOR and developing a structure and plan for resourcing the Network. It identified a substantial list of issues about Indigenous People's involvement in the management of WHAs and made 10 unanimous recommendations. Discussion of the future directions for AWHIN clearly demonstrated the need for a Strategic Plan and the two AWHIN representatives on AWHAC were to meet with the Heritage Division to develop a draft.

Funding cuts to the heritage areas of DSEWPC lead to no further face to face meetings for either AWHIN or AWHAC in 2011 or 2012.

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## Authors

**Allison Halliday**

AWHIN Member and Representative on AWHAC

**Hank Horton**

AWHIN Member and Representative on AWHAC

**Dr. Alistair Birtles**

Deputy Chair of AWHAC

## Biographies

**Allison Halliday**

A Rainforest Aboriginal woman from the Mulgrave River of Far North Queensland, Allison is of the Malanbarra Clan of the Yidinji Nation. Allison has been actively involved in Aboriginal issues, particularly Native Title, Cultural Heritage and Land Management, since March 1995 when Ministerial Council approved the Terms of Reference for The Review of Aboriginal Involvement in the Management of the Wet Tropics WHA. On 29 April 2005, as Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Negotiating Team for the Rainforest Aboriginal People of the Wet Tropics WHA, Allison officially signed off on the Regional Agreement with both State and Commonwealth Governments, in conjunction with the Tribal Groups of the WTWHA. Allison was also the Acting Executive Officer of the then Aboriginal Rainforest Council. Her role as Executive Officer and a Wet Tropics Board Director was to ensure the Regional Agreement was implemented by the Land Management Agencies and to monitor and review the continued involvement of

Rainforest Aboriginal people in the management of their traditional lands within the WTWHA. In 2008, as one of the AWHIN representatives for the WTWHA, Allison was nominated by AWHIN to represent it nationally on AWHAC.

**Hank Horton**

Aboriginal people have lived in Tasmania for over 35,000 years and Hank provides a passionate voice as one of their more high profile representatives. He is a certified trainer and assessor with National Job-Link teaching business enterprise/management, motor mechanics and cultural arts. As Manager of the Hobart-based Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, he was one of the founder members of AWHIN and one of the two original AWHIN nominees to represent them on AWHAC. He has therefore played a key role in ensuring that AWHIN concerns are strongly represented at a national level. He is a member of both the Tasmanian Wilderness WHA and the National Parks & Wildlife Advisory Councils and the new Aboriginal Heritage Council formed in late 2012 by the Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage to advise on a wide range of issues associated with the protection and management of Aboriginal heritage in Tasmania.

**Dr Alastair Birtles**

Alastair is a Senior Lecturer in Environmental Management & Ecotourism in the School of Business, James Cook University, Townsville. UK born, he has a Masters in Zoology from Oxford and a PhD in Marine Biology from JCU. With over 40 years of research experience in tropical environments, he has taught marine biology and zoology and ecologically sustainable tourism at JCU. A founding member of Ecotourism Australia in 1991, he is currently a Director and Deputy Chair of the Board of Wet Tropics Management Authority, Deputy Chair of AWHAC, a Member of the IUCN WCPA and an Honorary Research Fellow at the Museum of Tropical Queensland.

# Community involvement in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

Peter Mooney

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage (TWWHA) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 1982. It covers over 1.4 million hectares, representing about one fifth of the area of the island State of Tasmania.

The property is listed using all four natural criteria and three of the cultural criteria, satisfying more criteria than any other World Heritage property on Earth. Because of the sudden restrictions on timber harvesting, cattle grazing and mining extraction the initial listing caused much local community concern. The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) quickly realised that to have local communities appreciate the listing and have long term connections with the newly reserved lands a process of targeted partnerships would be required.

Over the last three decades, the PWS has engaged with particular sections of the community to form successful partnerships to care for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. These partnerships have all created sustainable programs that are mostly resourced from external providers.

## Mountain Hut Preservation Society

The listing of the TWWHA resulted in a number of north-west farming families having to remove their cattle from the newly reserved mountain country. This caused much resentment within the local farming communities. Many of these farming families had built access trails and overnight huts to service their cattle herds.

The PWS wished to create meaningful relationships with these disgruntled communities. In the late 1990s, the PWS approached a number of the community leaders to establish a partnership program that would enable the heritage values of the huts and trails to be maintained, with the assistance of the farming community. The PWS knew that sections of the community continued to visit the huts to stay overnight. Many of these visitors were related to the original high country graziers. Most importantly some of the visitors had constructed the huts and retained the necessary bush craft skills used to build and maintain the huts and bridges.

Over several years a trusting partnership was formed, now named the Mountain Hut Preservation Society (the Society). The Society has well organised volunteer working events which are formalised with PWS staff and heritage experts to maintain the heritage assets.

The partnership has generated multiple benefits for both the PWS and the community. The families provide many traditional skills (such as shingle splitting and dry stone





Hazara asylum seeker Abdul Hakim enjoying the sunset on a recent trip to Maria Island as part of the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service's innovative program "Get Outside with Community." Photo © Parks Tasmania





Members of the Mountain Hut Preservation Society rebuilding the Alpine huts.  
Photo © Parks Tasmania

construction) to assist in the maintenance of buildings. Normally the PWS would not be able to afford the hire of such specialist skills. The partnership has also enabled the families to reconnect with the country and reinvigorate their passion for the region, creating strong ownership of the huts and trails. This local connection has significantly reduced the level of vandalism of PWS signs, and has created a mutual trust with the PWS.

### Sea Spurge Remote Area Team

The Sea Spurge Remote Area Team (SPRATS) has grown from a project involving a small, but enthusiastic, group concerned about coastal weeds in the TWWHA, to a project that is over subscribed with keen volunteers. This program received the 2009 Tasmanian Award for Environmental Excellence in the community section, and they continue to receive Commonwealth Government grant funding and recognition.

SPRATS started from a small trial weeding program and site surveys undertaken during the 2006/07 summer. It was formed with the brief to tackle coastal weeds in the TWWHA before they became established from a few locations, making eradication nearly impossible. With the support of PWS staff, the group has mapped out a 10-year plan to eradicate weeds from the wilderness

coast of south-west Tasmania. Most of this region is within the TWWHA.

In its first three summers the group achieved phenomenal results, removing nearly one million Sea Spurge plants from more than 500 sites between Macquarie Harbour in the west and Cockle Creek in the far south - a distance of 600 kilometres. All plants are removed by hand, bagged, and removed from the region.

The volunteers also target Marram Grass. Both weeds form huge colonies which displace native sand dune vegetation and also blanket flat sandy areas used for nesting by beach birds, including rare and endangered species such as the Little Tern. Both Marram Grass and Sea Spurge are aggressive colonisers of beaches.

The volunteers give up weeks of their summer holidays to travel from mainland Australia and within Tasmania and pay for their own transport and food to be involved in the SPRATS project. The PWS assists with deploying the teams by boat or helicopter, and the teams spend up to 20 days walking remote and rugged coastlines. In some years the volunteer effort has totalled more than 800 volunteer days.



The south-west coast presents a number of challenges including inaccessibility, rugged terrain, wild weather and thick scrub. These challenges are part of the attraction and motivation for SPRATS volunteers, who are experienced bushwalkers who value the wilderness experience and are committed to protecting the TWWHA's wilderness values.

The group has achieved a major conservation outcome in the TWWHA. In some areas there were as many as five million plants to remove in one location.

The SPRATS project is a 10-year program that is due to finish in 2016. In summer 2013/14, the focus will change from weed control to monitoring as a result of the massive amount of work that volunteers have put into successfully controlling sea spurge in the past five years.

### **Frenchmans Cap Track upgrade – partnership with WILDCARE Inc Gift Fund and Dick Smith donation**

In early 2008, entrepreneur and adventurer Dick Smith challenged the Tasmanian Government, in the media, to jointly fund repairs to the Frenchmans Cap Track (the track). This was as a result of his having walked the

track, which is in the TWWHA. Mr Smith had publicly commented that the walking track had deteriorated since his previous visit in 1998. His belief was that if the track did not have an injection of serious money, sections would collapse beyond reasonable condition.

The track is one of Tasmania's great bushwalks, an iconic destination for serious walkers. It leads to the summit of the magnificent white quartzite dome of Frenchmans Cap, the most prominent peak in the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park. It is considerably more arduous than many other Tasmanian walks, including the Overland Track. The track is rough and muddy over extended sections, especially across the Lodden Plains, and is steep in places. Most walkers spend between three and five days completing the return trip, a distance of about 23 km each way.

The PWS spent several months negotiating with Mr Smith to create an agreement that was a practical and effective solution to upgrade the track in this remote part of Tasmania. An offer from Mr Smith to donate \$100 000 per year for a period of 10 years for maintenance works to the track was provided under the proviso that the PWS provide \$50 000 per year

Restoring the iconic Frenchman's Cap Track took a partnership of government and philanthropy. Photo © Parks Tasmania





in matching funds. An agreement was signed in April 2008.

The donation was made to the WILDCARE Inc Gift Fund, which provides an avenue for tax-deductible donations. WILDCARE Inc is an independent non-government organisation that works in partnership with the PWS in supporting conservation projects within Tasmania. The Gift Fund was established in 2005 by WILDCARE Inc to collect and distribute funds specifically for reserve management and nature conservation in Tasmania.

WILDCARE Inc is the major volunteer partner organisation of the PWS, and its thousands of members contribute tens of thousands of hours to the

conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage sites around Tasmania and its off-shore islands every year.

In the four years since the agreement for the Frenchmans Cap Track was signed, there has been major progress on the track upgrade. A large component of this was construction of 6.2 km of new track, including a major re-route of one section. The majority of the re-route has now been completed. The re-route is located on sloping ground that has enabled correct drainage. This has created better ecological outcomes compared to retaining the track within the low gradient Button Grass valley.

Volunteers contribute to the management of invasive sea spurge in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Photo © Parks Tasmania





## PWS Get Outside Migrant Program

The aim of the Get Outside Migrant Program (the program) is to provide people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds with the knowledge and skills to become self-sufficient in undertaking a visit to a nearby national park or reserve. The PWS does recognise that for community conservation to be further embraced by society conservation agencies need to create new partnerships with sections of society that have never traditionally been associated with general conservation activities. This is achieved through the provision of information and education services through PWS Discovery Rangers who lead excursions into the TWWHA (mostly day trips) for migrant groups, which results in the participants gaining a better understanding and appreciation of the parks and reserves conservation values.

The program has become so successful that migrant communities are now adopting a national park or reserve as an excursion focal point, with trained community guides leading excursions. The program trains community leaders in basic conservation values identification.

The program has been recognised for providing new migrants with the realisation that parks and reserves are safe and inspiring locations to visit. This is an important element for many of these people who have, and still experience, significant amounts of post traumatic stress. This type of program has also enabled the PWS to partner with a wide range of community service providers and educational institutions that may not normally connect with a conservation organisation like the PWS.

The program has multiple partners and has recently received a \$25 000 grant from the Scanlon Foundation. This foundation supports initiatives that create a more cohesive Australia. The grant monies will be used to support the wages of the PWS Discovery Rangers, transport to and from reserves, and educational materials.

## Conclusion

These four partnership program examples are designed and managed to be ongoing. It has been imperative for the community realise that the PWS is committed to these relationships for the long term. This has created a level of trust that will prevail beyond the individual officer commitment. The benefit for the TWWHA is new groups of people who appreciate, respect and enjoy the reserves. There is a tremendous level of skills and enthusiasm that the PWS now has available for very little cost. Perhaps the greatest benefit for the PWS as an organisation has been the new positive connections with parts of Tasmania's society where there were previously not trusted connections. The other interesting outcome has been the realisation by the many humanitarian organisations operating in Tasmania that our reserves are great locations to use within their individual assimilation and rehabilitation programs.

## Author

**Peter Mooney**

General Manager

Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service

Hobart, Tasmania

## Biography

Peter started with the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) as a trainee, attaining tertiary qualifications in environmental management. From 1981, Peter worked as a ranger and park manager in Tasmania's parks and reserves. He has completed a number of overseas postings working with NGOs; the most recent with the Charles Darwin Research Institute, Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, performing marine ecology assessments with the community.

Since January 2004, Peter has been the General Manager of the PWS. Peter has a strong commitment to building the capabilities of conservation agencies to manage reserves in partnership with local communities and tourist operators. The PWS has been leading a number of programs involving the tourism industry, local communities and Government agencies which have delivered innovative and environmentally sustainable solutions on the ground.

Peter is a board member of a number of environmental NGOs that have strong community-based programs. Peter is particularly keen to increase the PWS's capacity to eradicate invasive species and have sound biosecurity practices in place for Tasmania.

# Community engagement and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area

Karen Vohland

The World Heritage Convention (Article 5a) specifically asks Convention states “to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes” (UNESCO, 2013)

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority) recognises this obligation and that community based collaboration is a crucial element in conserving the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA), as well as securing a healthier future for the Reef.

Getting local communities and traditional owners involved in both protection and management has been one of the success stories in the GBRWHA. Individuals and organisations who use and enjoy the Reef for their cultural, lifestyle or livelihood activities are demonstrating their commitment and voluntarily taking practical steps every day to help safeguard its future.

## **The Great Barrier Reef, an amazing place – but facing some challenges**

The Great Barrier Reef (the Reef) is a special place; World Heritage listed and home to thousands of species of plants and animals. The GBRWHA covers over 348,000 sq kms and extends 2,300 kms along the Queensland coastline from the tip of Cape York down to just north of Bundaberg. It is recognised as one of the richest and most diverse areas on Earth and is also a vital economic hub. This multi-use marine park plays an important role in the lifestyles and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Australians. It contributes \$5 billion annually to the Australian economy (Access Economics, 2008). It is central to a range of activities including tourism, commercial fishing, recreational fishing and boating, shipping, diving, aquaculture and research. Most of these activities require a vibrant and healthy ecosystem to be viable.

While the Reef is recognised as one of the healthiest coral reef ecosystems in the world, it is facing some challenges: the impacts of a changing climate; continuing declining water quality from catchment







runoff; loss of coastal habitats from increasing coastal development; illegal fishing and poaching; and a few remaining impacts from fishing, are priority issues which are reducing the resilience of the Reef (GBRMPA, 2009).

Many of these issues are outside the legislative or regulatory influence of the Authority.

### Considering the options

So what were the Authority's options? Do nothing and wait for the Reef to slowly deteriorate, or alternatively choose to guide and influence stakeholder decisions and everyday actions that would help to ensure the long-term health and resilience of the Reef.

Consequently the Authority has set about forging relationships with a range of stakeholders through a variety of avenues. Relationships with communities have been developed through 12 Local Marine Advisory Committees; with Traditional Owners through our Traditional Use Marine Resource Agreements and with schools, councils and industry groups through the highly effective Reef Guardians Program.

### The Reef Guardian Journey

The Reef Guardian stewardship concept was originally created in 2003 as the vehicle for community level involvement and to give positive environmental behaviours a reef related cause.

It comes with no funding for participants – it is stewardship in the purest sense of the word, people choosing to take care of something that they value, but don't personally 'own'.

It is a voluntary program that aims to showcase the environmental actions already being undertaken within coastal communities and industries both in the Reef catchment and in the Marine Park. It is an important vehicle for behavioural change and the uptake of practices that can ultimately improve the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.

While the schools program continued to flourish, Local Government amalgamation shortly after the concept was launched in 2007 slowed progress of the Councils' program.





## A renewed focus and a new challenge

In May 2010, the Australian Government allocated short term project funding over two years to *Improving the Outlook of the Great Barrier Reef*. Part of this funding was to expand the Reef Guardian stewardship program under the *Enhancing Reef Guardians Project*. The objectives of the project were to strengthen the existing Reef Guardian Schools' and Reef Guardian Councils' stewardship programs to ensure their longer term sustainability, and to develop opportunities for farmers and fishers to contribute to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Marine Park), while exploring opportunities for tourism operators as well.

The Authority had a challenging relationship with farmers due to long standing issues of water quality and with fishermen because of the rezoning of the Marine Park in 2004, which removed commercial fishing from a much larger area. Hence developing any kind of stewardship program with them was going to be a challenge.

The Authority is working with cane farmers towards healthier catchments for a healthier reef. Photo © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

## Our Approach

For the new elements of the stewardship program to be successful the Authority needed to:

- recognise the commercial complexities of the industries involved;
- address the challenges associated with providing equitable opportunities for the thousands of farming and fishing businesses in these industry sectors to be involved in the program; and
- acknowledge the short two year timeframe of the funding and the resource limitations of just one person per program area.

The Authority used the proven methodology of developing the program 'with industry-for industry' which included establishment of industry-based steering committees comprised of representatives from peak bodies, relevant government agencies, conservation groups and program participants (i.e. farmers or fishers). Working groups which comprised the actual program participants provided technical expertise. The Authority also used industry knowledge to develop







Queensland schools are Reef Guardian Schools teaching children the importance of a healthy reef and how they can help. Photo © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

an appropriate framework and to ground-truth the viability of the delivery options across the industries involved.

The focus for all Reef Guardian Programs is to influence actions and activities that will help to address the key risks to the Reef, including promoting activities in the areas of:

- land management (including biodiversity);
- water management;
- waste management;
- climate change; and
- community education and knowledge sharing

### Our journey to date with the new programs of Farmers/Graziers and Fishers

The Reef Guardian Farmers/Graziers and Fishers programs take a comprehensive approach and recognise the value of economic, social and environmental sustainability of fishing and farming business. These programs aim to work with farmers and graziers to achieve real outcomes with a focus on continuing improvement through action plans. They are based around a set of desirable assessment standards covering environmental, social and economic outcomes and they are underpinned by the sharing of knowledge, recognising activities which are over and above what is legally required and involving everyone associated with the farming, grazing or fishing business.

#### Farmers

Desirable assessment standards have been cooperatively developed covering a range of aspects of farming practices including water resources for clean healthy catchments, efficient energy systems, healthy

soils through wise mineral and nutrient management, sustaining the functions of natural areas, wetlands and forests on properties and running a business that is resilient to natural and economic variability. Eight cane pilot sites have been identified between Mackay and Cairns, with four pilot sites identified in the Tully/Innisfail area within the banana industry and four grazing pilot sites are participating between Gladstone and Charters Towers. The pilot sites aim to practically test the concepts and assessment standards.

#### Fishers

A Reef Line pilot working group has been established and six reef line operators are participating in a range of voluntary activities including: utilising a carbon emissions calculator to minimise energy use within their fishing operations; trialling electronic data collection devices on dories and the mother ships; participating in a Coral Trout research project by assisting with the tagging program associated with the trial; and contributing information and trialling monitoring forms for the Authority, collectively called the *Integrated Eye on the Reef* monitoring program.

The Marine Aquarium Fish and Coral collection fishery has also joined the Reef Guardian Pilot program, showcasing their efforts towards environmental stewardship through their stewardship action plan. The Provision Reef Stewardship Action Plan outlines the actions and activities that this commercial fishing sector will undertake to ensure their fishing and collection practices are environmentally sustainable.

Additionally, as part of the program we are currently trialling electronic data collection devices in the inshore gill net fishery.



## Our journey to date with the existing programs of Schools and Councils

There are currently 13 councils along the Great Barrier Reef coastline officially signed up to the program which covers all coastal councils from Bundaberg to Cooktown and equates to 317,271 km<sup>2</sup> and a combined population of greater than 890,000.

The Authority has agreements with Councils via Memorandums of Understanding for the duration of their term. Each Council develops annual action plans which are reflective of the Council's annual operations plan and is endorsed by Council. A total of 923 projects are currently identified in these action plans covering the areas of land management, water management, waste management, climate change and community education and capacity building.

Currently in its tenth year the Reef Guardian Schools program involves more than 111,000 students and teachers in 285 schools across the Reef catchment. This equates to around 10% of the entire population of the catchment. The participating schools are currently undertaking over 1600 projects relating to waste management, water management, biodiversity/land management and climate change.

The key objective of the Reef Guardian Schools program is to utilise a whole of school approach to create awareness, understanding and appreciation for the Reef and connected ecosystems. Curriculum units and teaching resources have been developed around key risks to the Reef. Annual actions plans and reports are developed by schools reflecting their activities throughout the year. The Reef Guardian Schools Annual Awards are presented in term four each year. They are selected across ten categories and recognise the high standards of achievement made by these schools throughout the year. In addition, the Reef Guardian Schools '*Ripples of Change*' sponsorship consists of twenty \$500 donations, providing an opportunity for schools to undertake small environmental projects within their schools which have been identified as part of their annual action plan.

## Conclusion

Community-based Reef Guardian stewardship programs are essential. They play a critical role in ensuring that the values of the Great Barrier Reef are appreciated and that community actions are focussed on supporting management of the Marine Park so that it is well placed to meet the challenges ahead. They also honour and help implement the obligation of Australia's World Heritage Areas to give "function in the life of the community".

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## Biography

Karen Vohland is the Director, Stakeholder Engagement and Stewardship within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Karen has a long history as communications professional with more than 25 years' experience in media, public relations and stakeholder engagement. In her current role Karen directs the agency's Stakeholder Engagement activities including its Local Marine Advisory Committees, regional offices and the Reef Guardian Stewardship Program. Prior to this, she was the Communications and Education Director for the Authority for seven years. She has also held senior communication roles in the public health sector, emergency services and the television media, and has operated her own successful marketing company.

# Valuing our iconic heritage areas: how the industry can support keeping the outstanding exceptional

Daniel Gshwind

The intersection of tourism and World Heritage values in Australia has recently been brought into sharp focus as a result of the discussion initiated by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee in relation to Australia's management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The Mission Report: Reactive Monitoring Mission to Great Barrier Reef (UNESCO World Heritage Centre and IUCN, June 2012) produced by the UNESCO delegation, not only focused on the potential threats and benefits from tourism on the key values but also made reference to the threats to tourism from a loss of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

This discussion provides a general perspective of the role of natural environments as tourism assets and then seeks to identify the benefits and opportunities that can be generated through successful management of the connection between World Heritage values and tourism.

There is a symbiotic relationship between sustainable commercial tourism and iconic World Heritage sites, particularly in a destination like Australia that generates much of its 'brand value' from its natural attributes. Consumer research for both domestic and international visitor markets strongly indicates that, increasingly, Australia enjoys a positive reputation as a 'green' destination, high on the list of desirable natural experiences. Unique endemic fauna and flora species, as well as a range of prominent natural sites and features like Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef, have given Australia strong and readily recognised imagery that supports the destination's attributes as a place with strong natural heritage values. Not surprisingly, those attributes are featured prominently in commercial tourism advertising as well as in federal and state-funded destination marketing. Nature is one of Australia's core competitive advantages in global tourism.

In this context, a further general trend in tourism should be mentioned. The evidence suggests that consumers are seeking 'experiences' rather than just places or services when making travel decisions. Experiences that generate peer-approval, 'brag-value', or that may appear on popular 'bucket lists', are particularly desirable. The brand recognition of a specific natural site or its reputation as being unique or special adds significantly to its value as a tourism experience. While the attestation as a World Heritage Area has perhaps not been used as consistently or effectively in the promotion of Australian destinations, it has nevertheless





An opportunity to dive or snorkel on the Reef can become the highlight of a lifetime.  
Photo © Commonwealth of Australia (GBRMPA)

added an element of endorsement of those places as 'premium' experiences.

The value that is thus placed on natural heritage areas, particularly by both visitors and tourism operators, introduces a dynamic that can be highly beneficial for the promotion and support of heritage values. For specific sites and places that carry the brand-endorsement of World Heritage, the opportunities are particularly prominent.

Out of a complete list of current World Heritage Areas in Australia, a majority (those bold) also feature in any ranking of most popular and most visited tourism attractions.

### Cultural

- **Australian Convict Sites**
- Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens
- **Sydney Opera House**

### Natural

- Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh / Naracoorte)
- **Fraser Island**
- **Gondwana Rainforests of Australia**
- **Great Barrier Reef**
- **Greater Blue Mountains Area**
- Heard and McDonald Islands
- **Lord Howe Island Group**
- Macquarie Island
- **Ningaloo Coast**
- **Purnululu National Park**
- Shark Bay, Western Australia
- **Wet Tropics of Queensland**

### Mixed

- **Kakadu National Park**
- **Tasmanian Wilderness**
- **Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park**
- Willandra Lakes Region

An explicit acknowledgment of policy makers, land managers and tourism operators of the shared interests, combined with practical and innovative cooperation has the potential to advance both conservation, as well as economic and community outcomes.

Visits to World Heritage Areas in general, and quality commercial tourism visits in particular, increase the economic existence value of those areas (Drimyl, 2002). This creates a political and policy environment that is more likely to support these exceptional areas in the long-term. Visitors who have the benefit of quality interpretive services are also likely to be left with a

deepened understanding of ecological process, and a more astute understanding of the meaning of World Heritage and of conservation more generally.

A strong argument can be made that World Heritage Areas that have high visitation levels are more likely to remain protected and well managed as a result of political and commercial pressure. The tourism industry, dependent on the use of such areas, has an additional commercial incentive to actively seek policy outcomes that protect the assets vital to their product offering. It is quite literally protecting the basic resources of an industry. This has been demonstrated in numerous settings, not least the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP). More comprehensive zoning, fishing exclusions and better use management in the GBRMP are unlikely to have been implemented without industry support and endorsement from the visiting public.

The UNESCO Mission Report makes the following observation:

*The increased provision of visitor facilities to support sustainable tourism and enhance the appreciation of the property in itself is also an important contributor to the realisation of aesthetic values (p.17).*

### And

*Commercial marine tourism in the Great Barrier Reef is focused on delivering high quality tourism experiences which have significant economic value to the local communities and to Australia. Plans and permitting arrangements targeting commercial marine tourism have been systematically implemented and an array of policies, position statements and guidelines has been developed and are communicated in a clear and transparent manner to the public. As a result of this concerted action, and primarily through the establishment of industry partnerships, commercial marine tourism is now planned and managed sustainably, with minimal environmental and social impacts such as crowding. Through this continuous, effective management, commercial marine tourism is no longer considered as a major threat to the OUV of the property, provided current management measures continue. (p.24)*

Innovative partnerships offer significant further potential to advance mutually beneficial outcomes for both tourism and iconic World Heritage Areas. The tourism industry can play an effective role in cooperative management of sites; for example Tourism Weekly Monitoring is the original Eye on the Reef program and now forms part of the overarching program. These surveys started in 1997 as a set of observations collected by tourism operators. Today it is one of the





Presentation of World Heritage Areas is a core responsibility of World Heritage Managers. Photo © Queensland Tourism Industry Council

largest community based coral reef monitoring collaborations on the planet, and represents a successful partnership between the tourism industry, Marine Park managers and researchers (GBRMPA, 2013). There are also important areas of research where tourism, conservation and management interests can be combined to create better resources and more user-relevant knowledge outcomes can be achieved. The research partnership established with federal funding through the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) in North Queensland has demonstrated this potential (see link).

Finally, with appropriate provisions, it is also possible to establish private-public sector partnerships for investment in the protection of World Heritage Areas and values. Such arrangements could cover supportive infrastructure, access service provision, maintenance, monitoring and management. This is not without challenges, both for tourism operators and governments, but there is a significant potential for mutual benefits.

In conclusion, the two main observations are these:

First, based on major trends in tourism, Australia's competitive advantage in this market relies critically on the destination's natural assets and, in particular World Heritage values. Second, the long-term protection of those assets by the community and its policy instruments, at least to some degree, relies on their sustainable use, specifically through tourism.

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## Biography

Daniel Gschwind is the CEO for the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC). QTIC is Queensland's peak tourism industry body with more than 3,000 regional members.

Daniel is the Director of the National Tourism Alliance (NTA), a Director of the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) and a member of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA). He represents QTIC on various committees, including the Tourism Research Advisory Board, the Tourism Forecasting Committee and the Queensland Government's Skills and Training Taskforce. He is an Adjunct Professor to the School of Tourism at the University of Queensland. He is the Honorary Consul of Switzerland for Queensland.

Daniel holds an honours degree in economics from the University of Queensland and has worked as a senior economist with Queensland Treasury. He is a Vice Patron of Surf Life Saving Queensland and an Ambassador for the Queensland Museum Foundation.

He has previously been involved in yacht charter operations in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean for ten years.

# Australia's National Landscapes Program – promoting our World Heritage icons

Hilary Schofield

Australia has some of the world's most distinctive and diverse natural environments, with unique wildlife, spectacular landforms, exceptional national parks and outstanding World Heritage Areas. Australia is also home to the world's oldest living culture. Internationally, these natural and cultural assets make Australia one of the most desirable visitor destinations. However, converting interest into visitation or advocacy requires compelling communication and delivery of consistently high quality visitor experiences.

Australia's National Landscapes Program (Program) is a partnership between tourism and conservation managed by Tourism Australia and Parks Australia.

The Program aims to:

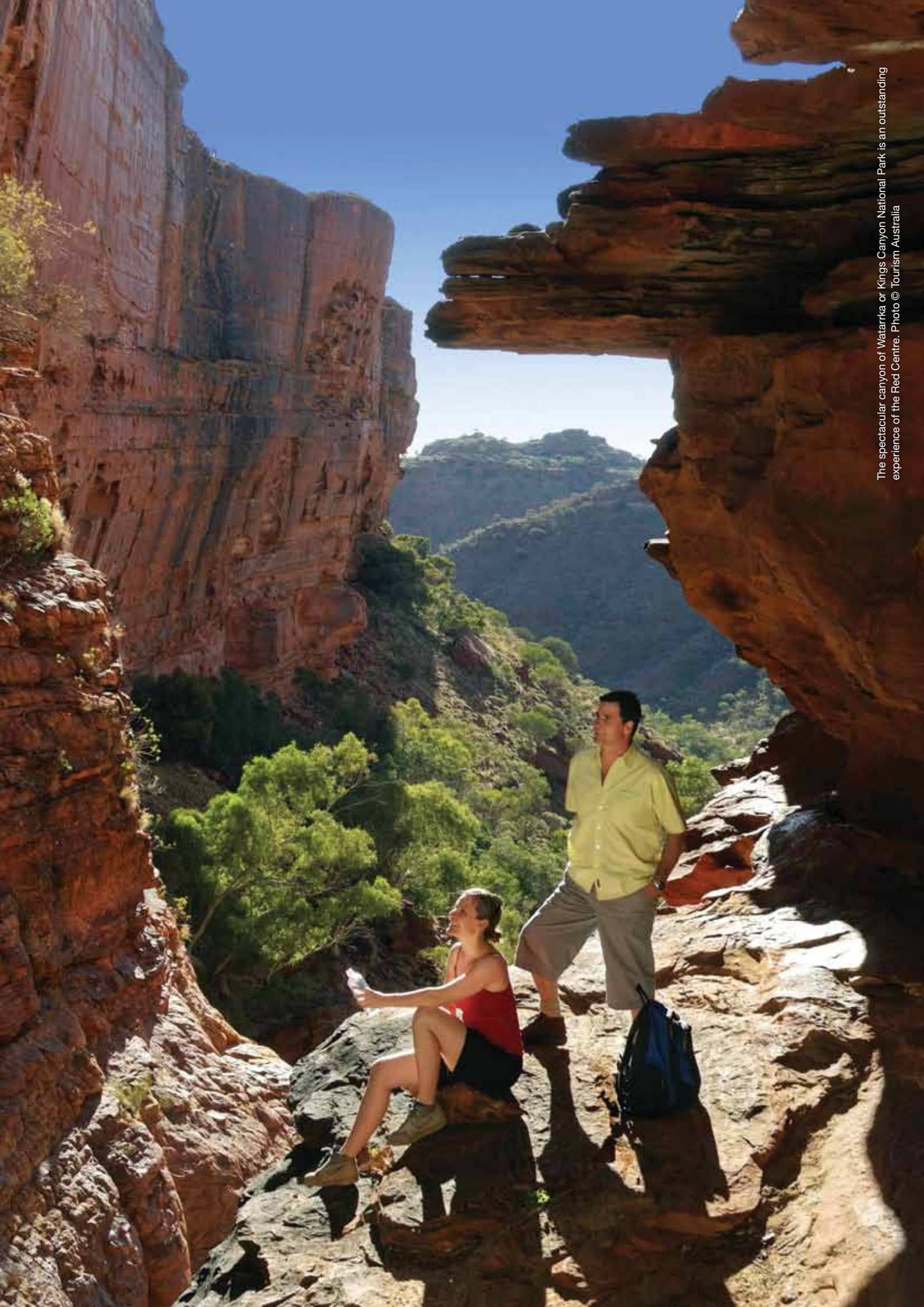
- promote Australia's world class visitor experiences;
- increase the value of tourism to regional economies;
- enhance the role of protected areas in those economies; and
- build support for protecting our natural and cultural assets.

The Program was inspired by the need to make Australia's wealth of over 9,000 national parks, protected areas, World Heritage Areas and reserves more 'digestible' and easily understood by our domestic and international visitors. It does so by identifying regions (National Landscapes) with distinct and outstanding character and the potential to offer a world-class experience.

Protecting the natural and cultural environment is a key aim of the Program which encourages all elements of the tourism industry to undertake conservation initiatives that improve the visitor's experience and contribute to the environment. Examples of this range from improved threatened species interpretation and opening a wildlife hospital to visitors at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary in Australia's Green Cauldron; to local arts groups promoting regional biodiversity values through exhibitions (with a percentage of funds raised donated to projects such as Landcare); to new 'voluntourism' products (e.g Conservation Volunteers Australia surveying yellow-footed rock-wallabies in the Flinders Ranges National Landscape).

Visitor experiences are not defined by land tenure. Accordingly, Australia's National Landscapes extend beyond individual national parks, World Heritage Areas,





The spectacular canyon of Watarrka or Kings Canyon National Park is an outstanding experience of the Red Centre. Photo © Tourism Australia



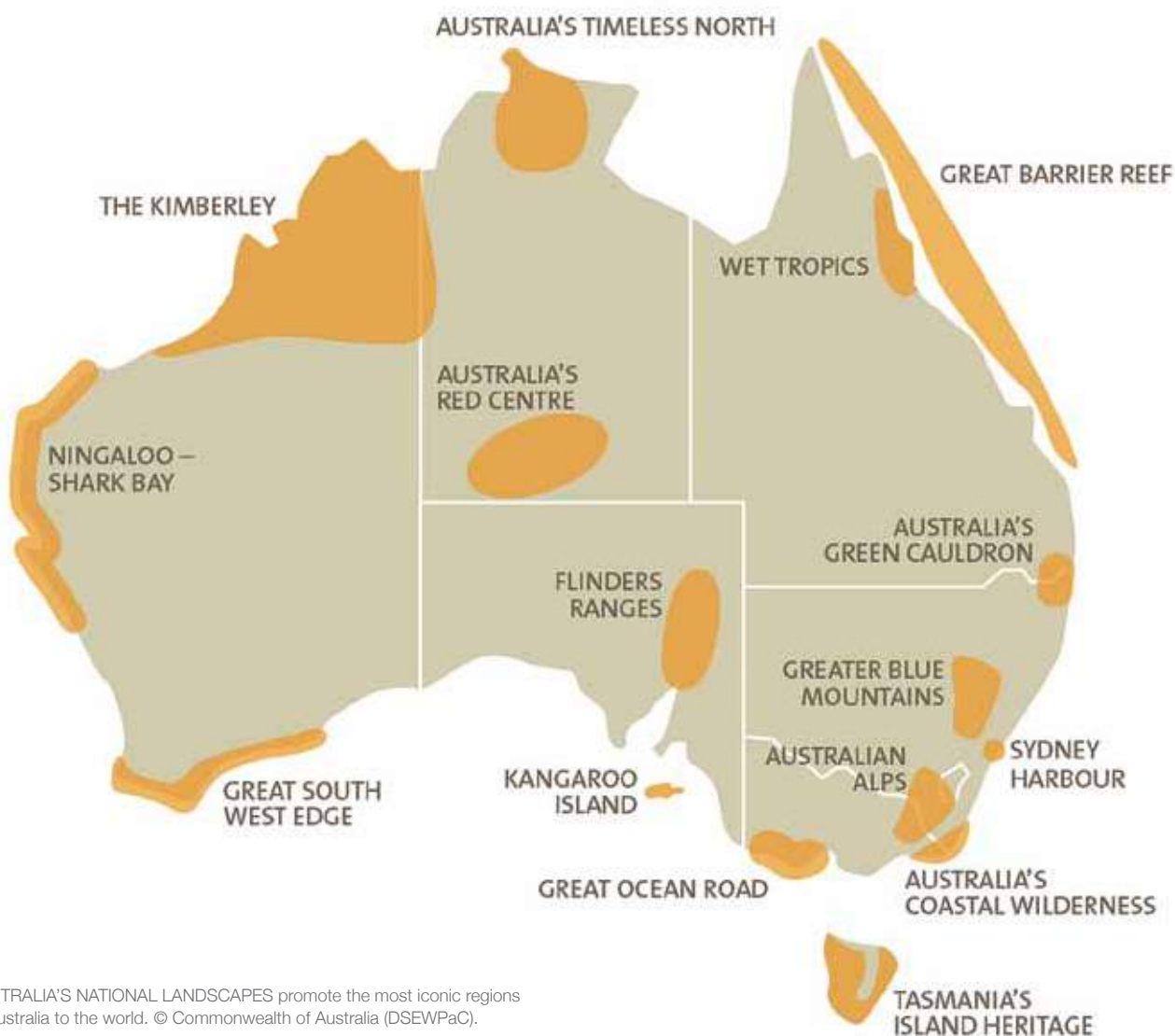
and state borders. It is the landscape itself, and the experience offered by the environment, that defines each National Landscape. Each Landscape incorporates a range of protected areas and management regimes that protect and provide the core attractions of these world-class environments.

Sixteen National Landscapes have been announced to date. Sydney Harbour is the most recent addition to the Program. It joins The Wet Tropics, Tasmania's Island Heritage, the Great Barrier Reef, Australia's Red Centre, Flinders Ranges, the Australian Alps, the Great Ocean Road, Australia's Coastal Wilderness, Australia's Timeless North, Australia's Green Cauldron, Greater Blue Mountains, the Kimberley, Kangaroo Island, Great South West Edge, and Ningaloo-Shark Bay. Of the set of National Landscapes, nine incorporate World Heritage Areas, underscoring the value of World Heritage to Australia's tourism industry.

### The Role of World Heritage Areas within the National Landscapes

Consumer research confirms that 'nature' and 'journeys' are the most motivating experiences for travel to Australia (Tourism Australia, 2010). Australia's National Landscapes provide plentiful opportunities for visitors to connect with nature and undertake a range of journeys (spiritual, emotional and physical). In many cases a World Heritage site nested within a National Landscape provides the iconic drawcard to a region (think sunset over the flood plains in Kakadu National Park, connecting to the worlds oldest living culture at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, or swimming with whale sharks off Cape Range National Park in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area).

While the icon value of World Heritage sites is often difficult to differentiate from external factors such as economic cycles, marketing and ease of access



AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL LANDSCAPES promote the most iconic regions of Australia to the world. © Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPoC).



(Buckley, 2002) we do know that a significant per cent of visitors are influenced in their travel decision by the World Heritage brand (King, 2011). We also know that World Heritage Areas are significant drivers of economic growth. In 2008, Australia's then 15 World Heritage Areas contributed over \$16 billion in annual direct and indirect national output and around 83,000 direct and indirect national jobs with 95 per cent of these impacts from visitor expenditure (Australian Government, 2008).

However, World Heritage Areas should not be considered in isolation from their surrounds. This is equally true for tourism management as it is for the effective management of ecological threats such as climate change, weed species, or feral animals. By considering World Heritage Areas in a landscape context there is greater opportunity to engage with local communities; build constituencies of support; and ensure appropriate access, accommodation, marketing and partnership opportunities. Australia's National Landscapes Program helps to connect individual sites to a wider context and can benefit World Heritage Areas in five key ways:

**1. Partnerships** – The Program provides a framework that supports networks of stakeholder collaboration: tourism organisations and operators working with protected area agencies, heritage managers, local councils, conservation groups, government agencies and Indigenous communities. By collectively working to agree a brand identity for the Landscape, such groups are able to plan and deliver the promise of their region. By combining forces, funds are leveraged and the Landscape is marketed with a consistent message.

For example, in the Wet Tropics National Landscape, the Wet Tropics Management Authority championed the Program as it aligns with a strategic focus to support a sustainable nature-based tourism industry that delivers the highest standards of presentation of the natural and cultural values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The Authority took a leadership role in the effort to have the Wet Tropics recognised as a National Landscape. Their motivation was to ensure that maximum community, industry and conservation benefits flow from the management of the World Heritage Area. Benefits include provision of outstanding visitor experiences, awareness of the values and conservation needs and understanding of the deep spiritual and cultural connections of Rainforest Aboriginal people to the Wet Tropics.

The Wet Tropics Steering Committee challenges participants to work together and 'think big', leveraging their funds and ideas for a common benefit. The membership balances tourism and environmental

expertise and is currently made up of representation from the following organisations:

- Regional Tourism Organizations (Tourism Tropical North Queensland / Townsville Enterprise)
- James Cook University
- Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service
- The Alliance for Sustainable Tourism
- Gulf Savannah Tourism Network
- Daintree Coast
- Wet Tropics Management Authority
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
- Regional Councils
- Several individual tourism operators

**2. Point of Difference** – Through a series of workshops and research the Landscapes uncover their world class experiences and unique 'point of difference'.

For Landscapes that feature World Heritage Areas, this is a chance to feature elements of Outstanding Universal Value and increase community understanding of what makes an area stand out from the rest of the world. This work then underpins planning, tourism development, and marketing. The process significantly deepens understanding of a Landscape's World Heritage values.

**3. Planning** – Each Landscape completes an Experience Development Strategy (EDS). The EDS is a planning tool to improve the availability of world class experiences to the target market.

This methodology (DSEWPoC, 2012) takes a visitor centred approach and is useful for considering how tourism experiences can interpret and present natural and cultural values. For example, in the Flinders Ranges National Landscape the steering committee considered how tourism products, sustainability initiatives, services, information, access, marketing, and infrastructure could be improved to "reveal the story of life on earth" and connect visitors to the outback culture and geoheritage of the region. As a result, a number of tourism projects were identified, including "Showcasing the Ediacaran story" experiences that will enable the visitor to go home with an appreciation of the significance of the first known multicellular animal life on Earth - the Ediacaran fossils (Flinders Ranges, 2011). Since completion of the EDS the region has successfully secured additional funding and support for implementation of projects.

**4. Protection** – Protecting the natural and cultural values of the National Landscapes is clearly central to ensuring long term success. Building support for the protection of values is an explicit aim of the Program. In recent years, the Program has helped widen constituencies of support for protected areas and

increased understanding of the role natural assets play in our tourism economy. Each year the nature-based tourism sector contributes \$23 billion to Australia's economy and in the 2012 March quarter, international visitors undertaking nature-based activities increased 7.4 per cent, nearly twice the increase seen in the overall international market (Tourism and Transport Forum, 2012).

**5. Promotion** - Opportunities associated with being a National Landscape are significant. Landscapes have access to a dedicated marketing program led by Tourism Australia. This includes the consumer site Australia.com (see link) with content translated into 17 languages and exposure to international trade, social and media engagement. World Heritage Areas within the National Landscapes can tap into these sophisticated and targeted promotional opportunities. For example, Australia's Red Centre, which incorporates the World Heritage Area Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, has formed a 'Red Hot Stories Team' who worked to establish themes and stories for 2012. The stories showcase what the region has to offer visitors, profile the natural and cultural values of key sites and identify conservation activities currently underway in the region. In 2012, visitation to the consumer site grew by 40% to 212,000 visits and the average length of stay was 12.5 minutes, demonstrating very strong market interest in National Landscapes content worldwide.

The top five markets accessing Australia's Red Centre page were the United States, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Canada (Australian Government, 2012). In addition, the region was profiled in seven editions of Tourism Australia's Media e-Newsletters; featured in the Downunder Travel Bulletin distributed to 11,200 travel agents worldwide; and featured in training modules to educate travel agents worldwide about the region. Over 22,000 media visitors accessed Australia's Red Centre suggested itinerary, media fact sheet, conservation fact sheet, and wildlife calendar and similar results were achieved across other Landscapes.

## The Future

Australia's National Landscapes Program has proven its effectiveness as a model for collaboration and partnership. However, the Program is still in its foundation stages. It will take sustained effort to increase community and visitor understanding of Australia's natural and cultural values, build support for protection, deliver conservation success, secure new resources, offer well designed sustainable visitor infrastructure, and deliver world class tourism products.

The current planning horizon of the Program extends to 2020 and beyond to align with policy objectives in Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, 2010) and Australia's National Long Term Tourism Strategy (Australian Government, 2009). As the Program continues to evolve there is a huge opportunity for World Heritage sites to increase engagement, capitalise on their point of difference, share stories, promote new experiences, contribute to EDS planning and build advocacy and support.

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### Biography

Hilary joined Parks Australia in 2008 and until late 2012 helped to develop and champion Australia's National Landscape Program with Tourism Australia. During this time she was responsible for protected area planning and tourism development in Parks Australia's terrestrial reserves including Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Kakadu National Park. As member of the National Long Term Tourism Strategy Working Group for Destination Management Planning and the Indigenous Tourism Working Group, she was closely involved with representing protected area interests in the development of national tourism policy.

Hilary holds qualifications in geography, environmental science and postgraduate energy studies. She has previously held executive level positions with the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, the Australian Greenhouse Office and the Tasmanian Government on a range of energy, climate and environment issues.

Snorkling off Coral Beach in the pristine waters of Ningaloo World Heritage Area  
Photo © Tourism Australia



# Fraser Island: A personal view of ‘presenting’ World Heritage

John Sinclair

Few people in Australia have had a longer or more intimate association with a World Heritage site as I have experienced. I have been engaged with Fraser Island since 1971 when the Fraser Island Defenders’ Organisation (FIDO) launched its campaign to have the Island’s outstanding natural values recognised and protected. It was a year before the UNESCO World Heritage Convention came into being and a decade before any of the great natural sites around the globe were inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Since 1971, I have been privileged to see more than 100 World Heritage sites in five continents and averaged visiting more than ten World Heritage sites annually over the past 25 years. In my view Fraser Island does not stand up well on site branding and presentation compared with most of these sites.

Fraser Island does not have a visitor centre, and I have never seen even the brass plaque marking Fraser Island’s inscription. Although there is information on the Queensland government’s World Heritage website on Fraser’s Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) (NPRSR, 2013a), the main site for visitation of the island has very limited mention of OUV qualities (NPRSR, 2013b). Once on the island the information on the status and importance of Fraser is inadequate. Apart from the few interpretive sign shelters located at some of the most visited sites on the island the nearest anything comes to interpreting the World Heritage values of the island are a series of faded panels on the outside of an old shed.

Some starts have been made to address this issue. A subcommittee of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was established to advance the concept of establishing a Fraser Island World Heritage Visitor Centre three years ago. However, it did not proceed because of the failure to secure Commonwealth funding to underwrite the process. A strategy to develop a much needed visitor centre has yet to emerge.

Most of the interpretation panels on Fraser Island address a wide range of management issues such as dingoes and tourist information, but lack specific references and information to communicate to visitors the island’s World Heritage status and OUV. The Queensland Government hoped to upgrade the jaded signage around the shed with Caring for Country application for a \$450,000 grant to develop an





Eli Creek Fraser Island – the boardwalk protects the fragile banks from erosion.  
Photo © Shannon Muir, Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPac)





Lake McKenzie: The extraordinary beauty of freshwater lakes perched high in the dunes is a key part of Fraser's World Heritage value. Photo © Paul Candlin, Commonwealth of Australia (DSEWPaC)

interpretation plaza at Central Station. However, to date, this application has not been successful.

In September 2011, I was nominated for a committee to review the transmission of interpretation of World Heritage values on Fraser Island. However the committee has lacked staff and the review has not commenced. While this was a good sign, there has been no follow up to indicate that the presentation of Fraser Island's World Heritage OUV is a priority. One needs to constantly remember that this obligation to present the value of the site is our obligation under the Convention.

My concerns go beyond the lack of priority for the presentation of Fraser Island as a World Heritage site to concern about the level of understanding and protection given to the OUV that resulted in Fraser Island's

inscription on the World Heritage list in the first place.

This is epitomised to me by what happened to Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora), a beautiful crystal clear lake perched high in the dunes which is one of the best known symbols of Fraser Island's outstanding natural beauty. Concern for high utilization and erosion on Lake McKenzie's pure white beach led to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) instigating beautification and "environmental protection" work which amounted to fencing off large sections of its famous white beach to establish a garden of native plants.

This project was aimed at addressing erosion, but resulted in an aesthetically intrusive fencing. In my view this project lost sight of the aesthetic values for which Fraser Island was recognised. Fraser Island has been





recognized to meet World Heritage Criterion vii – “(containing) *areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance or contain superlative natural phenomena*” (UNESCO, 2013a) and the statement of OUV submitted by the Australian Government refers to Fraser Island containing “*half of the world’s perched freshwater dune lakes occur on the island, producing a spectacular and varied landscape*” (UNESCO, 2013b). Fortunately, a more sensitive approach has now been adopted. The offending structures have been removed and the QPWS has endorsed a photo monitoring project of the beach usage to determine impacts and to shape any future management decisions here.

Similarly the Statement of OUV refers to Fraser Island containing “*more than 40 kilometres of strikingly coloured sand cliffs*” (UNESCO, 2013b). This distinctive feature of the island was inadequately considered when

the managers established a most unnatural plantation of casuarinas and a row of bollards on the beach in front of the Pinnacles, one of the most spectacular displays of coloured sands. This was done to prevent vehicles getting too close to the coloured sands and to restrict pedestrians to a contained access.

This plantation has the effect of making it more difficult to see an open panorama of these coloured sands and as the plantation grew the view of this feature was dramatically reduced. However the dynamic nature of the beach and the alluvial plume on which these capital works were established has been subject to constant erosion since it was established. Slowly beach erosion has whittled away the plantation, but instead of removing the ineffective and visually offensive bollards they have been regularly realigned to the new erosion front. The interpretation at this site makes no mention of

Fraser Island's coloured sands cliffs being part of the island's OUV.

My key point is that we need to break down the OUV into key components (see Day and Figgis chapters) and really understand and consider them in management decisions. The lack of this deep understanding can lead to a lack of sensitivity and inappropriate choices of management actions and modifications of the site.

A last example of where management has not reflected proper understanding of Fraser Island's OUV is the continued use of roads in sensitive areas. Erosion means large volumes of sand are dislodged for every visitor to Fraser Island which is then washed down slope in heavy downpours. This high erosion factor is transforming the geomorphology to the extent that some road cuttings are now four metres deep. As a result some areas including Yidney Lake have filled with sediment washed off adjacent roads and is now growing a forest of Eucalypts rather than being a functioning wetland. This illustrates how fragile the islands unique lakes are and how susceptible they are to disturbance. A QPWS monitoring project showed that run-off from the access road to Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) deposited 75 mm of sediment around monitoring pole on the edge of the lake between 28 November 2012 and 13 March 2013. The road also funnelled water from outside the catchment into the lake. Roads should be very limited and avoid areas adjacent to such sensitive sites.

All these examples illustrate that there is an inseparable nexus between how well the OUV of a World Heritage site is understood and presented, and how well the site

is managed. When Fraser Island loses one of its famous perched dune lakes through sedimentation, in my view, it is because of under appreciation that the lakes are a critical component of the OUV; when people misguidedly begin to interfere and 'improve' on a key beauty area, it means under appreciation of how untouched beauty is central to Fraser Island's inscription; when managers fail to understand the natural geomorphological processes that are an integral part of the OUV and use inappropriate management tools; it all illustrates that OUV is not just being inadequately communicated to the visiting public, but also to those entrusted with protecting World Heritage. My article on Japan's Shiretoko World Heritage Area describes an example of good presentation of OUV (Sinclair, 2012).

My concern about Fraser Island's OUV and its presentation is not new and nor is it political - I have raised these issues with many governments. It was documented in my 2011 paper "What has World Heritage meant for Fraser Island" citing the degradation (Sinclair, 2011).

There is now a higher priority being given by the many stakeholder groups through the Advisory Committees to improve the presentation of Fraser Island's OUV. Both the State and Federal Ministers made positive contributions at the 2012 World Heritage Symposium. Given the support from the public and tourist industry, it is now time to make new efforts to honour the Convention and really communicate the values, and make sustaining the OUV the central goal of all management for the Fraser Island World Heritage site.

Plantings at the base of the stark coloured cliffs of Fraser Island impede the view of their sculptural qualities. Photo © John Sinclair





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## Biography

John Sinclair has been the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation's chief campaigner and advocate for over 41 years. He was actively engaged in the campaign to protect the Great Sandy Region back in 1974. He developed a World Heritage nomination for the region in 1984 but then had to wait another eight years to see just Fraser Island eventually inscribed. He was named "Australian of the Year" for 1976 for his leading role in protecting Fraser Island. In 1990 he was honoured by the United Nations Environment Program by being named in the Global 500. He was awarded the prestigious international Goldman Environmental Prize in 1993.

He has continued to monitor the effectiveness of efforts to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of Fraser Island ever since. This includes spending weeks leading voluntary weeding programs. John's interest in World Heritage extends far beyond Fraser Island. For 25 years he operated a safari business that was focused on taking ecotourists to all of Australia's World Heritage sites except for Macquarie Island. He has also visited more than 100 World Heritage sites in five continents.

The author John Sinclair at Yidney Lake now filled with silt from erosion.  
Photo © John Sinclair



# Communicating the World Heritage brand: Building appreciation and commitment to the World Heritage concept

Lisa M. King

World Heritage listing is a global brand certifying properties possessing such valuable and irreplaceable heritage that they must be protected in perpetuity for the benefit of all humankind.

However, a significant number of visitors arrive at a site with little or no prior knowledge about the World Heritage status of the location they are visiting (King, 2011). In Australia, the World Heritage brand has often been erratically or only nominally presented to the public on-site (King, 2010). In some cases, information about the concept is also only superficially presented (King, unpublished data). The situation significantly reduces opportunities to transmit to the public what World Heritage is, and why it is important to understand and appreciate World Heritage.

As branding plays an important role in the sustainability of protected areas (King et al., 2012), this paper aims to strengthen public appreciation and stewardship for the World Heritage concept by suggesting two strategies park managers can employ to ensure a consistent presentation of the brand and its values. It begins by introducing the terminology used when discussing *World Heritage* branding.

## Speaking A Common Language: World Heritage Branding Terminology

It is useful to briefly review the current terminology associated with branding as the vocabulary is still evolving. *Brands* are composed of both visual and mental elements (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). The visual elements of the World Heritage brand consist of both its brand name and brand marks. The term World Heritage is the internationally recognised brand name.

Two brand marks are typically used to denote World Heritage – the World Heritage emblem and the World Heritage symbol (Figure 1). The emblem (Figure 1a) specifically refers to the original brand mark adopted in 1978 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2008). The symbol (Figure 1b) explicitly refers to the emblem without the encircling phrases. The symbol was previously known as the stripped World Heritage emblem (King, 2010; 2011).

Some World Heritage Areas have developed their own site specific logo (Figure 2). The phrase *World Heritage logo* is a vague, generic term that does not differentiate between World Heritage brand marks. For example, the term could apply to any of the brand marks shown in Figures 1 and 2. Another generic phrase, *World Heritage brand*, usually refers to the visual elements of the *World Heritage brand*, but may be used when discussing both the visual and mental elements of the brand.





How many of the tourists who visit the iconic Three Sisters come away with an appreciation of the World Heritage Value of the Greater Blue Mountains? Photo © R. Mackay





Figure 1: Examples of World Heritage logos



Figure 2: Examples of Australian World Heritage logos

Brand knowledge is the mental part of a brand and is comprised of all the thoughts, feelings, associations and experiences a person has had with a brand (Kotler and Keller, 2009). *Brand equity* is the overall positive or negative value the World Heritage brand bestows on a property based on a person's brand knowledge (Aaker, 1991; Kotler and Keller, 2009). While some agencies spend a great deal of time on the design and placement of their World Heritage logos, they may still overlook clearly transmitting the brand's values and therefore fail to build positive brand equity.

### Challenges and Constraints in Conveying the World Heritage brand

- The size of some World Heritage Areas allows for hundreds of access points. This situation makes it virtually impossible for management agencies to communicate to a visitor at every possible point of entry that they are entering a World Heritage Area.
- The fragmented nature of some World Heritage Areas makes it difficult and costly for management agencies to make effective visitor contact across all properties; and, for visitors to understand the relationship between distinctly separate sites encompassed within a single World Heritage Area.
- Some World Heritage properties are prone to damage in weather events such as cyclones, seasonal flooding, etc. making it difficult to maintain existing visitor infrastructure and justify the need for additional facilities.
- The number of land tenures and agreements within many World Heritage Areas adds additional layers of bureaucracy.
- Some World Heritage Areas cross state boundaries, adding further coordination considerations across management agencies.

Figure 3

### Challenges to Communicating the World Heritage Brand in Australia

Australian World Heritage management agencies are confronted by a unique combination of constraints and challenges when trying to transmit the World Heritage brand to its constituencies. These are outlined in Figure 3. Identifying the impediments in communicating the World Heritage brand is an initial step towards addressing some of these issues (King, 2011).

### Branding Strategies for Appreciation and Commitment to the World Heritage Concept

With the challenges listed above in mind, there are two useful strategies management agencies can employ to help build positive brand equity for the World Heritage concept and for specific World Heritage Areas.

#### 1. Develop a World Heritage visual identity guide

To build brand knowledge about the nature of the site, visitors must first be aware the site is a World Heritage Area. Thus, the World Heritage brand should be displayed prominently, consistently and repeatedly for the visitor to 'see' and become familiar with (King, 2010).

A strategy to ensure an integrated presentation of the World Heritage brand across all media and communications is to develop and adhere to a visual identity guide (King et al., 2012). A visual identity guide

- Low visitor numbers at some World Heritage Areas allow cash-strapped agencies to justify channeling funds elsewhere.
- Changes in Federal and state governments lead to changes in agency priorities that affect transmission of World Heritage to the public.
- Working with the agencies that control road sign installation and/or modification can be a long-term time consuming task; thus hampering World Heritage branding efforts.
- A lack of agency personnel trained in marketing and branding has led to ineffective branding exercises, missed opportunities and uneven presentation and communication of the World Heritage brand to the public.
- The lack of emphasis placed by tourism marketers and management agencies in conveying effective World Heritage messages has created, in some instances, weak linkages between the public and the specific World Heritage site name.
- The lack of up-to-date visitor data leads to best guesses by management agencies when developing long term communication plans.



(also known as a style guide or a brand standards guide) details how brand elements will be presented in all situations – from business cards to websites, interpretive panels, road signs and brochures.

## 2. Implement a World Heritage brand plan

The concept of World Heritage as well as the Outstanding Universal Value of the specific site should be expressed in terms that emotionally connect with the visitor and promote positive brand equity. Developing and implementing a brand plan is one strategy to achieve this goal. The brand plan details which World Heritage brand messages will be communicated, how they will be communicated and where they will be delivered to the public. It can stand alone or be part of larger communication or interpretive plan. Such brand plans should include how to best:

- **convey the World Heritage story.** Communicate the story which led to the development of the World Heritage concept and ratification of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention. Sharing this story helps visitors understand and appreciate the motivation behind the establishment of the World Heritage brand.
- **share why the site is World Heritage.** Tell the story of the Outstanding Universal Value and its components for which the site was inscribed and the

reasons a person should care that it is protected. Emphasize that World Heritage is the highest honour a protected area can receive as this appears to be a factor in building appreciation for the broader World Heritage concept (King, 2011). If the site has a World Heritage name that is different from the specific location or park name (for example, Lamington National Park is part of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia) explain why the site has two names.

- **relate major controversies over a site's inscription.** Often the history of a particular site's World Heritage inscription involves some degree of controversy. These issues are usually of interest to a visitor, but are rarely presented on-site. Relating these issues adds richness to the concept and can further build an emotional connection in the mind of a visitor between the conservation of the site and its World Heritage status.
- **present on-site experiences from the perspective of inscription criteria.** Develop or reorient public communications such as signage and visitor experiences to relate to the relevant world heritage criteria relevant to the site. For example, interpretive signage could point out to the visitor that he/she is about to embark on a track that highlights the exceptional natural beauty of this particular World Heritage Area. Indicate that its 'exceptional natural beauty' on a global scale is one of the reasons that

Understanding World Heritage values can come from wonderful experiences like watching the sunset over the floodplains of Kakadu from Ubirr Rock.  
Photo © Sally Greenaway, Commonwealth of Australia



this place was designated as World Heritage. In other words, design visitor experiences that reinforce the reasons the site was declared World Heritage and communicate that knowledge to the visitor to help build positive brand equity.

These approaches are also consistent with the goals of the National Landscapes Initiative of Parks Australia and Tourism Australia to enrich the tourism experiences in Australia's outstanding natural areas – many of which are in whole or in part World Heritage Areas (see Chapter by Schofield).

## Conclusion

World Heritage is an internationally renowned brand signalling a property with irreplaceable resources and values to all humankind. Presentation of the World Heritage brand inside many Australian sites could be considerably improved. Management agencies that develop a World Heritage visual identity guide and brand plan ensure that they are effectively communicating the brand and its values to maximize

visitor appreciation and commitment to the concept of World Heritage.

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View south along escarpment from The Pinnacle Lookout, Border Ranges National Park to Nightcap National Park. Photo © Paul Candlin, Commonwealth of Australia





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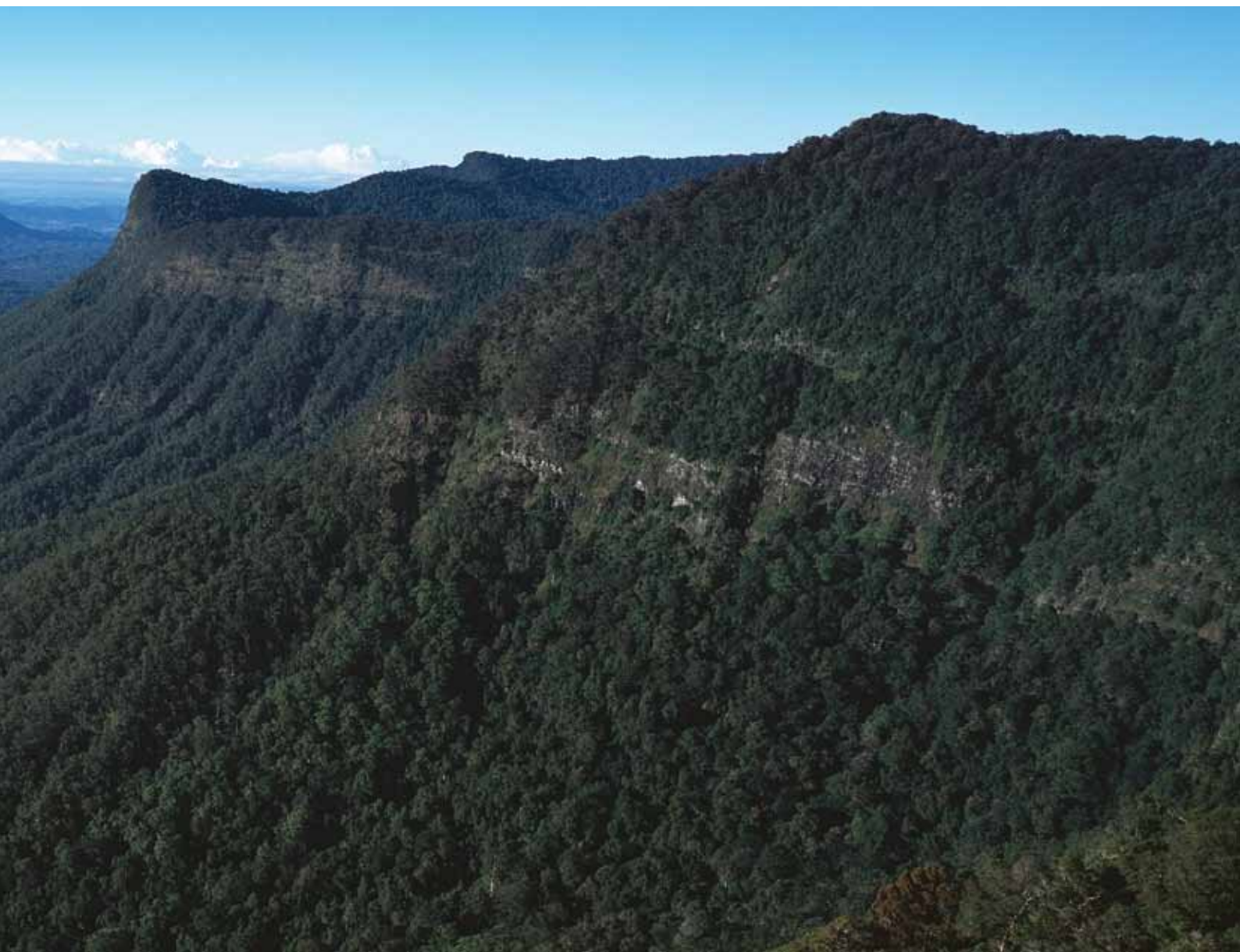
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# Australia's World Heritage nominations – What are our missing icons and what can be done to resume progress?

Dr. Geoff Mosley AM

*The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 1972 and the first places were placed in the World Heritage List (List) in 1978. Decisions on World Heritage nominations are made by the World Heritage Committee (Committee) with advice from organisations which include the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

Article 11.1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention requires each State Party “in so far as is possible, to submit to the World Heritage Committee an inventory of property forming the cultural and natural; heritage situated in its territory and suitable for inclusion in the list provided for in paragraph 2 of this article” (UNESCO, 1972).

The Australia government did produce such a list in the 1990s, but as the paper explains this has fallen into virtual disuse.

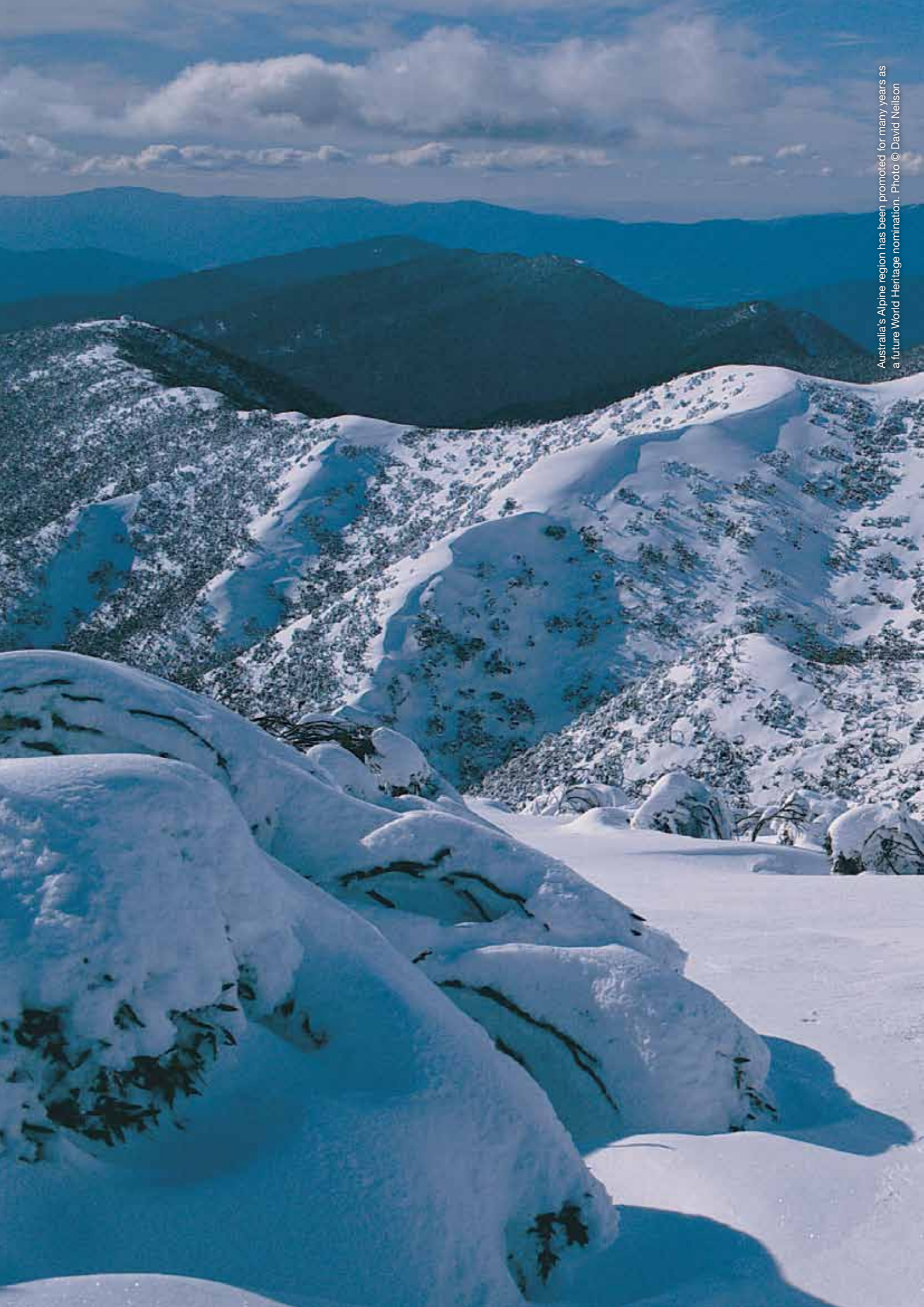
Since 1974 the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), Australia's major national conservation organisation, has had a highly significant role in promoting World Heritage, being a key supporter of most major nominations. During these decades ACF has maintained a list of areas which it believes are deserving of World Heritage nomination for their Outstanding Universal Value (Hutton, 1981). In addition in 1988 the ACF co published a major book on both existing and potential World Heritage Areas (Figgis and Mosley, 1988). In drawing up and adding to its list ACF has consulted widely with other Australian conservation organisations

## **The Decline in Australia's World Heritage Nominations**

Australia has a strong record of identifying and nominating places for the World Heritage List and now has 19 listed places. The responsibility for making nominations lies with the Australian Government which is advised by the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) on which the States and Territories are represented.

Over the last few years the process of selecting Australian areas for World Heritage nomination has





slowed and now almost halted. This includes the nomination of areas for placement on Australia's Tentative List, a necessary requirement before a nomination is considered by the Committee for listing - see Appendix A.

Australia is a large country globally recognised for its outstanding biodiversity, landscapes and culture. As indicated by the ACF list there are many opportunities for additions to the List to more fully represent the values of the Australian continent, islands and territories.

My main aims are to introduce you to the ACF 'World Heritage Waiting List', to discuss the present situation and especially why the process has slowed, and to suggest a remedy. Tables 1-3 in Appendix A refer to areas placed on the ACF list from 1974 onwards and to inclusion on an Australian Indicative List developed by the federal government between 1991 and 1995. It also refers to an inventory prepared by the IUCN in 1982 which highlighted outstanding natural areas and indicated selection criteria likely to be met (IUCN, 1982).

Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix A trace the lineage of 11 sites on the ACF list, none of which are on Australia's formal Tentative List. The tables reveal that many key heritage sites including Cape York Peninsula, the Eastern Arid Zone, South Western Australia, the Nullarbor, Antarctica and the Alps and Forests have not been nominated for World Heritage listing and are not on Australia's current Tentative List in spite of the fact that in the majority of cases proposals for their listing date back to the 1970s.

Table 2 includes three sites - the Kimberley, the Western Arid Zone and the Tasmanian Wilderness - in which some parts have been included on the List, but where there are major areas within these regions that have been proposed for nomination in the ACF list but whose extensions are also not on Australia's Tentative List.

This does not include the possibility of minor extensions of the existing World Heritage Areas in Table 2, which can be nominated without having to go through the preliminary process of inclusion on the country's Tentative List. In the case of Arnhem Land and the Great Barrier Reef there are also extensions which have been proposed that are not under consideration by government for nomination). There is also the possibility of a major extension to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and of course there are other areas, including some with cultural values, which may well be proposed in the future.

Today Australia's formal Tentative List comprises extensions to just two sites - the Gondwana Rainforests

and the Great Sandy Region, both added in 2010 (Table 3). The official advice is that these are the only sites agreed to be forwarded to the World Heritage Committee for listing over the next ten years.

Appendix B. discusses the international procedures and the role of tentative lists. It is worth noting that, in contrast, both the United Kingdom and the USA have 13 sites on their respective Tentative Lists.

### Why the slow down?

I think it is fair to conclude from these facts that the Australian World Heritage nomination process is at close to a stand still. There are a number of explanations for this situation but they have nothing to do with the actual quality of heritage values of the areas on the ACF waiting list.

In fact in the case of Antarctica the complete absence of any World Heritage site on the fifth largest continent with its exceptional Outstanding Universal Value is an embarrassing gap in the global World Heritage system and with a claim to 42% of the continent Australia has the clear potential to be a leader in filling it.

The size of some of ACF's proposals is another possible inhibiting factor in the case of Cape York Peninsula, the Kimberley and the Western and Eastern Arid Zone candidates but this did not prove to be an overwhelming obstacle for the Great Barrier Reef nomination. In Tasmania the main factors holding up a major extension, including the proposed Tarkine addition, appear to be forestry and mining interests. In the case of the Eastern Arid Zone, the Western Arid Zone, the Nullarbor and the Alps and South East Forests the fact that these proposals are located in two or more States and Territories, has proved to be an obstacle. The provisions made for on-going evaluation of World Heritage values in the Regional Forest Agreements of the late 1990s have had little positive impact.

It is worth noting that according to the then Environment Minister John Faulkner (letter to author of 6th June, 1995) it was a lack of cooperation by some of the States that led to the abandonment of Australia's Indicative List in 1995 before it had been submitted to the Committee. Under the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment of 1992 the Commonwealth now consults the States and Territories before proceeding with a nomination.

Finally, the whole process has been slowed by the fact that under the Heritage Protocol of April 2004 adopted by all the States, Territories and the Commonwealth it was agreed that "as a general principle" future





The world's great wilderness of Antarctica is undoubtedly of outstanding universal value – will it get this ultimate recognition? Photo © David Neilson

Australian World Heritage nominations are drawn from the National Heritage List. Unfortunately under resourcing of the responsible federal department means that heritage assessments of such nominations can take up to ten years. The values are there but they have to be verified. In the meantime their absence from both our National list and a World Heritage Tentative List exposes them to devastating developments such as those currently threatening the Kimberley, Cape York Peninsula and the Tarkine.

### The way forward

The main remedy is for the Commonwealth, the States and Territories to give World Heritage nomination a much higher priority. The Commonwealth as the leader needs to put more work into providing resources and achieving cooperation and there needs to be a parallel improvement in the work of the EPHC. All of the sites I have mentioned in the Tables deserve to be placed on Australia's Tentative World Heritage List within the next few years. This would give Australia a credible Tentative List by increasing it from two to 13, the same number as the current lists of the UK and the USA. These are the defining landscapes of our nation and we have pledged to pass them on to future generations with their qualities intact.

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### Biography

Dr. Geoff Mosley AM has been involved with assessing and preparing World Heritage nominations since 1974 in his capacity as the ACF CEO (1973-1986), ACF Councillor (1987), IUCN Regional Councillor (1981-1988), Member of IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (1979 - ) and heritage consultant (1986- ).

## Appendix A. The Waiting List

### - The Lineage of Areas Proposed For World Heritage Nomination for Several Decades

Property	Proposal History
Cape York Peninsula	Proposed by ACF in March 1977; IUCN Indicative Inventory 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991; recommended by EPHC for consideration for Australia's Tentative List in June, 2007.
Eastern Arid Zone (Including Channel Country, Simpson Desert and Lake Eyre)	Proposed by ACF March, 1977 as 'The Channel Country – Lake Eyre (encompassing Simpson Desert)'; IUCN Indicative Inventory, 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991.
The South West Of Western Australia	Proposed by ACF in March, 1977 as 'The West Australian Wildflower Region' (in 1981 name changed to 'Forest and Wildflower Regions of WA'); IUCN Indicative Inventory 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991.
Antarctica	Proposed by ACF March, 1977; Australian Antarctic Territory included on IUCN Indicative Inventory 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991.
Alps And Eucalypt Forests Of South East Australia: Australian Alps and East Gippsland National Parks	Proposed by ACF in 1987, proposal extended to include National Parks in South Eastern New South Wales in December 199; Australian Indicative List 1992; name changed to 'Alps and Eucalypt Forests of South East Australia' in 1996; Alps recommended by EPHC for consideration for Australia's Tentative List in June, 2007.
Nullarbor	Proposed by ACF in 1989; Australian Indicative List 1991.

Table 1. Properties that have been proposed by various bodies as identified, but are not World Heritage listed and not on Australia's Tentative World Heritage List as at July, 2012.

Property	Proposal History
The Kimberley	Proposed by ACF in 1977, initially as 'Prince Regent River and Kimberley Region', name changed in 1981 to 'The Kimberleys'; IUCN Indicative Inventory 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991; Purnululu National Park inscribed 2003; ACF boundary extension review (to include Dampier Peninsula) commenced 2011.
Western Arid Zone	Proposed by ACF as 'Ayers Rock and Arid Zone' in 1977; Uluru National Park on IUCN Indicative Inventory 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991; West Macdonnell National Park recommended by EPHC for inclusion on Australia's Tentative List in May, 2009; Uluru/Kata Tjuta inscribed 1987 and 1994 (additional values).
Arnhem Land	Proposed by ACF in August 1974 as 'Western Arnhem Land'; in 1977 proposal extended to 'Arnhem Land' (in 1981 defined as including Cobourg Peninsula, Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve and Murganella Wildlife Sanctuary); Kakadu National Park on IUCN Indicative Inventory 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991; Kakadu National Park inscribed 1981, extended 1987 and 1992.
Tasmanian Wilderness	'South West Tasmania' proposed by ACF in August, 1974, 'The Central Highlands - Tasmania' separately proposed in March, 1977, Tarkine separately proposed in 1989 and in 2010 included as part of 800, 000 hectare proposed extension to Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area; South West Tasmania on IUCN Indicative Inventory 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991; Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area inscribed in 1982 (including areas in South West Tasmania, Central Highlands and Central Plateau), extended 1989.
The Great Barrier Reef	Proposed by ACF in 1974; IUCN Indicative Inventory 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991; all except northern section inscribed in 1981.

Table 2. Part listed but with proposed extensions - not on Australia's Tentative List as at July, 2012.



Property	Proposal History
Gondwana Rainforests of Australia	Proposed by ACF in 1984; Australian Indicative List 1991; inscribed in 1986 as 'Australian East Coast and Temperate and Subtropical Rainforest Parks', extended 1994 and renamed 'Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia', in 2007 further renamed as 'Gondwana Rainforests of Australia'; recommended by EPHC for extension in May, 2009; added to Australia's Tentative List for extension in May, 2010.; 2012 proposal to add eucalypt forests to extension.
Great Sandy Region	Fraser Island proposed by ACF in May, 1974 and proposal extended to 'Great Sandy Region' (including Cooloola) in March 1977; IUCN Indicative Inventory 1982; Australian Indicative List 1991; Fraser Island inscribed 1992 (21% of the original nomination); Cooloola extension recommended by EPHC for consideration for Australia's Tentative List in May, 2009; added to Australia's Tentative List for extension in January, 2010.

Table 3. Part listed - extension proposed and on Australia's Tentative List at July 2012

## Appendix B. International Procedures and the Role of Tentative Lists

- Article 11.1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention requires each State Party "in so far as is possible, to submit to the World Heritage Committee an inventory of property forming the cultural and natural; heritage situated in its territory and suitable for inclusion in the list provided for in paragraph 2 of this article".
- The submission of "tentative lists" was first recommended by the World Heritage Committee in 1980. Submission of "Tentative Lists", "preferably" at least one year before any World Heritage nomination is considered, became mandatory for future cultural property nominations in 1988 and for natural property nominations in 2000 (Paragraphs 63 and 65 of the Operational Guidelines). State Parties are "encouraged to re-examine and re-submit their Tentative List" at least every ten years" Paragraph 65 of (Operational Guidelines). In 2011 "preferably" was removed and after 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2013 sites must have been on a the Tentative List of a State Party for at least a year before a World Heritage nomination can be submitted.
- A limit on the overall number of World Heritage List nominations to be examined annually by the World Heritage Committee was instituted in 2000 on an experimental basis. Initially this was 30 but in 2004 it was increased to 45. In 2007 a new priority system was set to apply where the overall annual limit of 45 nominations was exceeded.
- An annual limit on the number of nominations from State Parties was also introduced at this time. Initially, the limit for State Parties with sites already listed was 1 nomination per year but in 2004 this was increased to 2 per year provided one of them concerned a natural property (the aim being to try and correct the imbalance between cultural and natural properties). In 2007 the requirement for one nomination to be of a natural property was discontinued for 4 years (from 2008) with the State Party permitted to decide "as per its national priorities, its history and geography". The current version applying from 2011 is that one of the two nominations should concern "a natural property or a cultural landscape" (Paragraph 61 a) Operational Guidelines). The impact of this is to be reviewed by the World Heritage Committee in 2015.

# Voice of the future: What does World Heritage mean to a young Australian?

Jessey Reid

My name is Jessey Reid, I am 10 years old and live in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales, Australia. I acknowledge and pay my respects to the Elders past and present of this place and as the first peoples of Australia.

I'm going to talk to you about what World Heritage means to a young Australian.

A World Heritage area means a SPECIAL PLACE to me. Just think of your special place. How would you feel if it was destroyed?

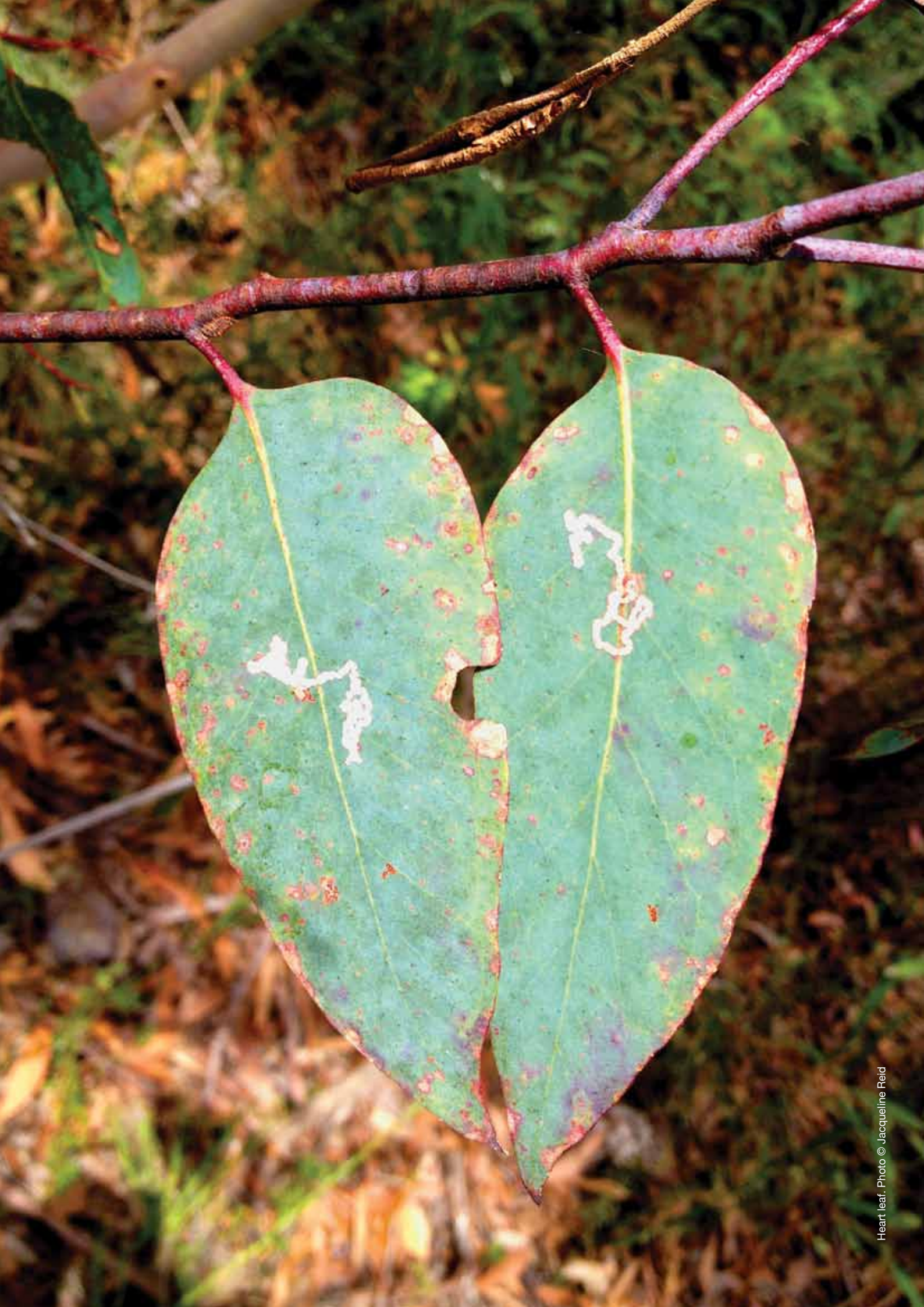
Basically, World Heritage places are special places that belong to us and that we need to protect so we can share with our kids about what they mean to us and our families.

My mum, Jacqueline, has enjoyed the bush since she was a baby and shares that love and appreciation with me. She is the Executive Officer for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and does lots of work with children and grown ups about national parks and World Heritage. I am a trainee Ranger and trainee Executive Officer and help Mum with her work when I can. I help to tell the story of World Heritage in the Blue Mountains and beyond.

We celebrated the Greater Blue Mountains 10<sup>th</sup> birthday as a World Heritage area in 2010. Hundreds of people were invited to 'make a wish for World Heritage'. My wish was that "no-one would litter in the national parks".

A number of community activities were held under the theme *Put Yourself in this World Heritage Picture*. Activities celebrating "our future, our heritage, our place", aimed to raise community awareness of what it means to be part of a World Heritage Area – the story of and the relationship between people and place. This included raising the profile of the World Heritage emblem and enhancing recognition of the global Patrimonito program (youth heritage guardians). Lots of children came to the celebration and we were awarded by the Governor of NSW as World Heritage Youth Guardian, after making our 'patrimonito pledge'. We all made a human picture of the World Heritage emblem.









Passing on a love of the natural world and all its cultural meanings will be crucial to the future of World Heritage. Photo © OEH.

I get to visit lots of amazing places and go on bushwalks with my family and friends. We visited Fairy Dell in the school holidays and saw the most amazing toadstool – it was purple. It's great to visit other World Heritage places. I've been to the Wet Tropics, Gondwana Rainforests, Willandra Lakes, Sydney Opera House and parts of the Convict sites – one day I would love to visit Paris!

We help to host amazing Living Country Culture Camps every year with the 6 Aboriginal language groups that have connection to the Country of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families come along to learn and share stories and experiences. We enjoy camping, traditional workshops, performances and presentations and we learn traditional dance, song, stories, tool making, bush tucker and medicines, artefact identification and much more.

My school was the first to be involved in the Bush Trackers project where we enjoyed a local bush walk with National Parks Discovery Rangers and our photos, poems, pictures and stories are going to help create a bushwalking guide for other kids. I think this is a great project which is helping some of my friends enjoy the bush, to visit safely and have fun! I'm lucky my mum works at National Parks.

I don't really want to be successful when I grow up because as David Orr (2005) says, "the planet does not need more 'successful' people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every shape and form. It needs people who live well in their places. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane. And these needs have little to do with success as our culture has defined it."

Thank you for listening and helping to look after our World Heritage - it belongs to us all.





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## Links

[www.livingcountry.com.au](http://www.livingcountry.com.au)

[www.bushtrackers.com.au](http://www.bushtrackers.com.au)

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## Biography

Jessey Reid and her mum Jacqueline Reid were born and raised in the Blue Mountains of Australia. Ten year old Jessey enjoys being part of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife 'team' that delivers ecological and World Heritage messages at a range of events across the Blue Mountains and beyond.

Jessey enjoys looking after her pets (2 dogs, 2 cats, 10 chickens and 5 fish), cooking, bushwalking, playing with friends, her iphone and practising her flute.

# The future of World Heritage in Australia

Associate Professor Peter Valentine

Australia was one of the first countries to participate in the World Heritage Convention (Convention) concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage. Amongst the conservation community there is a certain pride about our relatively large number of natural sites and our imagined leadership in mixed sites. There is also pride in the fact that our national government has employed constitutional law to protect some of our World Heritage sites from damaging activities proposed by particular Australian States. But are we really as excellent a global citizen as we may believe? In this brief presentation I review areas where we may have fallen short and suggest where effort and energy may direct our future World Heritage activities.

## Early Words of Wisdom

Let's remind ourselves about the core focus of the Convention. Taken from the preamble of the convention text:

- *Noting* that the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction,
- *Considering* that deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world,
- *Considering* that parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole...
- *Considering* that it is essential for this purpose to adopt ... an effective system of collective protection of the natural and cultural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods.

The threats identified in the Convention text seem remarkably modern and even more so today, although one new threat, climate change, is now much clearer. The Convention has its absolute focus on protection but how does it propose to achieve such collective protection? The Operational Guidelines (UNESCO, 2012), in conjunction with the Convention text, help clarify what is required. We can see these as the six "c" words for protection. The dominant message is "cooperation" but to this we can add "credibility" which is the science foundation; "conservation" which is the management needed; "capacity" which needs





investment and exchange; “communities” which are the foundation of values and the means of support; and finally “communication” whereby we can collectively better understand the global treasures on the list and work together for their protection.

Of course a final activity that emerges from the World Heritage Convention is an opportunity to celebrate the marvels of nature and culture across the planet. Although I come principally from a natural heritage background, and this presentation draws mainly on that arena, I join with all my fellow global citizens in the celebration of outstanding cultural heritage of every kind. In the context of Australian World Heritage I am very attracted to the idea expressed by Dr Ro Hill (see Hill chapter) as “biocultural diversity” and in line with the work of Fowler (2003) regret the rather limited use of “cultural landscapes” in the World Heritage processes.

### A Change of Consciousness

Initially some early thinking around World Heritage gave a strong focus to the celebratory context. For example Dr Jim Thorsell, the long time chief advisor on World Heritage for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), would often refer to natural listing as “the Nobel Prize for nature”. This also recognised the outstanding quality a site required to be considered for World Heritage, addressing the credibility issue and the scientific foundation. Others referred to a “badge of merit” and it was clear that many global sites were only acknowledged through the plaque on the wall of the manager’s office.

However, over time the emphasis shifted back to protection, especially given the rising number and intensity of threats to inscribed sites and potential sites. In 1995 the Wet Tropics Management Authority convened the first regional workshop for World Heritage Managers in South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the West Pacific, held in Ravenshoe within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. As part of the discussions there was a clear recognition that World Heritage meant much more than a badge of merit and the language was more consistent with accepting international obligations and supporting better management and cooperation. At the time it was proposed in the Ravenshoe Communique that a future workshop might consider Indigenous involvement in management of World Heritage, an issue that remains poorly addressed across the region today (World Heritage Committee, 1996)

This shift in consciousness has not been completely accomplished and we strive to find the right balance between celebration and conservation. One of the

landmark developments in Australia has been the strengthened legal capacity for protection, building particularly on the constitutional requirements. The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* was a significant leading edge in strong World Heritage protection. It is perhaps not surprising given that some of our early iconic sites were identified at least as much by the threats to their existence as to any existing protected area status. For example who can forget the tensions over oil exploration and mining of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) that inspired the community to support its protection against large and powerful vested interests. Of course inspirational and brave politicians were needed but they stood on the shoulders of hundreds of extraordinary citizens. A similar political and legal battle was ‘midwife’ to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The history of World Heritage in Australia will be written about communities, especially the environmental NGOs, ahead of politicians or bureaucrats.

One often overlooked aspect of the World Heritage Convention is its emphasis on the protection of all cultural and natural heritage, not just that which the Committee considers has outstanding universal value (Lucas et al., 1995). At that time Australia had an excellent framework for the recognition of natural and cultural heritage across the nation in the form of the Register of the National Estate, a product of the Australian Heritage Commission. Its principal shortfall was a missing capacity to protect the heritage identified. Section 30 of the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 (repealed)* required Commonwealth Ministers and their departments to avoid any action that could damage heritage places unless there were no ‘prudent and feasible alternatives’. This section did not apply to other levels of government or to private citizens.

The national legal reform, which saw the introduction of the EPBC Act, also abolished the Australian Heritage Commission and in its place established the Australian Heritage Council with powers to identify National Heritage. Heritage that did not meet the national threshold was passed off to the states and local governments, in the view of many a sad moment of abrogation. The *Australian Heritage Commission Act of 1975* was a landmark piece of legislation which established the Australian Heritage Commission (and which was broadly directed at identifying heritage as a critical part of our national life). The EPBC Act was equally forward-looking in ensuring that the Federal Government had capacity to protect those national and



international heritage elements over any threats from individuals, organisations or the individual states. The powers gained have been employed many times to protect World Heritage in Australia. The in-principle decision of Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2012 to devolve some of these hard-won legal powers to the States is a matter of concern to many.

There is one area of significant change that has been reinforced by the recent UNESCO Mission to examine threats to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. As the Mission Report documents and the World Heritage Committee reinforces, our management should be much better focused on the condition of “Outstanding Universal Value” (OUV). This reminds us that for World Heritage sites we need to meet our obligations under the Convention to protect, conserve, present, rehabilitate and transmit. An example of how this is happening includes the framework of the Wet Tropics Board Agenda, which is formally structured around these key responsibilities.

Another recent cutting edge development is the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority initiative in developing an Outlook Report (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, 1999) and the current process to develop a Strategic Assessment of the GBR to help identify and respond to existing and future threats to outstanding universal value. A third industry initiative is the attempt to bring together multiple stakeholders to prepare a cumulative impact assessment for the expansion of the Abbot Point coal-loading facility. Again, this approach draws strongly on the concept of OUV as a driver. A critical missing dimension is the somewhat ironic juxtaposition of a facility built to increase hugely coal exports which are destined for future power generation and therefore contributing directly to climate change and the fact that the greatest threat to the GBR is global climate change. If we were to take the international cooperation component of the World Heritage Convention seriously we might, for example, see China and Australia work together to reduce climate change contributions and thereby lessen the threat. At its most primitive this might mean offsets for all the Abbot Point coal burnt in China. Such offsets could be very well used addressing ecological and integrity concerns within Australia; (for example rehabilitating damaged catchment areas that contribute to reduced resilience of the GBR). This is what I would call “business unusual” and it would raise the bar significantly.

### **The Missing Australian Tentative List**

One very obvious failure of Australia in meeting its World Heritage obligations is reluctance with regard to

providing the World Heritage Committee with a Tentative List (see Mosley chapter). The Tentative List is not just some bureaucratic device, it is a “useful and important planning tool” required by the World Heritage Committee to allow States Parties and the Committee itself to undertake the necessary evaluation processes (Operational Guidelines). The advisory bodies, including IUCN, undertake analysis of these tentative lists so as to anticipate potential sites within themes or biogeographic regions. Most State Parties conform to the Committee requirements, but not Australia. China, for example, has 50 places on its Tentative List; India has 34. Australia at best meets the letter of the law (that is, taking a nomination from a site on the Tentative List at least 12 months before nomination as required by the World Heritage Committee) although even that appears to be treated as optional given the decision to prepare a nomination for Cape York Peninsula without it being on the Tentative List.

We could learn a great deal from the Indian approach where workshops are held, under the auspices of their national Advisory Committee on World Heritage Matters, to strategically develop their Tentative List. A series of six regional workshops will lead to a clearer analysis of what is needed and will become the basis of the 2012 Indian Tentative List. The approach is deliberately adopting a scientific and rigorous framework to increase credibility in the Tentative List. In Australia a similar approach has been used by the Australian Heritage Council in developing thematic studies of heritage (for example looking at Rocky Coasts, at Tropical Wetlands and there is a proposal for a Deserts study), which can then inform the development of nominations for the National Heritage List. Why not adopt such an approach for potential World Heritage?

Even the discussion of potential World Heritage is fraught with difficulty in Australia, perhaps partly because we have too often let conflict, rather than celebration, drive our World Heritage discussions. World Heritage can become an easy negative political target for those so-inclined. I recall comments about the United Nations troops being on standby to come and take our forests away in the Wet Tropics, one group claiming that we had mortgaged our rainforests to cover our international debts. These fanciful and unsubstantiated claims can find traction in communities unfamiliar with the nature and processes of World Heritage, a situation exacerbated by our failure to give World Heritage a meaning in the life of the community. The current situation with regard to Cape York Peninsula is a good example of some groups exploiting the World Heritage ignorance (our failing) to gain



The remarkable Gwion Gwion rock art of the Mitchell Falls in the cultural and naturally remarkable Kimberley Region of Western Australia.  
Photo © Peter Valentine

credibility for their own political or economic ends. The best counter for this is to have a national context of conversations about World Heritage long before any particular place is nominated; hence the need for an early and credible Tentative List.

In the absence of an official Tentative List, many people and groups have identified possible sites for nomination by Australia. Some suggestions have considerable antiquity, others are new. There are over 200 natural or mixed sites already on the World Heritage List including 16 such sites in Australia. A starting point for many is the 1982 IUCN publication that identified many possible natural heritage sites around the world. For Australia there were 13 sites identified in the 'Australian Realm' plus another 3 in the 'Antarctic Realm'. Of these 16 sites most are now listed, the exceptions being Cape York Peninsula; Western Australia's Southwest Floral Region; The Kimberley (but Purnululu is listed, but nothing in the western Kimberley yet); The Channel Country and Australian Antarctic Territory. Our proper Tentative List could at least begin with these outstanding natural sites. Others have also been proposed subsequently.

### Proposed Australian Tentative List

- Cape York Peninsula (mixed site or cultural landscape)
- Southwest Floral Region Western Australia
- Lake Eyre Basin (the Channel country part of it)
- Kimberley Region (terrestrial and coastal with islands)
- Australian Antarctic Territory (assuming tenure issues resolved)
- Australian Desert Diversity (awaiting thematic analysis)
- Coral Sea
- Extensions to the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites
- Extensions to the Home of the Eucalypts theme (including re-nomination of the Greater Blue Mountains)
- Cultural Sites: many awaiting identification but including Burrup Peninsula

It still seems unclear whether we in Australia should at least have places on the National Heritage List before we consider their nomination for World Heritage. It makes sense and provides an immediate level of protection just as great as World Heritage listing. The processes of National Heritage listing involve extensive consultation and properly completed could provide an excellent platform for a World Heritage nomination. In developing a recommendation for National Heritage listing, the Australian Heritage



Council, with support from Commonwealth departmental staff in the Heritage Division, undertake comprehensive scientific analysis and comparison within Australia and engage in extensive consultations with community and landowners. However, these processes are time consuming and have led to a bottle-neck in recent times especially given the challenges of very large sites like the Kimberley. Unfortunately, budget constraints in the last three years have seen a significant reduction in staff within the Heritage Branch and that further limits capacity to grow the National Heritage List.

## Conclusion and Final Comment

While there are many reasons to celebrate achievements around World Heritage in Australia, there is an enormous backlog of work to be done with very limited current commitment. The future will require a better investment and a stronger commitment to meet our international obligations. Several projects have been set out above. Apart from the Tentative List (which could be an excellent process if examined creatively) and developing links with National Heritage List processes, the entire question of management remains weakly addressed at the Federal level. The fact that resources for management are not always consistently sourced; (with some sites resourced using Federal funds, others with limited State funds and yet others with mainly State funds) raises questions about the basis of our management arrangements. Discussions at COAG in 2012 about devolving current Commonwealth responsibilities to State Governments also raise questions about the security of World Heritage sites when their protection may be left to the very State Government whose agenda most threatens the sites. The public may treat such arrangements with some degree of skepticism.

There are many significant questions that have not been addressed. These include whether World Heritage listing has made any difference to management. For example, do our World Heritage sites demonstrate world's best practice in protected area management? What additional management actions reflect the World Heritage status of our sites? Is interpretation and community engagement better in World Heritage sites than in other protected areas? Are our conservation outcomes successful?

New issues that threaten World Heritage in Australia, like climate change and biosecurity failures, add significantly to the list of concerns identified 40 years ago in the Convention. All of these still exist and their cumulative impact on World Heritage has yet to be addressed.

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## Biography

Professor Peter Valentine is an environmental scientist who has worked at James Cook University since 1975 with extensive periods at other Universities and research centres. In 1995 he was a visiting World Heritage Fellow at IUCN headquarters and has worked closely on World Heritage matters ever since. He is a member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (since 1989) and has been Editor of the Best Practice Guidelines since 2006. He has served as Vice-Chair Publications on the international Steering Committee between 2007 and 2012. He has been involved in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area since inception and is currently Chair of the Wet Tropics Management Authority. Peter is also one of two natural heritage experts on the Australian Heritage Council (since 2009) and has been advising both the Queensland State Government and the Commonwealth Government on the prospects for Cape York Peninsula to be listed as World Heritage. He is a member of the National Landscapes Reference Committee and a member of the WWF Eminent Scientists Group. He has a passionate interest in the biogeography and conservation of Australian birds and butterflies.





# Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional: The Future of World Heritage in Australia

THE CAIRNS COMMUNIQUE



# Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional: The Future of World Heritage in Australia

## THE CAIRNS COMMUNIQUE

### WORLD HERITAGE IN AUSTRALIA

Australia has a proud record in the identification and listing of World Heritage under its jurisdiction. It currently boasts 19 natural, mixed or cultural properties on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The first-listed World Heritage property in Australia was the Great Barrier Reef (1981). The most recent listing was Ningaloo Reef in 2011.

Australia's World Heritage properties represent a wide range of the natural and cultural values that Australians and the global community value. Elements of our forest heritage are represented in South West Tasmania, the Wet Tropics of Queensland, Gondwana Rainforests, Fraser Island and the Greater Blue Mountains. Our marine heritage is represented in the Great Barrier Reef, Lord Howe Island, Shark Bay and Ningaloo. Iconic arid landscapes of great beauty are represented by Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Purnululu and our tropical savannahs by Kakadu. Our fossil mammal heritage is recognised at Riversleigh and Naracoorte caves. The ancient occupation of Australia by Aboriginal peoples is demonstrated at Willandra Lakes. Antarctic and sub-Antarctic heritage is represented by the listing of Heard and McDonald Islands and Macquarie Island. Many properties represent outstanding examples of multiple values.

The World Heritage Convention provides for the listing of places with outstanding universal cultural value. The Australian Convict Sites, the Sydney Opera House and Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens are each included on the World Heritage List. Most of Australia's World Heritage Properties are special places for their Traditional Owners, but the Indigenous cultural values of Kakadu, Uluru-Kata Tjuta, Willandra Lakes and South West Tasmania are specifically recognised as a component of the Outstanding Universal Value of these properties.

The summary of values listed above vastly simplifies the global significance of Australia's World Heritage properties. Full details of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of each listed property can be found at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre website: [www.whc.unesco.org](http://www.whc.unesco.org)

### Australia's participation in the World Heritage Convention

The *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (the 'World Heritage Convention') was adopted by the United Nations in 1972. In August 1974, Australia became one of the first 20 countries to ratify the Convention. So far, 188 States Parties have ratified the Convention; making it the most widely recognized international treaty for heritage protection.

2012 marked the 40th anniversary of this unique international treaty that links the concepts of nature conservation and preservation of cultural properties, recognising the way people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

In ratifying the World Heritage Convention, Australia accepted a duty under Article 4, to ensure, 'the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of [its natural and cultural heritage]' and undertook to, 'do all that it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources...'

Under Article 5 of the Convention Australia committed to a number of other specific actions, including: to give its World Heritage properties a function in the life of the community; to establish services for the protection, conservation and presentation of natural and cultural heritage; to develop scientific and technical studies; to take appropriate legal, scientific, technical and financial measures in support of heritage; and to foster the establishment of centres of excellence.

The World Heritage Committee, comprising 21 members elected by States Parties to the Convention, guides implementation of the Convention. In accordance with the Convention, the World Heritage Committee is supported

by advice from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in relation to natural heritage values and by the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (the Rome Centre) in relation to cultural heritage.

The World Heritage Convention is supported by *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* prepared by the World Heritage Centre at the direction of the World Heritage Committee. These guidelines aim to facilitate the implementation of the World Heritage Convention by setting forth procedure such as:

- a) the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger;
- b) the protection and conservation of World Heritage properties;
- c) the granting of International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund; and
- d) the mobilization of national and international support in favour of the Convention.

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation for Australia's World Heritage**

While the Commonwealth is the State Party to the World Heritage Convention, Australia's constitutional arrangements require the involvement and cooperation of the States and Territories in the management of most World Heritage properties. The formal framework for these cooperative arrangements is the *Australian World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement*. This agreement lays out in general terms the respective roles and commitments of the Australian and State and Territory governments in relation to governance, management and funding arrangements and guiding principles in relation to these roles and commitments.

Arrangements for Ministerial liaison are in a state of transition. Many World Heritage properties once supported specific Ministerial Councils to oversee joint commonwealth and state government interests but these were mostly abolished several years ago at the direction of the Council of Australian Governments. The Environment and Heritage Protection Council then adopted a role in World Heritage intergovernmental coordination until it was itself abolished during 2011. Responsibility for World Heritage and implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement now rests with the Standing Council on Environment and Water.

In addition to advice received from their own agencies, Ministers on the Standing Council on Environment and Water are advised by the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee. This committee comprises representatives of each of the Australian World Heritage properties. In most cases, the representative is the chair of the property's advisory committee.

### **World Heritage property governance and management arrangements**

Arrangements for the management of Australia's World Heritage properties are almost as diverse as the properties themselves.

Some World Heritage properties are managed directly by Commonwealth agencies (Heard and McDonald Islands, Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta).

Many natural values properties are managed directly by the states e.g. Fraser Island, Purnululu, Greater Blue Mountains and Tasmanian Wilderness. The serially-listed properties: Gondwana Rainforests, Australian Convict Sites and the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites require coordination between the Australian government and two or more states.

Specific purpose statutory bodies that have explicit responsibility for World Heritage, sometimes in combination with other responsibilities, are in place for the Wet Tropics, Great Barrier Reef and Lord Howe Island group.

The Sydney Opera House and Royal Exhibition Buildings are managed by the Sydney Opera House Trust and Museums Victoria respectively. Two of the places on the Australian Convict Sites are in private ownership.

World Heritage listing is not necessarily linked to a single land tenure. Willandra Lakes, Wet Tropics, Great Barrier Reef and Shark Bay are examples of properties that comprise a mosaic of protected areas and other public land tenures and freehold or leasehold land. This requires coordination between multiple land managers to achieve a consistent management regime for these properties.

Most World Heritage properties have some form of community advisory committee that provides a focus for community engagement and advice and support for property managers. Several also have scientific advisory committees and some have established committees or other arrangements to facilitate the involvement of Traditional



Owners in the management of the property. In some cases, community, scientific and Indigenous interests are represented on a single committee. While the general role and powers of these committees have broad similarities, there are also significant differences between properties and States.

The Australian government funds executive support for many of the advisory committees. For state-managed properties, the relevant state managing agency often hosts and supports the executive officer position for these committees.

### State of Conservation of Australia's World Heritage

The state of Australia's heritage conservation, including its World Heritage, was briefly addressed by the *State of the Environment Report 2011*. This report noted that Australia's most recent World Heritage periodic report submitted to the World Heritage Centre in 2011 was 'generally very positive'. It found however that the three most significant factors affecting the condition and integrity of Australia's World Heritage properties were:

- Invasive and alien species or hyper-abundant species
- Climate change and severe weather events
- Social or cultural impacts on heritage (including changes in traditional ways of life as well as impacts of tourism)

### KEEPING THE OUTSTANDING EXCEPTIONAL – THE ACIUCN WORLD HERITAGE SYMPOSIUM

Prompted by a need identified by its members to sponsor a national dialogue about the future of World Heritage in Australia, the Australian Committee for IUCN (ACIUCN) with support from the Wet Tropics Management Authority and the Australian Conservation Foundation, convened a symposium in Cairns on 9 and 10 August 2012. The symposium formed part of Australia's celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Heritage Convention.

The symposium was organised by a steering committee comprising government and non-government representatives of IUCN and others with knowledge of aspects of World Heritage in Australia. Membership of the committee comprised the following people:

Mr Andrew Maclean, Wet Tropics Management Authority/Chair ACIUCN (chair)  
Mr Peter Cochrane, Director of National Parks  
Mr Jon Day, PSM, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority  
Ms Kate Feros, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities  
Ms Penelope Figgis, AO, Director ACIUCN  
Ms Chrissy Grant, Deputy Chair, Indigenous Advisory Committee  
Dr Jane Harrington, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority/President Australia ICOMOS  
Prof Richard Mackay, AM, Chair, Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee  
Mr Ross Macleod, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Queensland  
Mr Paul Murphy, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities  
Dr Lea Scherl, IUCN Commission on Environmental Economic and Social Policy  
Assoc Professor Peter Valentine, James Cook University  
Ms Ellen Weber, Wet Tropics Management Authority

The objectives of the symposium were:

- To elevate and enhance the significance and profile of natural and mixed World Heritage properties in Australia
- To share experience and learning, and forge new and existing partnerships between properties as a basis for improved future management of World Heritage properties
- To agree on a 'Cairns Communiqué' highlighting emerging priorities and key principles for Australian World Heritage in the future.

A particular focus of the symposium was consideration of the implications of the report of the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN monitoring mission to the Great Barrier Reef, which was presented to the World Heritage Committee meeting in St Petersburg, Russia in July 2012. The report expressed significant concerns regarding the condition of the Reef and made a number of recommendations to improve protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Great Barrier Reef. The World Heritage Committee largely adopted the mission's findings and recommendations. The mission's report and recommendations have important relevance to other Australian World Heritage Properties.

The symposium was attended by around 100 people from throughout Australia. The Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and the Hon Andrew Powell MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection (Qld) each addressed the symposium.

Along with the symposium proceedings, a primary output from the symposium is the following communiqué.

## ABOUT ACIUCN

The Australian Committee for IUCN (ACIUCN) comprises all Australian-based members of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

ACIUCN supports the implementation of the IUCN global program through information sharing between Australian members and where appropriate, representing the collective view of Australian members to the IUCN council and executive.

A key objective of ACIUCN is to support environmental policy development by facilitating dialogue between its university, NGO and government agency members. The '*Science Informing Policy*' seminar series is an important means to achieve this goal.

For further information: [www.aciucn.org.au](http://www.aciucn.org.au)

## THE CAIRNS COMMUNIQUÉ

This communiqué has been prepared as a contribution to development of a contemporary statement of priorities and principles for the management of World Heritage in Australia<sup>1</sup>.

The communiqué follows and acknowledges the *Richmond Communiqué on principles and guidelines for the management of Australia's World Heritage Areas*. The Richmond Communiqué was developed at a national workshop in Richmond NSW also organised by ACIUCN, on 7-9 August 1995.

In the 17 years since the Richmond Communiqué, eight new Australian places have been inscribed on the World Heritage List. Policy, management and reporting arrangements have continued to evolve. In this 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the World Heritage Convention, it is timely to review and refresh our collective commitment to the effective protection and management of these places of outstanding universal value.

The communiqué has been developed in the context of key World Heritage policy documents including the *UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*; the *UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the *World Heritage Convention* itself, Australia's *World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The communiqué is intended to reinforce, complement and guide implementation of, but in no way replace these documents.

The communiqué is intended to influence policy and planning for Australian World Heritage management and to contribute to best practice standards. It does not seek to be a comprehensive guide to World Heritage management but does highlight issues of particular importance.

The articles of the communiqué are structured to generally follow the obligations accepted by Australia under the World Heritage Convention.

The initial draft of this communiqué was developed by the Steering Committee for the symposium on World Heritage held in Cairns on 9/10 August 2012. The draft communiqué was provided to delegates for consideration prior to the symposium and was the subject of a discussion during the symposium. Informed by their own often substantial experience and by presentations at the symposium, delegates provided comment on the draft and authorised its completion by the Steering Committee as representing a consensus view of symposium delegates.

The presence of a delegate at the symposium does not imply endorsement of the communiqué.

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<sup>1</sup> The Cairns Symposium was organised by the Australian Committee for IUCN (ACIUCN) primarily to address World Heritage issues in relation to natural and mixed values. The interests and expertise of symposium participants largely reflected this emphasis. ACIUCN acknowledges that its sister organisation, Australia ICOMOS has a vital interest in World Heritage properties with cultural values, including those Australian properties with mixed natural and Indigenous cultural values.



## ARTICLES

### Preamble

1. Australia's World Heritage properties include many of the most naturally and culturally significant places in Australia, which have been recognised internationally as forming part of the cultural and natural heritage considered to be of outstanding universal value. These properties merit the very highest standards of participatory planning, management and resourcing – not only to discharge our obligations under the World Heritage Convention but to demonstrate our commitment to these places to the people of Australia and the World<sup>2</sup>.
2. The primary goal for the management of World Heritage properties should be to implement Australia's duty for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation, rehabilitation and transmission to future generations of the place within the meaning of the World Heritage Convention
3. Designation of a place as a World Heritage property requires the establishment of a specific management approach that encompasses the distinctive nature and requirements of the property and of its links to communities and stakeholders and also, the mobilisation of adequate resources to implement the approach to management.

### Identification, assessment and nomination of potential World Heritage properties (and amendments to currently inscribed World Heritage properties)

4. The Australian Government in close collaboration with State governments and communities should continue to assess the natural and cultural heritage of Australia which may be of potential outstanding universal value and to prepare nominations (and where appropriate re-nominations) for consideration by the World Heritage Committee.
5. The Australian Government, in collaboration with the States, should expand the tentative list of prospective World Heritage nominations to provide for an orderly process and a focus for expert and community engagement in relation to listing priorities. In developing this list, the Government should engage with Australia ICOMOS and Australian Committee for IUCN as the relevant expert advisory bodies<sup>3</sup>.
6. Noting that, for Traditional Owners, natural and cultural values cannot be separated, in identifying, assessing and developing potential World Heritage nominations, particular care should be taken to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners having regard to Indigenous cultural heritage values and continuing traditional ecological knowledge and practices within Indigenous communities before submitting a nomination<sup>4</sup>.
7. Noting that there is currently a requirement for National Heritage listing prior to nomination or amendment or inscription of a property on the World Heritage 'tentative list', the Australian Government, Australian Heritage Council and others involved should use their best endeavours to ensure that the National Heritage listing process does not unduly delay progression of potential World Heritage nominations.
8. The process of identifying, assessing and nominating places for consideration by the World Heritage Committee should be carried out through a collaborative process that aims to engage fully with governments, scientists, heritage professionals, site managers and Australian communities and stakeholders, with the objective of achieving widespread recognition and support for the outstanding values of the place and support for World Heritage nomination.
9. In its role as a State Party to the World Heritage Convention, Australia should provide leadership in adherence to the agreed procedures of the Convention, including ensuring that appropriate weight is given to the advice of IUCN and ICOMOS as Advisory Bodies under the World Heritage Convention.

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2 In this document, the term 'property' is used in a broad sense and includes specific sites, places and properties. This term is consistent with the language of the World Heritage Convention.

3 A list of places identified in presentations to the symposium as possibly having outstanding universal value is included in Annex A.

4 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is important context for this article.

## Protecting the Outstanding Universal Value<sup>5</sup> of World Heritage Properties

### Legislation

10. The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the 'EPBC Act') provides and should remain the primary statute for managing potential significant adverse impacts on World Heritage values in Australia.
11. Implementation of the EPBC Act in respect of World Heritage properties should be improved through greater use of strategic assessment processes, carried out in collaboration with the States, which address the cumulative impacts of development.
12. State Governments should ensure effective complementary recognition and protection of World Heritage in relevant environmental, heritage and planning legislation.
13. Recognising the very important role that statutory regional planning can play in protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties, governments and communities should support and encourage local government and other statutory entities including Native Title prescribed body corporate, to protect and support World Heritage values through the development and implementation of planning controls and other mechanisms<sup>6</sup>.

### Management planning

14. As a minimum standard, an integrated, values-based plan of management or other documented management system should be prepared for each established World Heritage property that explicitly describes the management systems and programs aimed at ensuring maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. This should include management planning for serial World Heritage Properties wherein effective coordination measures are prescribed for all component sites.
15. Noting that the preparation of a plan of management is desirable at the time of nomination of a property for consideration by the World Heritage Committee, the Commonwealth and States and Territories should work collaboratively to correct any shortcomings in planning systems for previously established properties. Once a system of planning is in place, it should be reviewed regularly, no less frequently than every ten years. Implementation reports should be prepared regularly to meet the needs of both managers and communities.
16. Traditional owners of World Heritage properties should be granted financial or other assistance to provide for their effective participation in planning and management of their traditional lands.
17. The process of developing and implementing management plans or other management arrangements for World Heritage places should be inclusive, adopting international best practice for engaging communities and stakeholders in decision making, noting in particular the objectives of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* objectives relating to the role of Indigenous peoples.

## Conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Properties

18. The values of World Heritage properties in Australia are threatened by numerous pressures including in particular climate change, population pressures, impacts of resource extraction and associated industries, invasive species, pathogens, habitat loss and fragmentation and legacy impacts from historical change. The scale, impact and risk of these pressures vary between properties<sup>7</sup>.
19. The cultural values of Australian World Heritage properties are threatened by lack of resources; insufficient identification understanding and identification; population shift; loss of knowledge; obstacles to the expression of traditional cultural practices and social connections; and the (lawful but inappropriate) incremental destruction of heritage sites.

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5 Outstanding Universal Value is capitalised when it refers to the specific statements attached to World Heritage properties which set out the core value set against criteria for which the site was accepted on the World Heritage List.

6 Local government has a particularly important role in relation to developments outside World Heritage Properties which have potential to cause adverse affects on World Heritage values.

7 The Australian State of the Environment Report 2011 systematically assessed general threats to Australia's natural and cultural heritage.



20. The Australian government, States and Territories and on-site property managers should systematically assess and record the place-specific threats and risks to the long-term conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of each World Heritage property as a basis for planning, resource allocation and monitoring progress. These assessments should include consideration of boundary and off-site threats and risks.
21. Conservation strategies and planning for World Heritage should address wider geographic, policy and legal contextual issues, so as to ensure that appropriate attention is given to threats, risks and opportunities. For natural heritage, addressing bioregional context can ensure that World Heritage plays an important driving role in setting regional conservation priorities. For cultural heritage, the context for World Heritage may be geographic but may also relate to Indigenous tradition or historic themes. Understanding the wider context for both natural and cultural values is therefore an essential element of well-informed conservation strategy development.
22. The Commonwealth and State governments and others with responsibility for World Heritage should ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to guarantee protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties and to respond to any threats to those values.

### **Rehabilitation of World Heritage Properties**

23. The impacts of past land use such as forestry, fishing, infrastructure, mining, agriculture and roads remain evident in many World Heritage properties in Australia, even if these activities are now appropriately regulated. In some cases the relict landscape and historic cultural places have heritage values.
24. World Heritage property managers, with support from the Commonwealth and State governments, should systematically assess the impacts of past uses of World Heritage properties and implement strategies and projects that aim to rehabilitate impacted areas in a manner which addresses all of the values of World Heritage properties.
25. Where past or proposed actions or activities outside of World Heritage properties create significant adverse impacts to the World Heritage values of the properties, World Heritage property managers should work in collaboration with neighbouring landholders, Traditional Owners, natural resource and heritage management bodies and governments to implement landscape rehabilitation programs and consider appropriate mitigation actions that will benefit the World Heritage property.

### **Presentation of World Heritage Values**

26. World Heritage listing is the highest acknowledgement of heritage value accorded to places on earth. This special status should be strongly promoted in the broader Australian community as a source of pride and a sense of shared responsibility.
27. The Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties should have a prominent place in the promotion, interpretation and other presentation activities associated with each property.
28. The Commonwealth in close collaboration with the States and other World Heritage property managers should establish and implement nationally consistent standards for recognition and branding of World Heritage properties.
29. World Heritage property managers with support from relevant governments should develop and implement property-specific information and interpretation services that aim to ensure visitors, communities and stakeholders improve their understanding and appreciation of the values of World Heritage properties as a basis for ongoing support of each property's protection.
30. The tourism industry has an important role to play in presenting the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties through commercial guiding and interpretive services, through advocacy for conservation of World Heritage properties and by contributing to the function of World Heritage in the life of the community. Particular care should be taken to ensure a role for local and Indigenous enterprises in the delivery of tourism services.
31. World Heritage property managers should collaborate closely with the tourism industry to ensure that World Heritage values are protected and conserved and that high standards of environmental performance and high quality information and interpretative services are implemented, commensurate with the global significance of

these places. In achieving this, World Heritage property managers and the tourism industry should collaborate in the development and implementation of schemes of training and accreditation to ensure high standards are achieved.

### Giving World Heritage a Function in the Life of the Community

32. To ensure World Heritage properties are a vibrant and essential part of the life of local communities, World Heritage property managers should establish and implement effective, place-specific systems of engagement with communities and stakeholders to:
  - ensure meaningful input and influence in decision making for the place
  - build collaborations with and among communities in support of the property and its communities
  - facilitate voluntary contribution to planning and management
  - provide opportunities for study and learning
  - maintain community confidence in and support for management programs and the values of the place
33. The rights, needs and aspirations of Traditional Owners of World Heritage properties should be recognised and respected in all aspects of assessment, nomination and management of World Heritage properties. This is relevant whether or not the place is specifically listed for its Indigenous cultural values and whether or not Native Title settlement has been achieved<sup>8</sup>.
34. Systems of engagement with Traditional Owners should be developed having regard to cultural heritage values, continuing cultural knowledge and practices and any diversity of views within Indigenous communities.
35. The Commonwealth and State Governments should establish, and where successful, continue programs and projects to achieve social and economic benefits for Traditional Owners associated with all World Heritage properties whether they have cultural values listed or not, as a contribution to national 'Closing the Gap' goals.
36. Governments should recognise the very significant contribution World Heritage properties make to regional, State and national economies in allocating resources for the management of Properties and in the systems of governance, engagement and presentation and promotion established for the various Properties.
37. While always ensuring protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of each of Australia's World Heritage properties, managers should seek opportunities to increase the economic and social contribution World Heritage properties can make to regional communities through sustainable tourism and recreation, and through programs of research, education and communication.

### Transmission: Research, Monitoring and Reporting

38. In view of the Outstanding Universal Value of Australia's World Heritage properties, Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should facilitate the allocation of sufficient funding for effective management programs and project work. Further, governments should ensure that World Heritage properties receive funding priority in areas such as climate change or invasive species research and the implementation of ethical best practice management principles based on the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
39. World Heritage property managers should actively encourage research within World Heritage properties, as a means of generating knowledge for application in both the place itself and for wider application in environmental and cultural conservation<sup>9</sup>.
40. Systems of monitoring in World Heritage properties, reflecting World's best practice should be established and supported to ensure trends in the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the properties are evident; to provide evidence of the impact of management interventions; to evaluate the wider social and economic benefits of the property; and to provide information to assist project design, ongoing management programs and resource allocation decisions.

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<sup>8</sup> In accordance with the EPBC Act (s.8) WH listing will not affect Native Title claims or negotiations

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO policy encourages the use of World Heritage properties as laboratories for the study of climate change. The logic extends to other disciplines.



41. World Heritage property managers should establish collaborations with universities, CSIRO and other Australian research agencies and initiatives as a means of ensuring programs are built on the best available knowledge and to facilitate sharing of monitoring outcomes.
42. An advisory committee (or some other effective partnership or and communication mechanism, relevant to specific properties) should be established for each World Heritage property with functions including:
  - advising managers of developments in scientific, conservation, social, cultural and economic research relevant to the property
  - advising on the scientific basis of management plans and programs
  - advising on incorporation of traditional knowledge into management plans and programs
  - facilitating and coordinating research programs relevant to the property
  - advising on research and monitoring priorities
  - promoting World Heritage properties as centres of excellence for engagement and working with indigenous communities.
  - assisting with the design and implementation of monitoring programs
43. The Commonwealth, in collaboration with the States, Territories and other World Heritage property managers, should periodically arrange for the preparation and publication of independent reports on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties and on other matters relevant to the World Heritage Convention. These reports should provide information relevant to the periodic reports on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties prepared for the World Heritage Committee by the Commonwealth and property managers.

### Education and Training for World Heritage

44. The Commonwealth, in partnership with the States and others as appropriate should establish a national World Heritage Centre of Excellence with the functions including<sup>10</sup>:
  - celebrating, communicating and interpreting Australia's World Heritage properties
  - providing a focus for research, education and training in relation to World Heritage management and related functions
  - supporting World Heritage management in developing Asian and Pacific Island nations
  - highlighting Australia's commitment to World Heritage to domestic and international audiences
  - recognising and incorporating Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Systems and Indigenous peoples
45. Australian schools and universities, in consultation with World Heritage property managers are encouraged to develop programs of teaching and research in support of World Heritage management to ensure Australia maintains adequate knowledge, skills and capacity in relation to World Heritage. Such programs should focus on actions and activities that practically apply that knowledge, skills and capacity. This will foster stewardship of each World Heritage property within the community which in turn will help protect the values and increase the resilience into the future.
46. Australia's long experience and capacity in relation to World Heritage management provides a basis for knowledge sharing and capacity development projects with World Heritage managers, especially in Asia and the Pacific. The Australian Government, through its environment agencies and AusAid, in collaboration with World Heritage property managers, should actively pursue opportunities to build international capacity for World Heritage management through training, staff exchange, twinning and other arrangements that meet the mutual needs of the partners.

### Governance and Management

47. Recognising that under the Intergovernmental Agreement on World Heritage, the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) fulfils an important role, providing advice on cross-cutting matters relating to World Heritage property conservation and management and Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention the Australian Government should ensure that AWHAC is properly supported, tasked and resourced.

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<sup>10</sup> The Convention calls for State parties to foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation ... and to encourage scientific research in the field.

48. Recognising the importance of ensuring the Traditional Owners of World Heritage properties have a direct and influential voice in national World Heritage policy and management, the Australian Government should ensure that the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN) or some alternative effective arrangement is properly supported, tasked and resourced.
49. The global significance of World Heritage properties demands a property-specific framework for management of each property that ensures an appropriate focus on retaining their outstanding universal value. At a minimum, this should comprise:
- An independently chaired advisory committee drawn as relevant from the regional, stakeholder and Traditional Owner community with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, accountable to the relevant Minister
  - An appropriately senior executive officer with capacity, professional competencies relevant to the property and sufficient authorisation to provide leadership and to build partnerships in relation to the property
  - A place-specific, values-based framework for management of the property documented in legislation and policy or through statutory management plans.
50. The Australian, State and Territory Governments should jointly undertake an early review of the adequacy of resources for World Heritage management that should consider:
- The overall level and security of funding committed to World Heritage
  - Development of nationally-relevant outcome and performance statements to provide a basis for investment decisions and program evaluation
  - Identification of appropriate cost drivers, including property size, levels of visitation, regional economic significance, and the nature of management needs and issues
  - Appropriate mechanisms for joint investment by the Commonwealth and the States, including transparent accounting for in-kind and voluntary contributions
  - Recognition of the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits that accrue from World Heritage listing.



## Annex A: Potential future Australian World Heritage Nominations

Potential Australian Tentative List based on previous proposals including some extensions to existing sites.  
(See Mosley this volume and Valentine this volume).

PLACE	STATE	DESCRIPTION
Cape York Peninsula	QLD	An immense region with a rich cultural heritage; relatively pristine savannah, rainforest, woodland and wetland landscapes with distinctive ecohydrology.
Eastern Arid Zone	SA, NT, QLD, NSW	Channel Country, Simpson Desert, and Lake Eyre with geological, hydrological and geomorphological heritage in its vast plains and channels which fluctuate between extreme aridity and flooding.
Western Arid Zone	NT, SA, WA	This zone includes the beautiful West MacDonnell, Peterman and Musgrave Ranges of Central Australia which are rich in both natural and cultural values.
Kimberley (East and West)	WA	Spectacular coasts and islands, ranges and rivers; enormously significant Aboriginal cultural heritage including extensive exquisite rock paintings.
SW of Western Australia	WA	The region has globally significant plant diversity with many endemic species and associated faunal richness.
Antarctica		Antarctica is the most pristine and spectacular environment on earth with outstanding natural phenomena and intact processes. Includes historic heritage.
Arnhem Land	NT	The vast area of eroded sandstone plateau is a rugged and beautiful landscape with high cultural and ecological values the equal of the Kakadu to its west.
The Nullarbor	WA, SA	The Nullarbor Plain is one of the world's largest limestone landscapes and the largest in an arid area. Its features include marine, coastal and inland processes; spectacular karst, significant geomorphology and coastal landforms and marine species.
Australian Alps forests of SE Aust.	NSW, Vic, ACT	Australia's unique alpine areas are part of the wider Eucalypt story with forest diversity from alpine ash to snowgums. The alps are globally distinctive with extensive endemism of plants and animals. Sea to snow vegetation.
Tasmanian Wilderness	Tas	Forest extensions to the Tasmanian Wilderness WHA including the Tarkine, the largest area of Gondwanan cool-temperate rainforest in Australia, which also holds a high concentration of Aboriginal sites.
Great Barrier Reef	Qld	The remote Torres Strait Island Region is seen as a suitable Northern extension of the GBRMPA to protect its unique and rich ecological and cultural heritage
Coral Sea		The spectacular marine habitat of the Coral Sea could be nominated to cover the Australian extent or possible as a transnational nomination;
Burrup Peninsula	WA	The Burrup Peninsula in the Pilbara region of WA contains the largest concentration of rock art in the world, perhaps a million rock engravings.
Fossil Mammal Sites		Extensions to complete the time series of fossil deposits have been suggested.
The Story of the Eucalypts		Extensions could further develop the Blue Mountains to include other sites as part of the serial exposition of Eucalyptus.
Houtman Abrolhos	WA	The most southerly coral reefs in the Indian Ocean and one of most southerly in the world. They have vast seabird rookeries and a rich history as the resting place of numerous wrecks including the Batavia shipwreck of 1692.
Rowley Shoals	WA	Rowley Shoals is a near perfect example of coral geomorphology in a remote location north west of WA
Sydney Basin	NSW	This site holds high coastal biodiversity and the beginnings of the national parks movement.
Flinders Ranges	SA	This region of dramatic landforms including synclinal Wilpena Pound, is home to millions of ancient fossils believed to be some of the earliest of life forms in its ancient geology. Ediacaran fossils are found only in a handful of places on Earth. It also holds cultural values to its Indigenous people and rich semi-arid flora and fauna