# Template FOR INPUT INTO THE

**AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY**

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| Overview  This template should be used to provide comments on the content of the Australian Heritage Strategy. | |
| Contact Details | |
| **Name of Organisation:** | Geological Society of Australia |
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| **Date:** | **9/6/2014** |
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| Questions  Please add your comments for some or all of the questions provided with the Strategy’s three high level themes below. If you have other information you wish to provide, please add this in the “Other comments” field. | |
| 1. **Improve National Leadership**   What are the most important things the Australian Government should be doing to offer leadership in heritage?  How can the Australian Government provide guidance and support for our national heritage—while still empowering other government, industry and community members to take responsibility and get involved?  What priority areas are important to you, your organisation or group?  What practical actions would you suggest to improve national heritage leadership? | |
| *Q. What are the most important things the Australian Government should be doing to offer leadership in heritage?*  A. Facilitate and progress the recognition, identification and management and of all forms of Heritage EQUALLY. Currently there is no specific mention of Australia’s geoheritage. As a component of National Significance, it is a matter of National Importance, under the EPBC Act. Geoheritage is recognised by the IUCN and in every country in the world. Internationally, the importance of Geoheritage is recognised as underpinning biodiversity as well as underpinning built heritage and cultural heritage. The Department of Environment Heritage website states ”Heritage is all the things that make up Australia's identity - our spirit and ingenuity, our historic buildings, and our unique, living landscapes. Our heritage is a legacy from our past, a living, integral part of life today, and the stories and places we pass on to future generations”. There is no mention of the abiotic in the Heritage Strategy. Australia has a unique and ancient geological history that is our heritage, i.e., our Geoheritage, and this is reflected in World heritage areas such as Macquarie Island, and that Australia has the oldest crystals in the world, i.e., the Jack Hills Zircons. Australia’s geoheritage is at all scales, and is reflected at all scales, from landscapes to crystal size. Culturally, Australia’s geoheritage is expressed in dance, the arts, in architecture, as foundational to indigenous culture, as the basis for the location of cities and towns colonised, and in the building stone of modern and heritage buildings.  *Q What priority areas are important to you, your organisation or group?*  A Recognition of the Geological Society of Australia (GSA) as a primary Stakeholder, with State registers founded on NHT funding. Most State and Territory Geological Society Divisions have a Heritage Committee and the GSA has a National Convenor for the Standing Committee for Geological heritage to act on behalf of the States at the Federal level.  Funding for a repository for stratigraphic profiles for science and education.  Funding for recording Australia’s geoheritage  A National repository for sites of geoheritage significance from local to international significance that has different levels of access depending on the sensitivity of the area, the management protocols in place, and the purpose for which the information is being used.  Q. What practical actions would you suggest to improve national heritage leadership?  *Training* by personal in the Department of Heritage as to what Geoheritage is, equal attention afforded biotic and abiotic heritage, and a position on Heritage Councils for a Geoheritage Partitioner.  Recognition that, in addition to themes and obtaining important stories associated with places with geoheritage significance, an inventory-based approach to identifying sites of geoheritage significance is important in providing communities a sense of place and also, for science and education.  Recognition that not all Heritage values are of national significance. This needs to be recognised in developing community partnerships because areas important to a community may not necessarily be of National significance. | |
| 1. **Pursue Innovative Partnerships**   What partnerships are most needed within the heritage sector?  What heritage roles and responsibilities should be led by governments, peak heritage organisations or community groups in the 21st century?  How should resources be shared through heritage partnerships to ensure the greatest return on agreed priorities?  Can you provide examples of successful innovative partnerships you or your organisation have established? | |
| Q What partnerships are most needed within the heritage sector?  A. There needs to be centralised databases for all forms of Heritage for planning and management. Heritage Councils and Local area Planners need to be aware of Stakeholders for planning and management and be in a position to support local community initiatives to obtain government and non-government grants and funding.  *Q What heritage roles and responsibilities should be led by governments, peak heritage organisations or community groups in the 21st century?*  A. All roads lead to Local Government for local area Planning and Management. Local Governments need funding to facilitate identifying sites of heritage, and specifically sites of geoheritage significance, and Local and Federal Government websites that describe sites of geoheritage significance, which may not necessarily be sites with scenic grandeur, and opportunities for communities to become involved in management.  Q How should resources be shared through heritage partnerships to ensure the greatest return on agreed priorities?  A. A central database with both public and restricted access.  *Q Can you provide examples of successful innovative partnerships you or your organisation have established?*  A. At the National level with the Australian National Landscape Programme, at state levels, there are any number of examples where the State GSA Committees have provided advice in relation to site values, partnerships in relation to Tourism, National Science week Programmes, and publications, | |
| 1. **Enable encourage communities to understand and care for their heritage**   What should the Australian heritage sector be doing to help the Australian community better engage in heritage activities?  How can a shared understanding of our national heritage be developed and best celebrated together?  Do you have any examples of activities that have been successful in promoting local heritage to a broader audience?  What is the role of technology and new media in providing greater community access to heritage? | |
| *Q What should the Australian heritage sector be doing to help the Australian community better engage in heritage activities?*  *A.* Incorporating the nature of Australia’s Heritage into the education system in primary and secondary schools, local government facilitating the dissemination of information on heritage and specifically geoheritage values of their locality. This will include information on how the geology of the region influenced the location of the town site development, its industries, and its natural heritage, and ecosystems.  *Q How can a shared understanding of our national heritage be developed and best celebrated together?*  A. Geoheritage festival that celebrates the arts, dance, music and other cultural activities that were inspired by the local landscape and geology.  *Q. Do you have any examples of activities that have been successful in promoting local heritage to a broader audience?*  A. The GSA Standing Committee is actively involved in working partnerships as well as developing partnerships in the identification and management of sites of Geoheritage significance, at all levels of government. The National Convenor is the spokesperson for facilitating recognition of the importance of Geoheritage at the Federal level, and is actively engaged in facilitating State, intra-State, National and International partnerships. This is evidenced by the GSA sponsoring Dr Kevin Page, (who stood in for Dr William Wimbledon), as a keynote speaker at the Geoheritage, Geoconservation and Geotourism sessions at the International Geological Congress (IGC), held in Brisbane 2012. Jane Ambrose from the Department of Environment attended as a presenter, by invitation. The 3 day session was the best attended Geoheritage session in the history of the IGC, or any international Conference. More recently, in partnership with international organisations ProGEO and the Wetlands Research Association, the GSA was successful in obtaining a 1.5 hr block of time in the upcoming IUCN World Parks Congress (IUCN WPC), Sydney 2014. This is the first time that Earth Scientists have been included in and IUCN WPC for the purpose of developing a Biodiversity strategy (that is, that geodiversity underpins biodiversity). In addition, in consultation with the GSA National Standing Committee Convenor, a 32 page Chapter on Geoheritage, to be released at the IUCN WPC, has been included in the Parks Area Manual. Further, one of the planned GSA /ProGEO sessions is a workshop to initiate discussion on IUCN Guidance Notes on Geoheritage. The States and the ACT divisions are actively engaged in matters of Geoheritage, the Victorian and NSW GSA Geological Heritage Committees liaise with local heritage Groups, and the ACT Committee engages with various stakeholders to conduct National Science Week activities, SA and the ACT divisions conduct local geoheritage tours, the ACT division is also actively involved with schools, and all divisions publish and or contribute to publications on geoheritage, that is linked to education and or geotourism. The GSA also has involvement in films and public talks by Populist Earth Scientists such as Iain Stewart, and Tasmania is recognised as a world leader in the arena of incorporating geoheritage into Parks Management.  *Q What is the role of technology and new media in providing greater community access to heritage?*  A The GSA has adopted phone apps as a means of developing tourism by providing information on the geoheritage of a region. Telecentres, local television and websites are a means of engaging community interest. | |
| **Other comments** | |
| A literature review by the Department of Environment would reveal that Geoheritage is an internationally important category of heritage that has been omitted from the Department of Heritage on its website. This is in spite of the 2009 inclusion of Geoheritage as an official program by the IUCN, and is out of step with the content of Graeme Worboys commissioned essay on Geoheritage, and the 2012 Submission by the GSA in past heritage consultations. While the United kingdom stands as a role model in recognising the importance of Geoheritage, the development and use of inventory-based assessment of sites of geoheritage significance, and policy development, Australia has a different geological history, and its own story to tell. Methods and expertise in the arena of Geoheritage can be found in the peer reviewed and published work by Brocx, Brocx and Semeniuk, Joyce, Osborne, Percival. These members of the GSA, and other Australian authors, continue to be involved promoting Geoheritage and developing and publishing methods to identify sites of geoheritage significance, at all scales, and at all levels of significance, specific to Australia. It is appropriate for this work to be acknowledged, and referenced by the Department of Environment, for inclusion in Australia’s Heritage Strategy, and funding opportunities.  Specifically in relation to the Strategy, Commitments and proposed actions, the following comments are made:  Page 12. Australia’s Tangible Heritage is more than Landscapes. Landscapes are large scale component of Geoheritage. Geology is the basis for Australia’s Geoheritage, for example, from its zircon crystals to the Seven Sisters, to Riversleigh, to various landscapes. Heritage is not just restricted to landscapes. Notably, Australia is important for its fossil heritage, and as with the Jack Hills Zircons. What is encompassed by Geoheritage is not being recognised in “What is Heritage”  Page 14. Professional Organisations, with their own programmes in geoheritage have not been identified, and as such, this is an major omission.  Geology has defined Australia’s heritage. As the world’s largest Island Continent since its separation from Antarctica, and culturally, since the inhabitation of the world longest surviving indigenous people, over 50,000 years ago.  Page 16. The Geological Society of Australia is well placed to provide advice on leadership in actions relating to the identification and /or management of Australia’s geoheritage.  Page 17. The National heritage List of 100 places does not capture the full gamut of Australia’s geoheritage and there is an opportunity to consult with the GSA Heritage Committees’ on-going work to revise and add to State registers since the NHT finding in the 1970s.  Pages 19 -24.The GSA recognises the need for innovative partnerships and submits that Geoheritage is an area that the GSA can contribute. However, a separate body to the Green Army is needed to manage projects involving geoheritage. Amongst its strengths, Nationally, on a State by State and Territory basis, in matters of geoheritage, the GSA commands the knowledge and expertise required to identify management issues, design education and training programmes, design appropriate levels of interpretation, and liaise with the Tourism Industry.  1(a) The GSA does not support matters of geoheritage being directed via the Green Army Programme. The Geological Society of Australia was funded under the NHT Programme to undertake (limited) assessments of sites of Geoheritage significance and the GSA would seek funding support to further engage in geoheritage conservation projects across Australia.  1 (b) Currently there is no representation by the GSA on the Australian Heritage Council. As Geoheritage is a matter of National Significance, the GSA seeks to be represented on the Australian Heritage Council.  1(d) the GSA supports the proposed actions, however, the proposed actions should be for all 4 areas of Australia’s mainstream Heritage, i.e., the Biotic, the Abiotic, Built, and Indigenous,  2. the GSA Supports the commitment and proposed actions, however, the GSA seeks to ensure that Geoheritage Practitioners have a central role in decision-making relating to Geoheritage.  2(b) the GSA supports this opportunity, however submits that the GSA, and not the Green Army Programme is the appropriate body to facilitate opportunities for young Australians to gain experience in geoconservation.  2(c) The GSA supports this initiative, however, it seeks the same opportunity afforded Historical Societies, and seeks a commitment for the Federal Government for Innovative funding resource sharing and creative partnerships  2(d) the GSA Standing Committee for Geological Heritage is actively involved in fostering greater collaboration between geoheritage and the Tourism sectors such that the appropriate management practices and an appropriate management strategy is developed such that heritage values are maintained. The GSA seeks to be recognised as a stakeholder in this initiative.  3(a) the GSA supports this opportunity, however it submits that the GSA, and not the Green Army Programme is the appropriate body to facilitate opportunities for young Australians to gain experience in geoconservation.  3(b) The GSA supports this initiative however, in relation to geoheritage, this should be a science-based and published/presented for use at the level of understanding/appreciation for the intended audience. Information for Tourism will be different to that for Kindergarten and Primary School children at one extreme to Researchers and World Heritage nomination at the other.  3(d) the GSA supports this initiative and submits that the GSA is the appropriate professional organisation capable of providing the good advice and guidance to help ensure work that is undertaken is effective and appropriate. | |