



TEMPLATE FOR INPUT INTO THE AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY

Overview

This template should be used to provide comments on the design of the Australian Heritage Strategy.

Contact Details

Name of Organisation:

Name of Author:

Margaret Brocx

Date:

24/01/2014

Questions

Please add your comments for some or all of the three questions below. If you have other information you wish to provide, please add this in the other comments field.

1. What do you think are the key elements of the Commonwealth's role in heritage?

Establishing a policy and funding framework and a central repository for information.

2. What new cooperative models could be explored to open up opportunities for heritage protection?

A hierarchical approach to obtaining information and a publically available database/repository where States can and information as information becomes available; and one that Australians and International researchers can use as a resource (with attached literature).

3. How can communities engage more effectively in the management of heritage places?

By being offered the opportunity to create an inventory of their natural and built, and other heritage. By forming formal Heritage NGOs in Each State, and subgroups in each region.

Other comments



As the Australian Heritage Strategy will provide a common framework and priorities for Australia's heritage to help ensure our heritage is recognised and protected for future generations, in keeping with global emerging trends in recognising the importance of Geoheritage in policy development, this submission aims to make the case that it is Australia's landscape and its geoheritage that underpins all "categories" of heritage and should therefore be at the core of an Australian National Heritage.

In addition, as with all strategies, actions within the Strategy should respond to emerging issues and gaps in the management and protection of heritage. This involves developing the following framework and set of processes:

- knowing what comprises Australia's Heritage (*i.e.*, identifying, assessing and documenting heritage places);
- protection (e.g., securing statutory protection for significant places, and/or archiving information on Australia's Heritage;
- developing policy/guidelines to assist decision making, appropriate management);
- providing support for conserving Australia's Heritage, *e.g.*, incentives, advisory services, financial assistance;
- communicating and promoting Heritage as being important to Australians;

Using the United Kingdom as an example, this type of framework as outlined above has resulted in extensive partnership opportunities, community engagement that includes the establishment of community groups, NGOs and new non-government funding arrangements identifying, documenting and managing its Natural, built and historic Heritage.

Australia, the world's only island continent, is a land of outstanding heritage values. It is the only developed country in the world with biodiversity described as being mega diverse, with an ancient and unique landscape, the home of the oldest continuous Indigenous culture on Earth, and a history of European settlement spanning only 200 years, with people from every culture of the world. Australia also is unique with respect to the cultural and political dichotomy that exists between the largely western European "new Australians", and the Indigenous culture that lives in a land, or "country" created by ancestral beings.

"The land is my backbone, I only stand straight, happy, proud and not ashamed of my colour because I still have land. The land is the art. I can paint, dance, create and sing as my ancestors before me. My people recorded these things....." Galurrwuy Yupingu Chairman of the Northern Land Council

The Australian landscape is also expressed in many forms artistically, such as, dance, music, literature, film, photography, and in paintings, *i.e.*, the arts. In addition, Indigenous peoples' wisdom and rights in relation to the landscape are now more widely appreciated, resulting in a shift in the understanding of the human history of those landscapes through a vast body of knowledge which is now being incorporated into biological research, land management, language, art and many other facets of contemporary Australian life.

Therefore, it is Australia's landscape, that is the basis for Australia's expression culturally, and heritage and



its significant geoheritage has played a role in this cultural development or in its historical buildings and/or events. This applies equally to all Australians, *i.e.*, The Traditional landowners (Indigenous peoples), colonists, and immigrants. In the light of the ongoing policy development in the United Kingdom and the rest of the world to include Geology, geological processes, and geoheritage, in grassroots planning and management, it would be insightful for Australia to develop a Heritage Policy that recognised the importance of the globally unique Australian landform as the basis for its GEO Heritage, its CULTURAL Heritage, and its BUILT heritage.

Following Brocx and Semeniuk (2007) there are 4 categories of geoheritage, as determined by the Geoheritage tool-kit, for science and education. In addition, aesthetically significant geoheritage sites include landscapes that are visually appealing because of their geologic features or processes. A National Heritage Strategy that encompasses these concepts has significant economic and social benefits. Many geoheritage sites are or can be tourist destinations and provide local and regional economic benefits and serve the public interest” for:

- tourism,
- science and education,
- and land planning and management, and is critical to advancing knowledge about natural hazards, groundwater supply, soil processes, climate and environmental changes, evolution of life, mineral and energy supplies, and
- most importantly, the basis for all aspects of the nature of the development of Australia in the history of Earth; the basis for development of Australia’s natural, *i.e.*, biodiversity and geodiversity; and its built and cultural development, and
- a community sense of place.

Margaret Brocx

Convenor
Standing Committee for Geological Heritage
Geological Society of Australia

Convenor
Committee for Geological Heritage
Geological Society of Australia (WA Division)

Representative ProGEO, Australia

References

Geological Society of America 2011 Draft Heritage Policy APRIL/MAY 2011, GSA TODAY Pp 56-58

Brocx M 2008 Geoheritage: from global perspectives to local principles for conservation and planning. Western Australian Museum (Monograph). Chapter 5 *The Australian Experience*. 175p. ISBN 978-1-920843-35-9.

Brocx M and Semeniuk V 2007 Geoheritage and geoconservation – history, definition, scope and scale. Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia 90: 53-87.