

ESSAY: WHOSE HERITAGE?

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INTRODUCTION

When we (the Gunditjmara people) sit down to do our planning, our submissions, our funding applications and our reporting, the question of 'how many systems?' is routinely asked.

Whose heritage? Yours, mine or ours? If the answer to this question in contemporary Australia is 'ours' then the challenge to be faced is how to develop integrated systems of management of diverse natural, environmental and cultural heritage values while respecting that different people and different groups will play different roles in decision making about that heritage and its management.

Australian heritage conservation, protection and management guidelines and legislative requirements are complex and range across natural and cultural features including more recent European post-contact layers of colonial settlement and the immense depths of Indigenous cultures that are embedded in the air, lands and waters of 'Country'.

Heritage managers, practitioners and bureaucrats are frequently asked the question 'whose heritage is it?' The question is compounded by the ever increasing integration and involvement of Aboriginal communities, government agencies, industry and the broader Australian society in debates about heritage management and conservation.

These debates are technical and involve emotional values as the question of 'whose heritage' is often about individual and community identity.

In particular, Aboriginal people and communities have strong attachment to place and interests that must be recognised, respected and built into heritage management decision making processes and frameworks. However, Australian heritage legislation does not always recognise or accommodate Aboriginal community decision making processes if these processes sit outside the current statutory framework. Integrated approaches to land and sea, natural resource and cultural heritage management in all its facets will not be appropriately achieved without continually increasing the involvement and the capacity of Aboriginal people and their communities, as key decision makers and often property owners, to participate in these often complex processes.

In this essay we have been asked to address the headline issue 'Whose heritage is it?', and to discuss the nature of the relationship between natural, Indigenous cultural heritage and non-Indigenous (or post-contact) heritage. We have also been asked if it is possible for 'specific groups' to claim ownership of specific parts of Australia's cultural heritage. The debates on each and all of these issues have polarised the cultural heritage management professions and public opinion in Australia for way too long; however, there are some very clear existing and emerging signposts that we can use to promote integrated and inclusive approaches to heritage management.

In order to understand and manage 'our (Australian) heritage' it is necessary to understand the context in which that heritage sits. This context, the cultural landscape, is both a heritage place and an analytical tool, which enables all groups with an interest in a place to begin to define their interest and its relationship to the other elements of the landscape. Cultural landscapes also provide the context in which we can explore the nature of what is perhaps the most contested of interests – that of Aboriginal people who are obligated to manage and to sustain an ongoing relationship with their cultural heritage. We will also draw on experiences of integrated management or 'caring for Country' provided by the Gunditjmarra community, in far south-west Victoria, which manages diverse and complex natural and cultural heritage in the Budj Bim cultural landscape. There is much to learn from these experiences in developing integrated approaches to heritage management in answer to the question 'whose heritage is it?'

DEFINING HERITAGE AND INTEGRATED HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

Heritage implies notions of inheritance and identity – it is the things we want to keep, protect and manage to pass on to future generations. It also helps shape, strengthen and express who we are as a community (at whichever level that is expressed).

Heritage management is ultimately about making decisions in the present, about the past, for the future.

Heritage is both "culturally constructed and politically shaped" (Aplin, 2002: p.16). Definitions of heritage are complex, contested and continually shifting. These definitional issues have been widely canvassed (see Aplin 2002, Johnston 2006 and Lennon 2006). Priorities and management approaches change over time often in response to other shifts in social and community values. These competing approaches are often most pronounced when the discussion turns to protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage. At times, Aboriginal cultural heritage management appears to sit uncomfortably with heritage disciplines and approaches dealing with Australia's European or built heritage and even natural heritage.

For Aboriginal people heritage management and conservation is an important way of sustaining their relationship with heritage places (Australian Heritage Commission, 2002, p.5). From an Aboriginal perspective "cultural heritage protection and management are an integral part of a holistic system consisting of economic, ecological, cultural and social inputs" (Orchard et al, 2003, p.414). These Aboriginal views and beliefs are often not taken into account in land use and natural resource management because of a "tendency for planners and decision makers to overlook, ignore, or misinterpret Indigenous perspectives" (Lane, 2002, p.829).

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES – AN INTEGRATED WAY OF VIEWING HERITAGE VALUES AND PLACES

Australia's Aboriginal people have "interpreted, used, managed, controlled, and renewed the natural and cultural resources of their traditional country for many generations" (Sutherland & Muir, 2001, p.25). Australia's first European settlers found an environment that had been extensively changed through many centuries of Aboriginal occupation, management and use. These settlers then continued to modify this landscape, often in dramatic fashion. Like Aboriginal inhabitants before them, the European settlers also found that the environment played a major role in shaping their lives, social traditions and communities. In Australia therefore, what is often considered to be a natural landscape is also a cultural one, and in many locations natural, Aboriginal, cultural and historical values co-exist layer upon layer revealing the history of human interaction with the environment over many, many thousands of years.

Definitions of cultural landscape commonly emphasise the layered impact of people on place over time and the meaning these places have for people. "A cultural landscape is a physical area with natural features and elements modified by human activity resulting in patterns of evidence layered in the landscape, which give a place its particular character, reflecting human relationships with and attachment to that landscape" (Lennon and Matthews, 1996, p.4). Similarly, "heritage places are located in cultural landscapes in association with other places, and ... these landscapes are made meaningful by people through processes of memory, traditions, and attachments through personal and community experiences" (Clarke and Johnston, 2003, p. 2).

Cultural landscapes help us understand the complexity of place and people's interactions over time with it. They are inclusive of natural values as the setting for this human interaction and embody the recognition that the 'natural' environment is also a cultural construction which, in Australia, means it has been managed and modified by Aboriginal people for many millennia. This relationship (or connection) is ongoing and continues in spite of the often forced movement of Aboriginal people away from their traditional lands, although it may be expressed differently, for example, as a result of introduction of new technologies or difficulties in accessing heritage places.

A landscape view is holistic and helps us to see and understand the connections, links and relationships between the elements of the landscape and the meanings it has for people. "Landscape ... has the potential to be the medium that helps in understanding the commonalities and differences in the ways that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities perceive cultural heritage" (Clarke and Johnston, 2003, p. 3). If the heritage endeavour is about protecting what communities value in the cultural landscapes they live in and use we must therefore understand that people from different social groups with different life experiences "read' the landscape differently ... view and use the landscape differently and place different values on the landscape" (Choy, 2009, p.4).

Not surprisingly then, debates about heritage are also debates about values; the inevitable questions that arise (are) – "which values should we conserve?" and of course, "whose values are we preserving?" (Clark, 2010, p.89). Integrated heritage management will therefore be inclusive of the range of values and connections expressed in the cultural landscape and the people and communities who express them.

INCLUSION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND PERSPECTIVES IN INTEGRATED HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

Legislative regimes and policy statements give specific meaning to and set up management frameworks and processes. These are also complex and overlapping and tend to entrench the separation of Indigenous cultural heritage from post-contact heritage and natural resource management. "Although the division of heritage into natural and cultural is a largely artificial distinction, and likewise the further division of cultural heritage into Indigenous and historic heritage, these distinctions have been strongly embedded in Australian law and government structures for more than 30 years" (Johnston, 2006, p.9).

Since the 1980s, the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage has increasingly involved its Aboriginal owners. One of the catalysts for this has been the strongly expressed concerns by Aboriginal people that they were being denied the right to make decisions about their cultural heritage. Speaking to archaeologists in the early 1980s, Tasmanian Aboriginal woman Rosalind Langford said, "It is our past, our culture and heritage, and forms part of our present life. As such, it is ours to control and it is ours to share on our terms" (Langford, 1983, pp.1-6).

In 1980, Gunditjmara women Christina Saunders and Sandra Onus commenced legal action to protect Aboriginal heritage places being impacted on by the construction of the Alcoa Aluminium Plant, near Portland, Victoria. High Court Chief Justice Gibbs found that "The appellants have an interest ... which is greater than that of other members of the public and indeed greater than that of other persons of Aboriginal descent who are not members of the Gourniditch-jmara people. The applicants and other members of the Gourniditch-jmara people would be more particularly affected than other members of the Australian community by the destruction of the relics" (cited in Weir, 2009, p.13).

This landmark decision acknowledged that there are times and circumstances when specific groups can claim 'ownership' of a particular heritage place or object. Not only that, it established in law that different communities of Aboriginal people have different connection to and levels of relationship with, and interest in, specific places. This has been further consolidated through the recognition of traditional owners and native title holders for whom the question 'whose heritage' also has quite specific meaning, especially when it comes to making decisions or 'speaking for Country'.

The Aboriginal view of Country is a holistic one encompassing the connection and interrelationship between "land and landforms, water and marine resources, the plants, trees, animals, and other species which the land and sea support, and cultural heritage sites" (Hunt, Altman and May, 2009, p. 3) and the people that live in them. For Aboriginal people environment and culture are synonymous and one cannot be understood without reference to the other. Managing cultural heritage is invariably seen as an integral aspect of managing the 'natural environment', it is not seen as separate from natural resource management (May, 2010, pp.1-2).

Aboriginal people also often have strong connection and ties with historic or post-contact heritage places. These are places where they may have lived, worked or even been forcibly incarcerated or massacred. They want to share their stories and be involved in decision making about these places. In sum, Aboriginal people are more than just another stakeholder group in heritage management.

Integrated Heritage Management – Examples from the Budj Bim Landscape.

In the following sections we will describe some examples of integrated heritage management, or aspirations to achieve it, in the Budj Bim Landscape. These examples highlight a number of the questions that may need to be considered at a national level if integrated heritage management is to be practically achievable for those who manage heritage values on the ground. Themes that will recur may be described as ‘Country’, connection, community and capacity – all of which are important elements of integrated heritage management.

In some areas of Australia, Aboriginal people are significant land owners (estimated to be over 20 per cent of Australia’s mass in 2007). This Aboriginal owned estate also includes some of “the most biodiverse lands in Australia” (May, 2010, p.1). This is just as true for the Budj Bim landscape in far southwest of Victoria as it is in remote northern Australia.

This landscape is formed on the lava flow created by the eruption of Budj Bim (also known as Mt Eccles). It has developed over many millennia to reflect an intrinsic layering of heritage values ranging from ancient Gunditjmara cultural practices and spirituality, their broad-scale landscape engineering for aquaculture, to their contact and post-contact experiences. As well as extensive and complex Aboriginal and historic heritage values, there are nationally and internationally significant flora, fauna, geological and geo-morphological values, all of which are an integral part of the Budj Bim cultural landscape.

The development of management regimes over the past 40 years to address the complex heritage profile can be aligned to the progress of the social relationships between Aboriginal people, governments and the broader community, including industry. The growing capacity of Gunditjmara people, through organisations including the Kerrup Jmara Elders Aboriginal Corporation, the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (a registered native title body corporate) and the Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation, to manage the Budj Bim cultural landscape’s Aboriginal values now also embraces the management of the historic and post-contact values that derive from the colonial settlement of the area.

Management of these many layers of heritage values is carried out in close consultation with government agencies including Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and Heritage Victoria, the Victorian Department of Sustainability & Environment, Parks Victoria and the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, and the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Water, Environment, Population and Communities (SEWPaC). Each of this multiplicity of agencies has its own legislative requirements and permitting conditions. There is also extensive consultation with local government and neighbouring non-Aboriginal landowners.

The heritage values and management of the traditionally engineered aquaculture systems and stone village sites are well documented (see McNiven and Bell, 2010). However it is more recent work on the historic heritage values of the Budj Bim landscape that is creating new thinking and knowledge about ‘whose heritage is it?’ In turn the management of these heritage values responds to the new understandings that the Budj Bim landscape continually presents.

St Marys Church, Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission

St Marys Church at the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission site is home to a set of values that are seen as historic. The church was constructed in the early 1860s from local bluestone to administer Christian religion to the Aboriginal people concentrated at the mission. After the mission's official closure in 1919, the church continued to serve Aboriginal families still living on the gazetted Aboriginal reserve as well non-Aboriginal families from adjacent farms for whom the mission was an important centre of social life.

The church was demolished in 1957 by government authorities after the spire was condemned as structurally unsound. As this was the same year in which the Aborigines Protectorate Board of Victoria was abolished, the community today still believes strongly that both events were an attempt by government to disperse the Aboriginal community that remained at the reserve. Today the remnants of the church, which is on land owned by the Gunditjmara people, include its foundation stones, the wooden pulpit and a set of window shutters. The sandstone font and the war honour roll are at St Johns Church in Heywood. Incredibly, the original church bell was discovered at a flea market, purchased by the Glenelg Shire Council and returned to the Gunditjmara community in 2005. Some of the original bluestone from the demolished church was used in construction of St Stephens Church in Hamilton and a dairy in Wallacedale.

During the past decade, a program of formal and informal proposals to conserve the church and its foundation site has progressed through the Gunditjmara community and the Lake Condah Sustainable Development Project. A survey asked the Gunditjmara community about how the site should be conserved, how the remaining fabric could be used for interpreting the church's story and ultimately how the community felt about the site's conservation. The community's responses ranged from constructing an exact replica of the church on the site, to leaving the site as it is to tell the story of the demolition and attempted dispersement of the Aboriginal community. Some asked if Jewish people would reconstruct places associated with the holocaust. Elders also had happy memories of the community's life at the reserve following the official closure of the mission. The subsequent community discussions on the fate of the site were deeply emotional as different generations of Gunditjmara recalled the role of foreign religion and its attempted genocide of Aboriginal people. A positive outcome of the exercise was the reaffirmation of the commonly held value that the same Gunditjmara hands and stone that had constructed the ancient engineered landscape had also constructed the church.

This value will be central in new proposals for the conservation and interpretation of the church site.

Colonial Dry Stone Walling & the Bessie Belle Sheepwash and Yards

The remains of dry stone walls demarcating early settler runs throughout the southwest of Victoria today give us a tangible view of the early colonial period of settlement. The material for constructing the walls was readily available from the volcanic plain across the southwest of Victoria.

If we apply the question of 'whose heritage is it?' to these colonial dry stone walls we may find the period presents heritage managers with many potential answers. Recent research revealed that Aboriginal people from the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission had worked as hired labour on the construction of these walls. Adding to the complexity of this story is the understanding that many

Aboriginal stone dwellings were dismantled and the stone material then used to construct the dry stone walls.

Constructed during the 1860s, the Bessiebelle Sheepwashes and Yards on the eastern area of the Budj Bim landscape are widely regarded as the jewel in the crown of dry stone constructions from Victoria's colonial period. The large structures are located on top of the lava stone and then embedded into sinkholes. The structures have deteriorated through climatic changes impacting on the lava flow with extended dry spells and seasonal inundation of water.

This same property also has extensive and significant Aboriginal heritage values including traditional aquaculture systems and stone dwellings. There is ethnographic reference to a large Aboriginal community living on the stones. The property is also the centre of the long running Eumeralla Wars of Resistance fought by Gunditjmara people. In 2010, title to the property was vested in the Gunditj Mirring Corporation, the representative organisation for Gunditjmara people.

The sheepwashes and yards have high heritage significance to the broader community attested to by the concern heritage organisations and agencies showed about the deterioration of the structures. Heritage Victoria funded a conservation project to restore and reconstruct affected parts of the structures. Experienced and qualified dry stone wallers Alistair Tune and Brett Pevitt were engaged. The significance of the project provided a special purpose and connection for Brett Pevitt as a Gunditjmara man.

Following the successful completion of first stage of the Bessiebelle Sheepwashes and yards in April 2010, Heritage Victoria has provided further funding to complete the bottom sections of the sheep baths.

Reflooding Lake Condah

Land returned to Gunditjmara following a native title settlement included Lake Condah, a natural lake which was drained by many artificial channels cut into its bed between the 1870s and 1950s. The Lake was important to the Gunditjmara people. "It was – and is – a cultural creation" (Bell & Johnston, 2008, p.6). The Gunditjmara people managed the water flows, created a series of wetlands and established vast aquaculture systems to harvest eels and farm fish. A long-held Gunditjmara community aspiration has been to re-flood the lake. Realisation of this aspiration required completion of numerous feasibility studies and reports detailing the hydrology of the area, potential impact of the reflooding on flora and fauna as well as studies of its impact on fish species and the eel population. Prior to construction commencing, an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan was approved to deal with Aboriginal heritage values and a Conservation Management Plan prepared to guide conservation of the post-contact heritage values. This was only the start. The new dam wall was built by Gunditjmara people working with the construction company and Gunditjmara people will monitor water flows, assess the impact on various species, and collaborate in further studies on the reinstatement of the aquaculture systems. These studies will be completed by a range of researchers from universities and government organisations. All this knowledge is then presented to full meetings of the Gunditjmara community, who will determine the future progress of any initiatives.

These examples describe a community able to drive an integrated approach to heritage management. However, this has not been achieved easily, has taken many years, has had many setbacks, and has not always resulted in outcomes with which the community is entirely happy. Many heritage management decisions are compromises reached after protracted and sometimes bitter debate and discussion. The case of the Convincing Ground is one such example.

The Convincing Ground

The Convincing Ground, just east of Portland, Victoria, is where early sealers and whalers massacred all but two men of the Kilgarer Gunditj clan around 1830. One of the first whaling stations in Victoria was built on the site soon after. 180 years later, the Convincing Ground became the focus of an intense struggle for the recognition of what happened at the place and how the site could be interpreted and managed. In essence the question being asked was 'whose heritage is it?' Not surprisingly it became part of the so-called history wars of the early 21st century, which also embroiled the heritage industry in supporting various interpretations of the history.

Planning permits for subdivision of the area were issued without consultation with the Gunditjmara whose interest in the area was well known and documented. The resulting damage to the area caused great distress to community members and became subject to a range of appeals and investigations.

At the end of the day, a section of the place has been set aside for the development of a commemorative park where people can reflect and learn about the location as one of the first recorded massacre sites in Victoria. While the result of the struggle to recognise and protect the place's story is somewhat adequate for the Gunditjmara, the community feels it was let down by the processes of the heritage industry and the heritage management systems. The Gunditjmara feel that the inscription on the Victorian Heritage Register gives demonstrably greater standing to the historic heritage significance than the cultural heritage values. "The weight given to the historic heritage values of the site is measurably greater than the weight given to our Gunditjmara interpretation of the place and its story" (Bell, nd, .3).

The historic heritage values were never challenged in the way the Gunditjmara story of the place and events were. Longstanding Aboriginal occupation and use of the area was attested to by aboriginal stories about significant landscape features such as Pinnabool, (Mt Clay), located close-by. There is also physical evidence in the form of recorded artefacts. The discounting of the value and precision of oral tradition as opposed to weight given to the post-contact written record was sadly a response that was all too familiar to the Aboriginal people who agreed to tell their story. The debates and hearings also included arguments over the nature and essence of the tangible and intangible values entwined in the cultural and historic heritage of the area. To the Gunditjmara it seems that tangible historic values and the presence of historic physical fabric were more relied on in the final decision to protect the place through inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register. But the contradictions do not end here. The Convincing Ground is also included on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register, with a different area of registration, which may be closer to the Gunditjmara view of the place and related events. However, do two registers with different registration descriptions with different permitting and other requirements present further future challenges to integrated management of the area?

THE GUNDITJMARA VIEW POINT

From these examples, we can see that the Gunditjmara community is working towards a more integrated, inclusive and efficient heritage management process that aligns cultural (Aboriginal) and historic (colonial) as well as natural heritage values rather than perpetuating the separation of assessment, management and treatment of these different heritage values. However, sorting through the multiple levels of bureaucracy and legal requirements is not easy. “When we sit down to do our planning, our submissions, our funding applications and our reporting, the question of ‘how many systems?’ is routinely asked. The community want and need to achieve the goal of being more inclusive with our heritage management work as responding to the two sets of heritage values and their intricate regimes is extremely time consuming and at times, very frustrating. Responding to the strata of local, state and commonwealth heritage requirements can be difficult, however the challenge does grow and enhance our capacity as a community and as an organisation working in the heritage industry.” (Bell, nd, p.2).

A THEMATIC APPROACH

The integrative approach adopted by the Gunditjmara has been reflected in the recent development of the Victorian Framework for Historical Themes (Heritage Council of Victoria, 2010). The themes provide a layered matrix that firstly recognises a place, and then allows the place’s story to be told in context of its various histories including natural, cultural and post-contact heritage values. The thematic approach is inclusive and as a starting point recognises that all places in Victoria have associations for Aboriginal people and that these associations are ongoing. Aboriginal cultural heritage and histories are included as an integral part of the histories and experiences that make Victoria unique. The Framework’s case study on Lake Condah and the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape provides the story of the cultural and historic landscape as part of both the Gunditjmara and the Victorian experience (Heritage Council of Victoria, 2010, pp. 50-51).

INTEGRATING APPROACHES TO HERITAGE MANAGEMENT – CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS

What do we learn from these Gunditjmara examples and how is this learning relevant to the development of a national heritage strategy. Does it help us answer the question ‘Whose heritage is it?’ Heritage management is about communities expressing their connection to Country and choosing what features they wish to preserve for future generations and what stories they want to share.

Connection to ‘Country’ or place is an important part of people’s commitment to protect heritage places and values. We have seen from the Gunditjmara examples that the community is well-placed to promote integrated cultural heritage management on lands they own or where they have a formalised, recognised management role. However, their capacity to influence or be involved in decision making about heritage is not as strong on private land owned by other people, where connection is not always so apparent.

In more urbanised areas of eastern Australia where Aboriginal people were speedily displaced and dispossessed of their traditional lands, Aboriginal heritage values will be widely found on land now in

non-Aboriginal private ownership. As the Gunditjmara examples show, connection to Country is not broken by changes in land tenure or historical events.

There is little written on managing Aboriginal heritage values on private land. Similarly, there is little funding or program support for private landowners who wish to manage these values just as they would manage natural values. In some areas, given the contested relationship between Aboriginal communities and private land owners, there may be a need to build the capacity of both sides to develop relationships around management of these heritage values. This is an area where inspiration might be drawn from tools developed in the natural heritage and biodiversity conservation spheres to encourage private landholders to play a role in helping to preserve Aboriginal heritage values without impinging on the certainty of their tenure. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures recognise and value stewardship of land. Closer collaboration between these communities in an integrated approach to natural resource and cultural heritage management will promote greater understanding of the histories and values of the cultural landscape.

From the Gunditjmara examples we also begin to appreciate that integrated management of heritage values in the landscape is necessarily multi-disciplinary, connecting different ways of seeing and thinking. An integrated approach requires the various systems of knowledge (including local knowledge), disciplines, technical expertise and management regimes to learn from each other.

The Gunditjmara examples continually stress the importance of building the capacity of the community to manage the complex cultural landscape they care for. Capacity to participate as partners in integrated heritage management is the final issue we wish to raise. Negotiating the maze of cultural and natural heritage management arrangements and agencies is a daunting obstacle for community groups (be they Aboriginal or other community groups) in general, particularly if they rely on volunteer labour or limited resources provided for specific purposes. Yet it is these very people at the local level who are often most connected to, passionate about, and committed to, managing and protecting the cultural and natural heritage values which give meaning to and tell the story of the ongoing and continually evolving relationship between people and the places they live.

The examples we have used about Aboriginal community efforts to manage all the heritage values in the Budj Bim landscape show very clearly that such an integrated approach requires dedication, time and access to a multiplicity of resources, both people and financial. This has been documented at length across Australia, in both remote and more urbanised areas of south eastern Australia (see also Pappin, 2007 and Hunt, Altman and May, 2009). As the Gunditjmara people have identified, the holistic approach preferred by Aboriginal communities is continually challenged by the separate silos of administrative and protective regimes dealing with heritage values. However, as we have seen its inclusive nature of this holistic approach has the potential to enrich the values we seek to manage as 'our heritage'.

In 2006, Chris Johnston asked what the consequences were of the apparent separation of the 'heritage world' and the 'natural resource management world'. She concluded that "there is a closer alignment today than there has ever been before, but more is possible" (2006, p.2). Five years later, this comment is probably equally true, and where the closer alignment is emerging much can be learnt from the knowledge and perspectives that Aboriginal peoples involved in cultural and natural resource management bring to the endeavour on a day to day basis. The closer alignment arguably

arises from the on ground efforts of community groups, and often succeeds in spite of administrative and policy frameworks of the day.

‘Joined up government’ is a frequently used term in relation to de-mystifying public administration for those people and communities who seek programs and services. A truly integrated ‘joined up’ system of managing Australia’s unique cultural landscape with its layers of heritage, histories and values has the potential to emerge from a reconciliation of the multiplicity of approaches, legislative frameworks, strategic policies and funding programs. An inclusive approach drawing on the strengths of each rather than continuing the siloed approach that is the heritage legacy is what is required to support communities to maintain their particular connection and build their capacity as they manage and protect ‘our’ heritage.

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