

WORLD HERITAGE PERIODIC REPORTING

ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, 2003

AUSTRALIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGIONAL SYNTHESIS REPORT

December 2002

SECTION I



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**SECTION I: APPLICATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION BY
THE STATE PARTY**

I.1. INTRODUCTION

a. State Party

AUSTRALIA

b. Year of ratification or acceptance of the Convention

1974: Australia was the seventh country to ratify the World Heritage Convention in August 1974.

c. Organization responsible for the preparation of the report

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d. Date of the report

24 December 2002.

e. Signature on behalf of State Party

Kevin Keeffe
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I.2. IDENTIFICATION OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES

a. National inventories

List of World Heritage Properties

The Heritage Management Branch of Environment Australia maintains the list of Australia's fourteen World Heritage properties. The list, which also includes brief descriptions of each property and a list of examples of the World Heritage values of each property, is found at:

<http://www.ea.gov.au/heritage/awh/worldheritage/index.html>

Environment Australia also publishes this information in a summary form as a printed publication, 'Australia's World Heritage'.

Register of the National Estate

The Register of the National Estate was established by the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975* and is administered by the Australian Heritage Commission. The Australian Heritage Commission has compiled this Register since 1976. The national estate is defined in the Act as 'those places, being components of the natural environment of Australia or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations as well as for the present community'. There are now more than 12 000 places of natural, historic and indigenous significance listed on the Register. The corresponding database contains information on the 12 000 listed places and on all places that have been considered by the Australian Heritage Commission, as well as all others in the process of assessment or that have been rejected for listing by the Australian Heritage Commission. The Register includes sites and places of local through to national heritage significance. It is not considered to be a complete listing of sites and places of heritage significance, and new places are continually added, and, in cases where values have been lost, places are removed from the Register.

Properties that are nominated for World Heritage listing have generally already been listed in the Register of the National Estate by the Australian Heritage Commission, as a recognition of the heritage values of the place. Boundaries between the area listed in the Register and that nominated for World Heritage listing may vary due to the level of significance, differences in the criteria, new data, or management issues at the time of listing.

Further information on the Register of the National Estate is accessible at:

<http://www.ahc.gov.au/register/index.html>

National List under new heritage legislation

The Australian national (Commonwealth) Government is reforming national heritage arrangements and has developed legislation to establish a new heritage system to complement and enhance the World Heritage Management regime. This system includes

the establishment of a National Heritage List of places that have outstanding national heritage values, including cultural, natural and indigenous heritage values. World Heritage places will be included on this list and a place must be included on the National List before being considered for World Heritage listing. A Commonwealth Heritage List would also be established, listing those places owned or controlled by the Commonwealth Government with heritage values. The Register of the National Estate will continue to be a part of the new heritage system, primarily providing reference information. This system will complement the listing and protection of heritage places of less than national heritage significance as established by the legislative frameworks of Australian States and Territories (provinces) and local governments. The new heritage regime will also include the creation of an independent expert body, the Australian Heritage Council, to advise the Minister on the listing and protection of heritage places. The Council would replace the Australian Heritage Commission.

The new heritage listing and protection arrangements have been developed following extensive consultation over a period of over four years with government, non-government and community bodies, including technical workshops, a National Heritage Convention in 1998, the release of discussion papers, and over 60 briefing sessions held nation-wide between May and October 2000.

The new National Heritage List will comprise places, or groups of places, that have outstanding national heritage values. The Australian Heritage Council will develop themes for listing and advise the Government on the heritage significance of places proposed for listing. Public comments will be invited on proposed listings and the Council will assess any comments received during this process. The final decision on entry of places in the National Heritage List will be made by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage and gazettal of a place on the List may include a statement by the Minister on management and funding arrangements. If a proposed national heritage place requires urgent protection, there are emergency listing provisions to protect the place while the Council undertakes an assessment of its heritage values.

As reported to the Committee at its Twenty-fourth Session in Cairns in 2000, Australia is undertaking a continent-wide assessment for sites of high-level of significance for their representation of the evolution of the eucalypts, for possible inclusion on the proposed National List. This work is currently underway in preparation for the pending passage of the legislation for the new heritage system.

National heritage places will be protected consistent with the Australian Government's constitutional powers. Protection regimes will also be established through accreditation and bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and the States. Management plans and conservation agreements similar to those in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* ('EPBC Act') will allow the Commonwealth to make agreements with owners, including private landowners, to help conserve heritage places.

At the time of the production of this report, the legislation for the new heritage system - the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2002, the Australian Heritage Council Bill 2000, and the Australian Heritage Council (Consequential and

Transitional Provisions) Bill 2000 - is under debate in the national Parliament. It is anticipated that passage of the Bills will take place in the next sitting of Parliament in 2003.

After passage of the legislation, the National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists will be administered by the Heritage Division of Environment Australia.

Further information on the proposed new legislation is available at:
<http://www.ea.gov.au/heritage/law/heritageact/index.html>

Other lists

Each State and Territory of Australia has legislation which provides for the listing of natural and cultural heritage places including those of State / Territory significance, protective mechanisms for these places, and the establishment of State / Territory expert body. The criteria for including places on these lists varies between jurisdictions, as do the protective mechanisms. Generally, places with natural heritage values are conserved by States and Territories through the management of conservation reserves, including national parks and nature reserves.

Many local governments keep heritage lists and may conserve listed heritage places through town planning and land use regulations. Their authority to protect places depends on the State's laws and local government regulations, which vary across jurisdictions.

The Australian Council of National Trusts is a community-based organisation with independently constituted Trusts in each State and Territory. Most National Trusts compile a heritage list for their State or Territory, primarily of places with historic heritage values, but they also include some places with Indigenous and natural values. These lists help provide recognition and promote public awareness, appreciation and concern for heritage places.

States and Territories also have legislation to protect significant Indigenous places. These jurisdictions have extensive site registers as a key element of their legislation. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organizations also keep lists of important sites or significant sites to help ensure their protection. Given the sensitivity of cultural information, most of these lists are not publicly available.

b. Tentative List

Australia's Tentative List is as follows:

- Sydney Opera House in its Harbour Setting (entered on the Tentative List in May 1996)
- Australian Convict Sites (entered on the Tentative List in June 2000)
- Purnululu National Park (entered on the Tentative List in October 2001, and currently under evaluation by the World Heritage Committee's Advisory bodies, for consideration by the World Heritage Committee in June 2003).
- Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens (entered on the Tentative List in December 2002, for formal nomination before February 2003.)

Australia is committed to identifying and promoting places of potential World Heritage significance and has a policy to enter a place on the Tentative List when there is agreement between the main parties concerned, including the relevant State government, that the place should be nominated for the World Heritage List. Australia's Tentative List is determined by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage in accordance with formal heritage policy commitments of the government. The Commonwealth Government announces publicly its intention to nominate particular areas or sites.

c. Nominations

All fourteen properties nominated by Australia to the World Heritage Committee have been accepted for inclusion on the World Heritage List. Some were not listed for all of the criteria for which they were nominated and some of the listed areas did not cover the full extent of the area nominated. The fourteen properties, and their year of inscription, are:

1. Great Barrier Reef (1981)
2. Kakadu National Park (1981 – Stage 1, 1987 – Stage 2 and 1992 – Stage 3)
3. Willandra Lakes Region (1981)
4. Tasmanian Wilderness (1982, extended in 1989)
5. Lord Howe Island Group (1982)
6. Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves (Australia) (1986, extended in 1994)
7. Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (1987 – natural values and 1994 – cultural landscape)
8. Wet Tropics of Queensland (1988)
9. Shark Bay, Western Australia (1991)
10. Fraser Island (1992)
11. Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh / Naracoorte) (1994)
12. Heard and McDonald Islands (1997)
13. Macquarie Island (1997)
14. The Greater Blue Mountains (2000).

As the last three of these listed properties were listed after 1994, they are not dealt with in this report, and will be covered in the next national periodic report.

- Purnululu National Park was nominated for the World Heritage List in January 2002, and this nomination is currently under assessment for consideration by the World Heritage Committee in June 2003.
- The Melbourne Exhibition Building has been subject to a cultural values assessment and a World Heritage nomination has been prepared. It is expected that the Melbourne Exhibition Building nomination will be submitted by 1 February 2003.
- An assessment and nomination of a serial listing of Aboriginal rock art may proceed in the future, subject to consultation with and the agreement of Traditional Owners and finalisation of management arrangements.

In addition to formal nominations, a number of processes have moved towards the identification of potential World Heritage values in other areas and regions. These have included Commonwealth Government assessment studies of the potential World Heritage values of the Lake Eyre Basin were conducted between 1995 and 1997.

The Commonwealth-State Comprehensive Regional Assessment-Regional Forest Agreement (CRA-RFA) processes in forested regions of Australia included a World Heritage Expert Panel which undertook a systematic identification of significant themes relating to natural and cultural values for all terrestrial areas of Australia. It assessed the themes in their global context, identified outstanding universal themes relevant to forested areas, and also identified areas warranting further investigation for possible World Heritage values, during 1996 and 1997.

A Workshop of Experts also investigated the outstanding universal values of eucalypt-dominated vegetation in March 1999. The CRA and RFA processes also resulted in the significant expansion of the conservation reserve system in forested regions that will assist in maintaining options for any future identification of potential World Heritage values in those regions. These studies will inform the consideration of a serial eucalypt site as an early inscription on the National Heritage list, in accordance with commitments given to the World Heritage Committee in Cairns in 2000.

Expert studies of the potential outstanding universal value of a number of other areas have also been undertaken (including the Sydney Opera House in its Harbour Setting and Australia's convict sites) as well as methodological studies relating to the assessment of this level of value (Domicelj, J, Halliday, H, and Jame, P, 1992 *Australia's Cultural Estate - framework for the assessment of Australia's cultural properties against the World Heritage criteria*).

State government assessment projects have also been conducted such as the Queensland Government's Natural Heritage Significance of Cape York Peninsula assessment.

Nomination process

Nomination processes will vary according to the circumstances and issues relating to each property. In general, the Commonwealth government prepares nominations in cooperation with relevant State and Territory governments and key stakeholders. This process includes formal agreement on management arrangements.

The dominant factor governing the nomination process is that while the Commonwealth has the power under the Constitution to take the necessary action to identify and protect World Heritage values, the general land planning and management responsibilities for most of the Australian properties reside with the State and Territory governments.

The nomination process generally follows these steps:

1. Development of awareness of the values of the area over time through research, publications, and general increase in public awareness of the area and its values;
2. Extensive consultation with major stakeholders including State and local government, landholders, Indigenous people, special interest and community interest groups, and relevant experts;
3. Funding and conduct of assessment studies to identify the extent, scope and detail of potential World Heritage values;
4. Negotiations with State government and major stakeholders on Commonwealth funding arrangements and role in management;
5. Finalisation of funding and management agreement with State government;
6. Preparation of nomination document, drawing heavily on assessment studies;
7. Decision by the Minister for the Environment for the Environment and Heritage to submit the nomination;
8. Placement on the Tentative List by notification to the World Heritage Centre;
9. Provision of nomination document to World Heritage Centre.

In the 1980s there were some high profile disputes following decisions by the Commonwealth to nominate properties to the World Heritage List. The most significant of these was the Franklin Dam controversy. This arose out of the decision in June 1982 of the Tasmanian Government to allow the construction of a dam by the Hydroelectric Commission on the Gordon River in South West Tasmania. The Tasmanian Wilderness area had been nominated for World Heritage listing in 1981 and was inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 1982.

In 1983 the Commonwealth Government acted to prevent the construction of the dam by issuing regulations under sec. 69 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975* (Commonwealth) and enacting the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act 1983* (WHPC Act). The WHPC Act was the first specific national legislation for the protection of World Heritage enacted by a State Party to the World Heritage Convention. Following a major review of national environmental and heritage legislation, the WHPC Act was replaced by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, which came into force in 2000.

The powers of the Commonwealth Government to protect World Heritage Areas have been tested since the passing of the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act (1983)*, including by the High Court of Australia, the highest court in Australia's judicial system. Relevant cases include *The Tasmanian Dams Case* (1983) 158 CLR 1, *Richardson v. The Forestry Commission of Tasmania* (1988) 164 CLR 261 and *Queensland v. The Commonwealth (Wet Tropics Case)* (1989) 167 CLR 232.

The determinations of these court cases included the following outcomes:

- the World Heritage Convention could be legitimately implemented in Australia through the external affairs and corporations heads of power given to the Commonwealth Government by the Constitution; and

-
- Australia has obligations under the Convention with respect to property that is cultural heritage and/or natural heritage whether or not that property has been nominated or inscribed on the list.

These cases confirmed the Commonwealth Government's authority, under its Convention obligations, to ensure the conservation and protection of World Heritage properties.

Motivation for nominations

Properties are nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List in order to achieve international recognition of their outstanding universal value, to facilitate their protection and sound management and to increase public awareness of their global significance.

Nomination challenges

The nomination of properties for inclusion on the World Heritage List is accompanied by a number of challenges. These include:

- insufficient comparative analysis currently available at a global level on the international significance of particular themes or aspects of heritage, especially Indigenous heritage values;
- the need to negotiate agreements between main stakeholders on the extent, magnitude and protection of the values for which the property is being nominated; and
- the need to ensure that the natural and cultural heritage of Australia is adequately represented on the List of World Heritage

It is also necessary to ensure appropriate consultative mechanisms are in place to respect the views of Indigenous people in relation to knowledge of sacred sites, ceremonies, and other cultural aspects remaining exclusively within their domain rather than being published in a nomination document. Whilst this can at times limit the amount of documented evidence of outstanding cultural values that can be provided to the World Heritage Committee for assessment, such control of knowledge can be viewed as being necessary to protect the very values for which an area is being nominated.

Perceived benefits of listing and lessons learnt

Benefits of listing include the following:

- direct protection of outstanding values from loss, depletion, or degradation;
- the establishment or strengthening of management agencies, structures and programs to protect listed properties on a long term basis;
- increasing recognition by different levels of government, the private sector, and the broader community of the international significance of the listed properties and the need to protect the values within them;
- increased economic benefits from sustainable tourism;
- the establishment of frameworks and mechanisms by which conflict between social, ecological and economic values can be managed systematically and justly;
- access to government resources for management, planning, research, and promotion of the values of the listed properties; and

-
- an increase in economically and ecologically sustainable enterprises and employment, particularly in tourism and related industries, in place of less sustainable industries.

Lessons learnt from listings include the need:

- for, and benefits of, consultation with and agreement between major stakeholders, including all levels of government, on issues of World Heritage property nomination, planning and management;
- to involve local communities, specific interest groups, and Indigenous people in processes and decisions on World Heritage property nomination, planning and management;
- to identify and communicate to all parties involved the benefits of World Heritage listing of the area that is the subject of the proposed listing as early as possible in the process;
- to identify prospective areas for nomination and to commence consultation and identification and substantiation of values as early as possible in the process;
- for, and value of, robust and clearly defined national legislation for the implementation of obligations under the World Heritage Convention; and
- for, and value of, broad-based community support for the nomination, planning and management of properties.

I.3. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION, AND PRESENTATION OF THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

a. General policy development

Policies that aim to give the cultural and natural heritage a life in the community

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments implement a range of programs to promote World Heritage properties and to ensure they have a life in the community. For example, the Commonwealth government provides funding to the States for the purposes of constructing visitor centres, producing signage and interpretive materials. The Commonwealth also publishes material on Australia's World Heritage properties, and promotes this material through property visitor centres, the internet and other means. The Commonwealth took the opportunity of hosting the World Heritage Committee meetings in 1981 and 2000 to promote the World Heritage Convention to State, Territory and Local governments, local communities and interest groups. The Commonwealth has worked with State and Territory education networks in promoting education on World Heritage in schools, including through hosting a World Heritage Youth Forum in conjunction with the World Heritage Committee meeting in Cairns, 2000.

Integrating protection of World Heritage properties into comprehensive planning programs

Development plans and conservation strategies carried out in World Heritage areas must be consistent with the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

World Heritage issues are taken into account by the Australian Government in national planning processes. They are also incorporated within regional planning processes such as the Commonwealth-State Comprehensive Regional Assessment-Regional Forest Agreement processes applied to native forests (for further details refer to: <http://www.rfa.gov.au>); and State regional planning exercises, such as FNQ2000 in Queensland.

Each World Heritage property is also included by State and Territory authorities in their respective planning frameworks and processes. One means of protecting World Heritage values is the relevant State legislation reserving areas as national parks, other conservation reserves, state forests etc; and at the Commonwealth level, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and some property-specific legislation such as the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* and the *Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994*.

b. Status of services for protection, conservation and presentation

Property management agencies

All Australian World Heritage properties are managed under the auspices of either State land management agencies or, for properties controlled directly by the Commonwealth, by Commonwealth agencies. Details of these agencies are included in Section II of this report.

Environment Australia's Heritage Division

The Heritage Division of Environment Australia is responsible for the overall national overview and coordination of World Heritage properties and the implementation of Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention. The Division is comprised of the Heritage Assessment Branch and Heritage Management Branch. At the time of preparing this report, the Heritage Division, which also includes staff supporting the Australian Heritage Commission, is staffed by approximately 118 personnel.

c. Scientific and technical studies and research

A substantial body of scientific, technical and research work has been conducted on properties. It includes reviews of the values of a number of listed properties (Australian Fossil Mammal Sites, the Great Barrier Reef, Lord Howe Island Group and the Central Eastern Rainforests Reserve), overviews of property values set in a wider context (the work of the World Heritage Expert Panel for example - see: <http://www.rfa.gov.au/rfa/national/worldheritage/final4.html> <http://www.rfa.gov.au/rfa/national/herwshprpt/index.html> <http://www.rfa.gov.au/rfa/tas/raa/heritage/index.html>) and overviews of property management (for example Boer, B and Fowler, RJ 1996 *The Management of World Heritage Properties in Australia* , Parts I and II).

As reported to the Committee at its Twenty-fourth Session in Cairns in 2000, Australia is undertaking a continent-wide assessment for sites of high-level of significance for their representation of the evolution of the eucalypts, for possible inclusion on the proposed

National List. This work is currently underway in preparation for the pending passage of the legislation for the new heritage system.

A number of additional technical studies have been completed in the assessment of places for potential nomination. These are described in I.2 b. Nominations

d. Measures for identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation

Implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Australia, except concerning identification and nomination issues that are dealt with above in Section I.2.c, occurs by means of the following mechanisms:

Commonwealth Legislation

Australia introduced the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act* (WHPC Act) in 1983, to become the only country at the time with national-level World Heritage legislation. The WHPC Act enabled Australia to make regulations to protect its World Heritage Properties from threatening actions identified in the regulations. The legislation, in effect, operated as a last resort mechanism for stopping specified actions.

Australia's World Heritage legislation has been strengthened recently to provide greater protection for Australia's World Heritage properties. The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), which came into force in July 2000, replaces and significantly improves on the WHPC Act by ensuring up-front protection and improved management for the World Heritage values of Australia's World Heritage properties.

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) represented the most fundamental reform of Commonwealth environment laws since the first environment and heritage legislation was enacted in the early 1970s. The EPBC Act replaces five Commonwealth statutes: *Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974*; *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992*; *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975*; *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act 1983*, and the *Whale Protection Act 1980*.

The EPBC Act provides strengthened protection for matters of national environmental significance, including the World Heritage values of World Heritage properties. It places particular emphasis on the implementation of Australia's international environmental responsibilities, including those under the World Heritage Convention.

The EPBC Act complements the intergovernmental cooperative arrangements already in place for management of World Heritage properties. It seeks to promote a cooperative approach to the protection and management of the environment involving governments, the community, scientists and other experts, landholders and Indigenous peoples. The Act also recognises the role of Indigenous people in the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity.

Under the EPBC Act:

- A person must not take an action that has, will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on the world heritage values of a World Heritage property. All actions that are likely to have a significant impact on world heritage values will be subject to stringent environmental assessment and approval regime;
- Any action that has, will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on world heritage values - whether that action is taken inside or outside the boundaries of the World Heritage property - is subject to the Act;
- Damage to the world heritage values of a World Heritage property may attract a substantial fine or, in extreme cases, a jail term;
- The Commonwealth Environment Minister can impose conditions on activities that are likely to adversely affect World Heritage properties;
- Regulations set out the Australian World Heritage management principles which promote nationally consistent standards of management for all of Australia's World Heritage properties;
- The Commonwealth must endeavour to ensure the preparation and implementation of a management plan for a World Heritage property consistent with Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention and the Australian World Heritage management principles; and
- The Minister for the Environment may accredit management plans for World Heritage properties where they meet conditions set out in the Act. Separate approval under the EPBC Act is not required if a proposed action is to be taken in accordance with an accredited management plan.

The EPBC Act preserves the joint management arrangements that exist with Traditional Owners at Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks. The Traditional Owners continue to constitute a majority of the Boards of Management.

The cornerstone of the EPBC Act is a comprehensive assessment and approval regime. Actions that are likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance (including the world heritage values of a World Heritage property) are subject to a rigorous assessment and approval process. An action includes a project, development, undertaking, activity, or series of activities.

In the period 16 July 2000 to 30 June 2002, 603 referred actions were considered under the assessment provisions of the EPBC Act as a whole. Of these, 82 referred actions were scrutinised to determine whether they were likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a World Heritage property.

	Consideration of referrals under EPBC Act, 16 July 2000 – 30 June 2002	
	Total referrals considered under all EPBC provisions	Referrals considered under World Heritage provisions
Total received	603	82
Total requiring approval (controlled action)	167	28

Referrals were spread across a range of activity categories with over half of the total represented by tourism, recreation and conservation, mining and aquaculture. No referrals were received in relation to three of the 14 World Heritage properties. Between 1 and 9 referrals were considered in relation to 10 properties, while 39 referrals (47 per cent of the total) related to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area.

Of the 82 actions scrutinised in relation to their impact on World Heritage values, 28 were found to be controlled actions and were subjected to detailed assessment under the Act.

EPBC Act, 16 July 2000 – 30 June 2002	
World Heritage property	EPBC Act referrals considered under World Heritage provisions
Australian Fossil Mammal Sites	2
Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves	3
Fraser Island	3
Great Barrier Reef	39
Greater Blue Mountains	9
Heard and McDonald Islands	0
Kakadu National Park	2
Lord Howe Island	0
Macquarie Island	0
Shark Bay	1
Tasmanian Wilderness	7
Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park	3
Wet Tropics of Queensland	9
Willandra Lakes Region	4
Total	82

The EPBC Act regulates actions that are likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a World Heritage property. Under the EPBC Act, the World Heritage values of a property are the natural and cultural heritage in that property as defined by the World Heritage Convention. The Act imposes substantial civil or criminal penalties on a person who takes an unlawful action.

Australia's experience with the EPBC Act to date has shown that the Act is a more responsive tool for setting and implementing national standards for World Heritage protection than the legislative regime it replaced. For example, while the Australian Minister for the Environment has made decisions relating to the protection of World Heritage values for some 82 proposed actions under the EPBC Act, there were only six uses of the regulatory provisions of the WHPC Act in the course of the sixteen years of its operation.

Other Commonwealth legislation deals with management arrangements for specific properties, such as the *Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994* and the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, and is described in more detail in the Section II property-specific chapters.

Commonwealth legislation is accessible at:

<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/>

The EPBC Act is accessible at:

http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/epabca1999588/

State Legislation

The planning and management of World Heritage Areas not directly under the control of the Commonwealth Government is conducted under the legislation of the relevant State.

This is described for each property in Section II. State legislation is accessible at:

<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis>

Funding for World Heritage Property Management

The Federal Government has a strong record of funding Australia's World Heritage areas. Over the last seven years the Government has invested almost \$500,000,000 in meeting its international obligations for World Heritage areas within Australia. This commitment to resourcing Australia's World Heritage obligations will continue.

Federal Government funding for World Heritage is provided through the Natural Heritage Trust – a national, integrated initiative to restore and conserve Australia's environment and natural resources. An important objective of the Trust is to improve the protection and management of World Heritage. The period of the Trust has recently been extended and an additional \$1 billion has been provided to fund the delivery of its objectives. An important element of the new Trust arrangements will be a more focused and strategic approach to meeting World Heritage management needs.

Within Australia, World Heritage management includes a range of responsibilities and opportunities at the national, state and regional levels. This is reflected in the funding approach of the Trust, which will provide opportunities to develop new partnerships between communities, landholders, industry and Governments. Through these opportunities, community involvement in the management of World Heritage will be further strengthened in accordance with Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention.

Management Plans

Most Australian World Heritage properties have management plans, some of which are in force under the legislation of the relevant state. These are described in Section II of this report. The Australian World Heritage Management Principles (Schedule 5 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*) set out principles for the preparation of management plans, including requirements for the accreditation of plans. As management plans are reviewed and replaced, efforts will be made to ensure that the new plans comply with these principles.

Bilateral Agreements

For those properties not directly controlled by the Commonwealth Government, the Commonwealth and relevant State government enter into bilateral agreements for management and funding. There is provision in the EPBC Act for the Commonwealth to accredit such agreements.

Ministerial Councils

Commonwealth-State Ministerial Councils have been established for a number of World Heritage properties. These are made up of the relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory Environment Ministers. They meet on an as required basis, and deal with major policy and funding issues. Further detail is provided in Section II.

Parliamentary Inquiries

Parliamentary Inquiries are a significant component of Australia's democratic process at the Commonwealth level. Those inquiries that have involved World Heritage properties or issues have generally attracted public attention and resulted in numerous submissions and other representations from a broad spectrum of interests, including from all levels of government, individuals, experts, commercial interests and non-government organisations.

During 1995 and 1996, a Commonwealth parliamentary committee, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts (HORSCERA), conducted a public inquiry into the management arrangements for inscribed World Heritage Areas in Australia. The report of the Committee is available at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/enviro/whainq/whirpt/contents.htm>

Reports of other Commonwealth Parliament inquiries conducted in recent years that have included a World Heritage component include the following:

- Report on the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Bill 1998 & Environmental Reform (Consequential Provisions) Bill 1998: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/bio/index.htm
- Report on Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2000; Australian Heritage Council Bill 2000; and Australian Heritage Council (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2000: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/hert2000/index.htm
- The Hinchinbrook Channel Inquiry:

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- http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/hinchinbrook/index.htm
 - Jabiluka: The Undermining of Process: Inquiry into the Jabiluka Uranium Mine Project: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/jabiluka/Contents.htm
 - Access to Heritage Inquiry: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/access/contents.htm
 - Inquiry into the Proposal to Drain and restore Lake Pedder: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/environ/pedding/peddrpt/contents.htm>

An inquiry into Environmental Regulation of Uranium Mining, including at the Ranger and Jabiluka uranium operations in the Northern Territory is underway at the time of the preparation of this Report. Details of the inquiry are available at: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/uranium/index.htm.

Full lists of parliamentary inquiries, which include inquiries concerning World Heritage matters additional to those noted above, are available at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/environ/reports.htm>

and:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/history/index.htm#Environment>

Consultative and Technical Committees

Most World Heritage properties rely on property-specific committees for community input and technical and scientific advice. These committees are effective consultative mechanisms for both providing community (including NGOs – see below) and technical input to planning and management and for building links with stakeholders and sources of specialist expertise. Details on specific arrangements are included in Section II.

Local Community involvement

Local communities are involved in the conservation and protection of World Heritage through means such as community consultative committees and opportunities to comment on draft management plans and similar management and planning documents for each property, as well as through generic means such as opportunities provided by the EPBC Act and its processes (which includes a number of opportunities for public input and provides third-party standing and the power to lodge injunctions on the administration of the Act).

Descriptions of mechanisms for involvement in the conservation and protection of World Heritage properties are provided in Section II.

Private sector involvement

The private sector is involved in the conservation and protection of World Heritage properties in a number of ways. These include the following:

- in the use of consultants and other experts by governments in relation to research and management issues, and in the values documentation and nomination processes;
- by virtue of freehold and leasehold land being included within or located adjacent to property boundaries;

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- by the operation of sustainable resource use within some properties (such as shell-grit mining at Shark Bay and commercial fishing within the Great Barrier Reef WHA);
 - by the publications industry and its related sectors such as advertising in the use of graphic images of properties in books, calendars, advertisements, etc; and
 - by the conduct of tourism operations and in some cases visitor centres within or near properties.

The most common form of private sector involvement has been in the conduct of tourism operations. Sustainable tourism provides significant benefit to the presentation of World Heritage values, enhancing the visitor experience, and generating employment and financial benefits.

Further information is included in Section II.

Involvement of NGOs

Non-Government Organisations take an active role in the conservation and protection of Australian World Heritage and in promoting with Governments the nomination of areas for listing. In seeking to achieve their objectives on these issues, numerous methods have been used, including:

- participation in public consultation forums;
- utilisation of the media and other publicity and public awareness raising avenues;
- utilisation of the political system to seek legislative change through Commonwealth and State Parliaments;
- utilisation of the legal system by seeking injunctions through the courts;
- publication of books, reports and research outcomes;
- involvement in public participatory processes such as commenting on draft management plans and development proposals;
- involvement in consultative committees for some properties;
- involvement in ACIUCN and Australia ICOMOS in issues such as reactive monitoring; and
- observer and lobby at World Heritage Committee and other international meetings.

The Commonwealth Government seeks the involvement of NGOs and other specific interest groups in decision-making processes and provides some funds for administrative support. NGOs have made substantial contributions towards the identification and management of Australia's World Heritage properties.

Proposals for policy and legal reform

The Commonwealth government is in the process of undertaking major reform with the introduction of a national heritage system which strengthens the identification, listing and management of places of national heritage significance. The new legislative system is currently under debate in the national Parliament and is described above at I.2.a – National Inventories. The new legislation will complement current World Heritage legislative and regulatory arrangements, by providing essentially identical legal and management structures for the protection of places of National heritage significance. It is also expected

the National heritage system will provide a additional mechanism for the identification of places with potential World Heritage values.

Other international conventions

Australia is a signatory to numerous international conventions that provide for conservation and environment protection. Conventions of particular relevance to World Heritage Convention are the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran) 1971 and the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro) 1992 . Both of these conventions are implemented through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* in the same manner as the World Heritage Convention, so that actions that may potentially impact on an area covered by more than one convention are assessed simultaneously in an efficient and integrated manner.

Scientific and technical measures

The Commonwealth government funds research projects within World Heritage properties through the Natural Heritage Trust. Such projects include ongoing palaeontological research at Australian Fossil Mammal Site (Riversleigh), fire research in relation to the Tasmanian Wilderness and wildlife research at several other properties.

Refer also to section I.2.c – Nominations and I.3.c – Scientific studies and research, and Section II.

States and Territory governments also undertake measures for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of cultural and natural heritage, which are included in Section II.

Financial measures

Refer to sections I.3.b – Status of Services for protection, conservation and presentation and Section II.

Presentation

This section describes publications and materials that have been produced by, or with the assistance of, the Commonwealth Government that relate to all Australian World Heritage properties. State and Territory government agencies, NGOs, the private sector, or scientific institutions also produce a significant amount of important information.

Managing agencies for the individual World Heritage properties produce published material such as brochures, maps and other interpretive material specific to the property for which they are responsible. These materials are referred to in Section II.

Reports and publications

Reports and publications on World Heritage produced by Environment Australia, that relate in most cases to all of the properties, are as follows:

- ‘Australia’s World Heritage’ (1995) –providing information on Australia’s World Heritage properties.
- ‘World Heritage Listing – What Does It Really Mean?’ (1996) – information on what World Heritage listing means.
- ‘Australia’s Kakadu – Protecting World Heritage – Response by the Government of Australia to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee Regarding Kakadu National Park’ (1999).
- ‘Australia’s World Heritage’ (1999) – information on Australia’s World Heritage properties (update of 1995 book of the same title).
- ‘Managing Australia’s World Heritage’ (1996) - House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Other publicity materials

- ‘Australia’s World Heritage’ (2000, 2001) – video.
- Property-specific leaflets and posters.
- World Heritage speaker’s kit – set of 35mm slides and notes.
- World Heritage display (2001).
- World Heritage coins – Australian currency featuring World Heritage properties – in press.

Commonwealth Government/Environment Australia Internet sites

Web sites for management agencies are presented in Section II and are not replicated here.

Heritage

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/

Australian and World Heritage

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/awh

Heritage lists

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/lists

Advisory bodies

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/advisory bodies

Protecting heritage

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/protecting

Research and information

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/information

Laws, guidelines and charters

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/law

Migrant heritage

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/migrant

Heritage tourism

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/tourism

National parks and reserves (includes links to Commonwealth-managed World Heritage Areas)

www.ea.gov.au/parks

Sub-Antarctic Islands World Heritage Areas

<http://www.aad.gov.au/environment/areaprotection/worldheritage/default.asp>

Infrastructure to assist presentation

The Commonwealth Government, through the Natural Heritage Trust, has funded numerous infrastructure projects within World Heritage properties to assist in their presentation. Foremost amongst such infrastructure are visitor centres, but many smaller works such as lookouts, nature trails, access tracks and walking tracks have also been constructed and maintained. Details of these are presented in Section II.

e. Training

Training of personnel for the management of World Heritage properties is conducted by the relevant property management agencies, which in most cases are State conservation management agencies. Training in a broad range of World Heritage values related disciplines and public land management skills is conducted at a number of tertiary institutions and other training colleges throughout Australia, as well as in-house in relevant government departments and agencies.

The Heritage Management Branch of Environment Australia holds management workshops for the World Heritage property managers and Senior Policy Officers approximately every one to two years. These workshops usually take the form of two-day seminars at which matters of common interest are discussed, and where managers are brought up-to-date on matters such as Commonwealth legislation.

Workshops have been held on:

29 November-1 December 1993

9-10 October 1995

April 11-15 1996

24-25 September 1996

10 March 1997

7-8 December 1998

8-9 May 2000
7-9 March 2002

Reports on these workshops are produced for use by the Heritage Management Branch and property managers and are not formally published.

Both Commonwealth and State governments support attendance of management staff at relevant domestic and international conferences, including the ACIUCN 'Richmond' Workshop and UNESCO World Heritage Managers' Workshops (Australia 1995, Thailand 1998, New Zealand 2001).

I.4. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND FUNDRAISING

Membership of World Heritage Committee and World Heritage Bureau

Australia is an active participant in international meetings of the World Heritage Committee, and, where appropriate, the World Heritage Bureau. As part of its ongoing commitment to participate in and cooperate with the reform and other agendas of the World Heritage Committee, Australia has also been active in working groups such as those dealing with the review of the Operational Guidelines and discussions on strengthening the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in the management of World Heritage Areas.

Australia was one of the first States to ratify the Convention and has taken an active role in terms of representation on the World Heritage Committee and Bureau since becoming a State Party.

Australia hosted the 5th World Heritage Committee meeting in Sydney in October 1981 and the 24th World Heritage Committee meeting, during which it also convened the Youth and Indigenous People's Forums, in Cairns in November-December 2000.

Australia was a member of the World Heritage Committee from 1976 to 1983; 1983 to 1989; and 1995 to 2001. Australia was Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee in 1981, 1982 and 2000 and Vice-Chairperson in 1980, 1983, 1984, 1988, 1995, 1996 and 1999.

Asia-Pacific Focal Point

The Asia-Pacific Focal Point for World Heritage (APFP) is a regional network for World Heritage Managers, established to share experience, knowledge and resources between countries in the region. The APFP helps Asia-Pacific countries adopt and meet their obligations under the World Heritage Convention, and also helps ensure best practice management of their World Heritage sites. Some countries in the Asia-Pacific region are not yet Parties to the World Heritage Convention, and many countries have only recently become Parties. As a consequence, heritage in the region is not yet well represented on the World Heritage List.

The APFP was established by Australia in 1999 following a recommendation by the regional World Heritage network, and a subsequent formal request from Mr Bernd von

Droste, then Director of the World Heritage Centre. Previous meetings of regional World Heritage managers identified common interests across the Asia-Pacific region, including geographic proximity, developing social and economic links and identity, a collective desire to improve the protection of World Heritage values, and agreement on the need to identify, protect and manage the region's rich cultural and natural heritage as well as its living and strong Indigenous traditions.

The Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation concerning World Heritage in the Asia-Pacific region (MoU), signed by Australia and UNESCO in May 2002, sets out the joint understanding for the operation of the APFP, as part of a formal arrangement between Australia and UNESCO. The MoU also facilitates mutual cooperative arrangements between Australia and UNESCO's regional field offices for effective prioritisation and targeting of Australia's contribution to regional coordination in World Heritage matters.

Under the MoU, Australia and UNESCO have agreed to consult with one another, and States in the Asia-Pacific region, on ways and means of assisting States in the region to:

- Implement the World Heritage Convention;
- Promote best practice in management of properties on the World Heritage List;
- Facilitate requests for international assistance, for submission to bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, for properties inscribed on the World Heritage List;
- Identify and secure funding for World Heritage activities; and
- Share information and experience, further develop networks, and exchange views on management issues, including through the use of the internet.

The APFP is operated by the Heritage Management Branch of Environment Australia and draws extensively on the skills of Australia's Commonwealth and State Government management agencies, UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and Field Offices in the Asia-Pacific region, advisory bodies, regional World Heritage managers, the academic community and relevant experts.

The structure and operation of the APFP are shaped by the needs of its regional stakeholders. It is accessible through the APFP web site and uses direct communication and publications including a newsletter to share information and experience. The regional network members also meet to exchange views on specific issues and broader policy questions. The APFP endeavours to answer questions raised by regional States, and uses the managers' network to coordinate responses.

To date, the APFP has supported a wide range of strategic activities in the Asia-Pacific region to facilitate implementation of the World Heritage Convention and assist regional countries with their World Heritage activities. These include:

- Establishment of the APFP web site: <http://www.heritage.gov.au/apfp/index.html>;
- Publication of the APFP newsletter for distribution throughout the region;
- Support for the 3rd World Heritage Regional Managers' Meeting at Tongariro National Park, New Zealand;
- Support to the Pacific Island Museum Association Training Workshop in Palau;
- Support to the ASEAN Cluster and Transborder Natural World Heritage Workshop in Indonesia;

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- Support for indigenous representation from the Solomon Islands to the World Heritage Indigenous Forum in Cairns, Australia;
 - Support for Australian Indigenous representation at the Cultures and Biodiversity Congress, China;
 - Support for the Asia-Pacific World Heritage Karst Forum, held at Gunung Mulu National Park World Heritage Area, Sarawak, Malaysia;
 - Publication and distribution of Proceedings of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Karst Ecosystems and World Heritage, Gunung Mulu National Park World Heritage Area, Sarawak, Malaysia;
 - Secondment of Australian expert staff under AusAID's Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) Programme to support World Heritage activities in Thailand, Vietnam and Western Samoa;
 - Support for training of Malaysian World Heritage property managers in World Heritage interpretation at Uluru Kata-Tjuta and Kakadu National Parks, Australia.
 - Support for a delegation and study tour by representatives from the Sabah State Government, Malaysia, to the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage properties;
 - Development and implementation of the AusAID funded (A\$250,000) joint Australia-Indonesia Government Sector Linkages Program project for enhancement of local government planning and management capacity at Lorentz National Park World Heritage Area, Papua;
 - Support and hosting of UNESCO's Periodic Reporting Workshop in Asia and the Pacific, held at the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage property in March 2002;
 - Support for Fiji's Levuka Heritage Awareness Programme;
 - Support for a Heritage Conservation, Cultural Tourism and Local Community Development project in Vanuatu;
 - Offer of funding support for up to two scholarships for World Heritage managers from the Asia-Pacific region to enrol in the Graduate Certificate in Applied Science (Karst Management) course at Charles Sturt University, Australia; and
 - Support for the Natural World Heritage Information Workshop for the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic, to be held in 2003.

Further information about the APFP and its operation, including copies of the *Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation concerning World Heritage in the Asia-Pacific region* and recent publications, are available on the APFP web site at:

<http://www.heritage.gov.au/apfp/index.html>

Direct Assistance to Other Countries

See section above on Asia-Pacific Focal Point.

Role in international fund raising efforts

Australia is not directly involved in international fund raising efforts in relation to World Heritage, but has contributed directly and consistently to the World Heritage Fund annually since 1981.

Consistent with the requirements of the World Heritage Convention, Australia provides 1% of its annual contribution to UNESCO as its contribution to the World Heritage Fund. In 2002, this amounted to A\$115,000.

I.5. EDUCATION, INFORMATION, AND AWARENESS BUILDING

Both Commonwealth and State governments take steps to increase the awareness of decision-makers, property owners and the general public about the protection and conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of World Heritage properties through numerous means such as visitor centres, Internet sites, and publications that are described above in section I.3.d under Presentation, and in Section II.

There are no formal educational courses to provide qualifications exclusively on World Heritage matters, although many tertiary courses, for example in cultural heritage (humanities), law, archaeology, science, geography and environmental studies include components that include a World Heritage element.

I.6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

National priorities

Australia as a State party is committed to a process of continuous improvement in managing the values for which the properties are inscribed on the List of World Heritage. To contribute to this goal, it will engage with property managers, expert bodies, technical committees and community consultative committees along with Australian chapters of the advisory bodies to identify practical, achievable and realistic recommendations for future action on a national basis.

High national priorities for development in the medium to long term include:

- Increased efforts in developing management plans for those properties still requiring planning to a level expected of World Heritage values;
- Better coordination across properties that are separated by State borders (AFMS, CERRA) and also between different properties that are located in the one State and Territory (especially in Queensland and the Northern Territory);
- Improved opportunities for training and development of on-site managers in World Heritage issues;
- Enhanced opportunities for the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of World Heritage properties;
- An enhanced role for the Asia-pacific Focal Point, especially in the Pacific;
- Greater investment in collaborative research efforts on issues of shared concern (e.g. fire management, sustainable tourism development);
- Security and balance in funding arrangements.

In relation to individual properties, the main conclusions and recommendations of Individual (Section Two) property reports are summarised below (for further details see Sections II.2. and II.3. of the Property Chapter).

1. Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) remains cautiously optimistic about the future of the GBRWHA, particularly for the issues for which GBRMPA has direct involvement or control. Where matters are outside the GBRMPA's direct control, GBRMPA takes an active role in negotiating suitable outcomes which support the conservation objectives of the GBRWHA e.g. fisheries management and water quality issues. There are some organisms and environmental attributes which require further monitoring or even management actions to address human impacts, but virtually all of these potential problems are currently being addressed by one or more of the management agencies responsible for the care of the World Heritage Area.

There are however, broader issues like coral bleaching or changes in sea level for which little can be done by local management agencies such as the GBRMPA to ameliorate the ultimate cause(s) of the threats.

Neither management of the Marine Park nor the GBRWHA is static. Use patterns and technology are constantly changing and the marine environment itself is dynamic: subject to both human use and natural impacts. While many of the management tools developed when the park was first declared (zoning plans, permits) are still highly appropriate, management has had to adapt and other management tools have needed to be introduced (eg plans of management, no-anchoring areas, Vessel Monitoring Systems, Dugong Protection Areas).

One area where considerable management efforts still need to occur is a move toward more effective management arrangements which meet the aspirations of Native Title holders and Indigenous people.

2. Kakadu National Park

The natural and cultural values for which Kakadu National Park was inscribed into the World Heritage List are being maintained. The Park is large, diverse and ecologically intact. It contains a variety of habitats and vegetation types, including extensive and relatively unmodified vegetation cover and largely intact faunal composition. The number of introduced plants and animals remains quite low. Active management is undertaken within some areas of the Park to maintain its good condition and to ensure its long-term integrity of the cultural and natural heritage. Also, the surrounding areas provide a good buffer against external, potential adverse, influences.

A review of the current Plan of Management for the Park is underway, following the statutory process for the review of management plans, as established within the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. the review of the Plan is being conducted in an open consultative process where all stakeholders have been invited to comment, including through public advertisement.

Work will also continue on monitoring tasks within the Park under an enhanced monitoring framework.

The Australian Government continues to emphasise the need for consultation with Traditional Owners before a decision is made on any possible nomination of Kakadu National Park, the greater Kakadu Region or Kakadu National Park and the East Alligator River catchment as a World Heritage cultural landscape.

3. Willandra Lakes Region

Since the establishment of the World Heritage area, the values of the property have become more clearly identified and better protected. Of particular importance has been the involvement of members of the local community, both pastoralists and Indigenous peoples in the management of the values of the property, particularly through property planning processes.

The priorities for management in the next monitoring period include the further development of the capacity and involvement of traditional tribal groups in the ownership and management of Mungo National Park, the development of skills in the community and the provision a keeping place for human remains.

4. Tasmanian Wilderness

Following the establishment of the World Heritage area, the values of the property have become more clearly identified and better protected. The property managers have identified the need for the provision of targeted funds to support performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting programs required for UNESCO Periodic Reports.

5. Lord Howe Island Group

Significant progress with the enhancement and protection of the Island's World Heritage values has been made since the inscription of the Property. However, further work and funding is required to consolidate and achieve the ongoing protection of values. Key to this process of continuous improvement will be, as identified in the property chapter in Section II a shift from environmental management being resourced on a "one off" project specific basis to more secure and sustainable funding arrangements at all levels of government.

Future management initiatives and directions are outlined in both the Lord Howe Island Board's Corporate and Operational Plans, with specific reference to the Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage Key Result Area.

6. Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves (Australia) (CERRA)

The World Heritage values of the CERRA property are well maintained due particularly to legislative protection afforded protected areas and significant funding allocations from State and Commonwealth agencies to support active management actions including weed control, regeneration, rainforest rehabilitation, research and monitoring. Changes in tenure, particularly of adjacent properties, have enhanced the protection of the World Heritage areas and adjacent land.

Given the sound legislative base for protection of the property; the most significant factors affecting management are the identification and monitoring of values and adequate management of key threatening processes. In particular, the ongoing commitment to coordinated monitoring and research efforts across the property and development of systems for storage and distribution of resource data and research results is of importance.

This relates particularly to *loss of biodiversity*, identified as a high risk factor with the ability to ameliorate the risk limited by adequate knowledge of values and hence the ability to identify existing and potential causal processes. The importance of this risk factor is heightened due to the inability to fully predict the consequences of realisation of the threat.

Appropriate management tools and enforcement capability are common factors in the ability to manage the other key threats to the property which are uncontrolled or inappropriate use of fire; inappropriate recreation and tourism activities, including the development of tourism infrastructure; and invasion by pest species including weeds, feral animals and fungal pathogens.

Priorities for future action include:

- Implement the Strategic Overview including ongoing support for and involvement of, the Community Advisory Committee and Technical & Scientific Advisory Committee.
- Develop a strategic approach to monitoring, both as a whole of property approach and in line with respective state agency management objectives.
- Consultation and involvement of indigenous people, appropriate consideration of issues and subsequent enhanced ability to protect cultural values.

7. Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park

Programs are in place to maintain and protect the cultural and natural heritage values for which Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park was included on the World Heritage List. The rock art in the Park is being protected and traditional protection of the Park continues through the practice of *Tjukurpa*.

Traditional protection of Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park is provided by the Anangu through the practice of the *Tjukurpa*. The policies and prescriptions contained in the current Plan of Management concerning the management of the Park's cultural values are based upon respect for *Tjukurpa*.

Substantial research has been undertaken within the Park, focussing on a range of issues. As a part of the research and Park management practices, factors that could potentially affect the Park have been identified and as a consequence a range of management responses have been developed. These identified factors include visitor and tourism pressures on cultural sites, the passing on of traditional knowledge and ecological management, hydrology, introduced animals, weeds, fire management and erosion within the Park. Due to the development and implementation of management responses, the Park continues to be well managed, with all values of the property being maintained.

Improved monitoring of cultural values represents a future need in the management of the Park. Work is in progress to develop, with Anangu (the Aboriginal owners), a clearer framework for monitoring of cultural values and to identify appropriate joint management responses – acknowledging that many of the pressures and issues involved are not entirely within the Park and will require coordinated, cross-jurisdictional responses.

Enhanced presentation of the World Heritage values of the Park through development of new visitor infrastructure based on presentation of World Heritage values (especially cultural values) rather than ease of access or ‘scenic values’, through on-going revision of Park educational materials, improved tour operator training and improvements to on-site interpretation of the Park.

Review and audit of the implementation of the current Plan of Management is a high priority.

8. Wet Tropics of Queensland

Improved knowledge of the significance and values of the Property has increased markedly since listing due largely to a concerted scientific research effort by the Rainforest CRC, an earlier Authority funded research grants scheme and annual information collection and collation for State of the Wet Tropics reporting.

Overall it is concluded that the state of the Property’s World Heritage values have been maintained since listing and that a wide range of management activities have been implemented to achieve progressive enhancement of these values in the longer-term.

Specific statutory protective measures for the Property are now in place. The *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* together with its subordinate statute, the *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998* provide the legal framework and statutory mechanisms for management of the Property by regulating activities within the Property that have the potential to impact on World Heritage values. A range of other legislation and regional planning instruments is assisting in conservation management in areas surrounding the Property.

The proportion of the Property in protected area tenures has increased significantly, while the area of leasehold and freehold has been reduced.

Native title and Indigenous land use negotiations will continue to emerge as a major area of management focus with 80% of the Property potentially claimable under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

The establishment of the Rainforest CRC as a national centre for understanding rainforest ecology and management, and its partnership arrangements with the Authority, has resulted in a major increase in applied research effort being directed at management issues.

Internal fragmentation (and its array of impacts on ecological integrity, ecosystems and evolutionary processes) is considered a major threatening process to the World Heritage

values of the Property. In recognition of this, wherever feasible and opportunities arise, obsolete infrastructure has been phased-out, and considerable efforts have been invested in improving management and maintenance practices through the use of codes of environmental practice and detailed environmental management plans. The Rainforest CRC is undertaking adaptive management research designed to test current management practices; to provide the baseline data necessary for designing robust monitoring systems; and to provide prescriptions for improved management.

Following completion of the Wet Tropics Management Plan, the development, completion and implementation of specific management strategies has been an Authority priority. The *Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism and Walking Strategies* are at the implementation stage. The *Wet Tropics Conservation Strategy* is under development and will be used as the framework for developing strategic approaches to the management of issues such as pests, climate change, fragmentation and rehabilitation.

Negotiated outcomes with Aboriginal peoples associated with the Property through processes such as the Interim Negotiating Forum and management agreements will continue to be a priority for the Authority.

The finalisation of the Authority's long-term regional vegetation and geology mapping project is due for completion in 2004.

9. Shark Bay

The integrity of the Shark Bay World Heritage Property has been maintained since its inscription in 1991. Management arrangements have been, and continue to be, developed and implemented to ensure that actions taken to address potentially threatening processes are undertaken in such a way as to minimise any impact on World Heritage values.

Combined with adequate planning, this will ensure that the ecological and evolutionary processes in the Property will continue unimpeded and that the diversity and complexity of the terrestrial and marine ecosystems will be perpetuated.

Implementation of the actions identified in this report will be closely linked to the availability of resources. In the first instance, agencies will commit available resources to actions that have been identified as having high priority. The Shark Bay Ministerial Council (comprised of relevant Commonwealth and State Ministers) will provide direction in the identification of priority actions for implementation, with further advice from the Community Consultative and Scientific Advisory Committees.

The following projects are proposed for implementation during the next 5-6 years (prior to the second periodic reporting period), dependent upon available resources:

- Completion of a management plan for South Peron
- Dirk Hartog Island tenure transferred to national park
- Completion of a management plan for Edel Land
- Extension of the Shark Bay Marine Park to include waters adjacent to Bernier, Dorre and Dirk Hartog Islands

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- Finalisation of the Strategic Plan for the Property
 - Completion of a Communication Plan for the Property
 - Completion of the World Heritage Interpretive Centre
 - Continued involvement with indigenous interest groups
 - Continued feral predator control to support native fauna re-introductions.

10. Fraser Island

The World Heritage values for which Fraser Island World Heritage Area was originally listed remain intact. Management of the FIWHA has maintained the World Heritage values. The two main threats to the values have been identified as being recreation and visitation, along with inappropriate fire regimes.

Many projects designed to minimise the threats posed by increasing numbers of visitors to the island are underway. Key projects include the Fraser Island Transport Study, development of a camping management plan, and the implementation of the recommendations of the Desired Site Capacities Study.

In addition, the continued development of appropriate visitor infrastructure will significantly enhance the capacity of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to minimise and manage the impacts of visitation. A Draft Fire Strategy has been prepared to provide direction for fire management on Fraser Island.

Key actions include the continued implementation of the recommendations of the review of tourism document, dingo management strategy, and desired site capacities study. In addition, it is anticipated that several current projects including the development of the camping management plan, review of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan, transport and access study and fire strategy will be finalised during the next 12-18 months.

Discussions are underway with relevant stakeholder groups to consider a possible future extension to the boundary of the property.

11. Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh / Naracoorte) (AFMS)

The state of World Heritage values are being maintained.

For Riversleigh, the main management challenges are to enhance strategies for protection of a remote World Heritage site using ranger patrols, clear public information and securing of high public-use areas. A related challenge is to establish a community consultative process to manage the interests of researchers, Indigenous people and other stakeholders.

For Naracoorte, the current management challenges are to mitigate the increasing effects of visitation and party size tours through specific caves and redevelop presentation facilities given projected increases in visitation.

A high priority is the establishment of an on-going monitoring system at Riversleigh for fossil displacement and removal and regular communication to assist managers and

researchers to work better on presenting and transmitting the fossil resource for future generations.
