

AUSTRALIA

Uluru Kata Tjuta

II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1987, 1994

Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Parks Australia
Heritage Management Branch of the Dept. of Environment & Heritage
Australia

II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria N ii, iii C v, vi

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
“The huge rock formations of Uluru and Kata Tjuta are remarkable geological and landform features set in a contrasting, relatively flat, sand-plain environment. They are a part of an important cultural landscape and have special significance to Anangu. The features of both Uluru and Kata Tjuta are physical evidence of the actions, artefacts and bodies of the ancestral heroes (the *tjukuritija*) who travelled the earth in creation times.”
- The landscape of the park also represents the outcome of thousands of years of management under traditional practices governed by the *Tjukurpa* (law, knowledge, religion & philosophy) of the Pitjantjatjara & Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal people.
- Patch burning (which leaves burnt & unburnt areas in a mosaic-like pattern) during the cool season has been adopted as a major ecological management tool in the park.
- A number of rare animals are found in the park including the: (i) Hairy-footed Dunnart; (ii) Sandhill Dunnart; (iii) Mulgara; and (iv) rare Great Desert Skink lizard which can grow up to 2 metres.
- An indicative table of WH attributes is attached.

Status of Site Boundaries

- At the time of the IUCN evaluation in 1987, it became obvious “that the rectangular boundaries of the Park were artificial and other natural features lay outside the area.”
- The UKT is a Biosphere Reserve under the UNESCO MAB programme (along with 11 other reserves in Australia). However, formal zoning of the buffer & transition zones “has not yet been instituted”.

- Uluru NP management plan (1991) recognises 3 management zones: (i) ‘intensive’ (the climb, sunset & sunrise viewing areas); (ii) ‘intermediate’ (Olga Gorge); and (iii) ‘minimum’ (walking trails).

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- During renomination in 1994, the boundaries were modified and an inappropriate air strip was removed. Since 1994, “significant road relocations, including the Kata Tjuta ring road, have been made to prevent access to sacred sites.”



View of Uluru

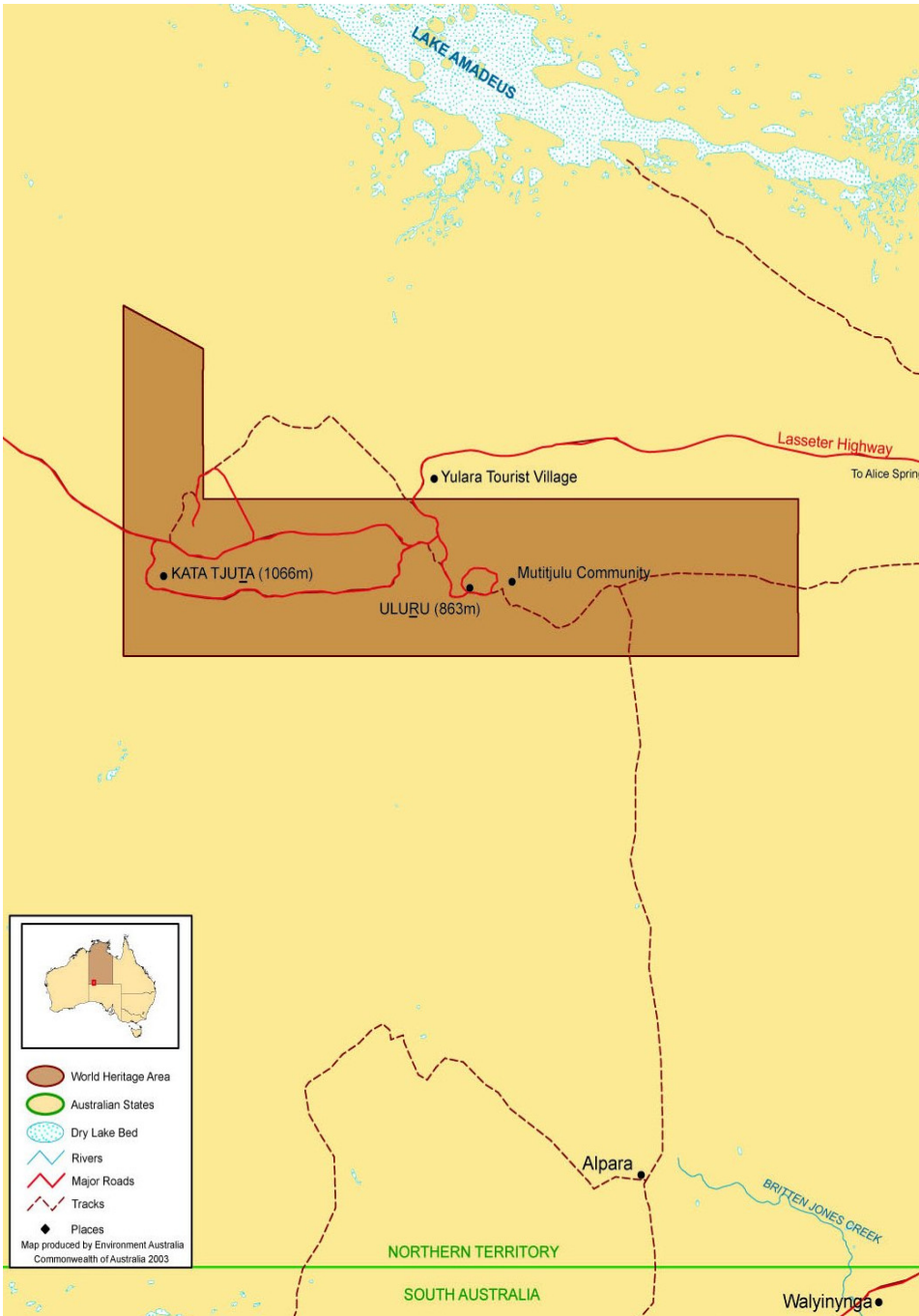


View of Kata Tjuta

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- “The inalienable freehold title of Uluru-Kata Tjuta NP was handed back to the Anangu (the UKT Aboriginal Land Trust) in 1985 following a successful land rights claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976”.
- The Aboriginal Land Trust subsequently “leased the area back to the Director of National Parks to be jointly managed... under a board of Management with a majority of Anangu owners”.
- The EPBC Act 1999 “ensures the maintenance of an Aboriginal majority on the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Board of Management.



Map of Uluru- Kata Tjuta showing WH Area (in brown)

- National legislation includes: (i) Australian Heritage Commission Act (1974); (ii) Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act (1984); and (iii) Native Title Act (1993).
- State legislation includes: (i) NT 'Aboriginal Land Rights Act' (1976); (ii) NT 'Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act' (1989); (iii) Heritage Conservation Act (1991); and (iv) Territory Parks & Wildlife Conservation Act (1995).
- The current 2000 management plan is the 4th plan for the park, and is the main policy document in effect for 7 years. The plan, which was released as a

- draft for comments, lists a range of actions that the Anangu deem necessary.
- A cultural heritage workshop for park staff, Anangu & other stakeholders was held in September 2000.

Financial Situation

- In 2001-2002, approx. AUS\$ 8.08 million (US\$ 4.8 million) was allocated for operations & capital works in the park.
- In 1999-2000, the park received AUS\$ 3.1million (US\$ 1.85million) to enhance visitor facilities, shelters (*wiltjas*), & toilet facilities.

Present State of Conservation

- In April 1995, the Board of Management and the then Australian Nature Conservation Agency were awarded the UNESCO 'Picasso Gold Medal for WH Management' involving indigenous peoples.
- IUCN noted in 1994 that fragile rock paintings & archaeological deposits had been well protected by raised walkways.
- Developments are confined to the area bounded by the sealed 'ring road' in Uluru, and on the western side of the domes in Kata Tjuta.

Staffing and Training Needs

- A 'Community Traditional Consultancy' scheme engages Aboriginal people on a casual & temporary "day labour" basis. In June 2002, 40% of the workforce employed were Anangu.
- No overall staff figures supplied.
- Parks Australia offers opportunities to all employees to pursue formal studies and promote inter-

- Lease payments go to the Central Land Council, and “the remaining revenue received from Park use fees... subsidises the Commonwealth Government’s contribution to the park”.
- * International Assistance from WHF: none.

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Signpost of the Uluru National Park Cultural Centre

Access to IT

- GIS is used to map the distribution of rabbit warrens, develop a ‘holistic flora map’, and integrate scientific analysis with traditional knowledge.

Visitor Management

- Between 1983 and 2001, visitors increased from about 105,970 to 396,456.
- Researchers must obtain a permit from the Director of National Parks in consultation with the Anangu. Parks Australia also produces a ‘Tour Operator Workbook’.
- An award-winning Cultural Centre resembling 2 ancestral snakes was opened in 1995 providing visitors with an introduction to *Tjukurpa*, Anangu lifestyle, wildlife & joint management.
- “The protection of sacred sites enhances the visitor experience, as they begin to understand the country and Anangu culture, and the implied responsibilities of visiting”.
- Although “inconsistent with their spiritual veneration of the site (...) Anangu choose to leave the decision of whether or not ‘to climb’ [the rock] to the tourists”.

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II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- Threat of wildfires,
- Disruption of the dune plains & southern aquifer recharge through poorly planned infrastructure,
- Crowding at peak visitation times,
- Six introduced mammals (house mice, camels, foxes, cats, dogs & rabbits),
- Some 34 exotic plant weeds including Buffel grass,
- Erosion of the soils,

- Off-road driving,
- Damage to rock art from water & vegetation.

Counteractive Plans

- Anangu fire management techniques have “greatly reduced the threat of wildfires”.
- A review of hydrodynamics, current & projected use of groundwater aquifers is being completed.
- The ‘Feral Animals Strategy’ is implemented in line with relevant national threat abatement plans.

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- Key indicators are being developed as part of an overarching park performance management framework to assist ‘State of the Environment’ reporting. A ‘Monitoring Matrix’ is presented.
- Traditional Aboriginal tracking techniques supplement vertebrate & invertebrate monitoring in 8 permanent sites representing a range of habitats in the park.
- A comprehensive visitor monitoring strategy with baseline data is being developed.

Monitoring Indicators

- Various monitoring indicators exist for: (i) weed infestations; (ii) burning practices; (iii) water consumption; (iv) introduced animals; (v) fire risks; (vi) fine-scale soil mapping & erosion hazard maps; and (vii) a ‘rock art database’.

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- “Improved monitoring of cultural values represents a future need in the management of the park”.
- Implementation of the ‘Parks Visitor Infrastructure Masterplan’ will “stage” new developments.
- New infrastructure based on the presentation of WH features (especially cultural values), “rather than ease of access” or scenery will be developed.
- Five years before the lease expiry in 2084, the Aboriginal Land Trust will renegotiate the renewal or extension of the existing management arrangements.

* **No State of Conservation Reports**