

# Australia

State of the Environment

2011

## Australian Heritage Council - State of the environment 2011 workshop – summary notes

DECEMBER 2011

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**FOR** the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities  
**ON BEHALF OF** the State of the Environment 2011 Committee



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## **Cover image**

Kantju Gorge, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, NT  
Photo by Director of National Parks

## **Preface**

This report was developed for the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities to help inform the Australia State of the Environment (SoE) 2011 report.

The Minister for Environment is required, under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, to table a report in Parliament every five years on the State of the Environment.

The Australia State of the Environment (SoE) 2011 report is a substantive, hardcopy report compiled by an independent committee appointed by the Minister for Environment. The report is an assessment of the current condition of the Australian environment, the pressures on it and the drivers of those pressures. It details management initiatives in place to address environmental concerns and the effectiveness of those initiatives.

The main purpose of SoE 2011 is to provide relevant and useful information on environmental issues to the public and decision-makers, in order to raise awareness and support more informed environmental management decisions that lead to more sustainable use and effective conservation of environmental assets.

The 2011 SoE report, commissioned technical reports and other supplementary products are available online at [www.environment.gov.au/soe](http://www.environment.gov.au/soe).

## **Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities - Australian Heritage Council**

### **State of the Environment 2011 Workshop**

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JJ Clarke Room, 1st Floor, Old Treasury Building, 20 Spring Street, Melbourne

Thursday 9 December 2010, 8.30am to 12.00 noon

#### **Attendees List**

<b>PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>POSITION</b>
Prof Carmen Lawrence	Chair, Australian Heritage Council
Dr Jacqueline Huggins	Indigenous Expert, Australian Heritage Council
Dr Libby Mattiske	Natural Expert, Australian Heritage Council
Prof Peter Valentine	Natural Expert, Australian Heritage Council
Mr Howard Tanner	Historic Expert, Australian Heritage Council
Prof Sharon Sullivan	Historic Expert, Australian Heritage Council
Dr Greg Terrill	Head of Division, Heritage Division, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
Mr Paul Murphy	Assistant Secretary, Heritage Division, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
Mr Theo Hooy	Assistant Secretary, Heritage Division, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
Dr Leah McKenzie	Director, Maritime and Movable Heritage Section, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
Prof Richard Mackay	Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd State of the Environment 2011 Committee - heritage
Ms Lynette Sebo	State of the Environment 2011 Secretariat, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

#### **Summary Notes**

##### **Workshop Overview**

Members of the Australian Heritage Council participated in a briefing and workshop discussion as part of the preparation for the Australian State of the Environment (SoE) 2011 Report to the Commonwealth Parliament. The workshop was facilitated by Richard Mackay, in his role as a member of the State of Environment 2011 Committee. For the purposes of the SOE 2011 Report and the workshop, 'heritage' encompasses both natural and cultural heritage, whether formally listed or not, and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage.

This workshop had four purposes:

- to brief participants on the process for preparing the SoE 2011 Report and outline SoE Live intentions;
- to share the current version of an evolving draft chapter outline for the heritage section of the SoE 2011 report and to invite comment;
- to gather high level opinion on key messages, major issues, threats and potential responses for Australia's natural heritage through an interactive discussion; and
- to identify potential contacts who could provide further information.

## **Introduction**

The workshop opened with Richard Mackay providing an outline on the SoE reporting approach, including the Committee's intention to address drivers, risk assessment, management effectiveness and outlooks in the report. Australian Heritage Council members were advised that this workshop is one of a number of workshops being conducted with peak heritage bodies

It was indicated that the aim of the workshop was to obtain the collegiate view on threats, pressures, risks and management responses for natural, Indigenous and historic heritage, together with recommendations on suitable contacts and data sources. A draft chapter outline for the 'heritage' section of the SoE 2011 report was circulated for comment.

Participants outlined their skills and background and a presentation was delivered by Richard Mackay.

## **Presentation by Richard Mackay**

Richard Mackay delivered a presentation on proposed issues to be addressed in the SoE 2011 heritage chapter and addressed topics including:

- Heritage listings and representativeness of lists
- Natural and cultural divide in heritage management - resourcing and capacity building
- Heritage development dilemma - reactive response to heritage impact management
- Climate change impacts
- Focus on heritage – iconic vs local heritage
- Importance of Indigenous landscape management
- Erosion of intangible elements of heritage and loss of stories and tradition
- Absence of a national heritage strategy
- Quantum of heritage in Australia – number of, distribution, gaps
- Quantum of heritage listings – comparison of Australia, UK, US and China
- Market failure owing to lack of market incentives
- 2006 Productivity Commission message – government and private ownership
- Adaptive re-use
- Sustainability initiatives impact on historic heritage – Green Star rating system
- Rural depopulation leading to decline in condition of rural heritage
- Subsidiary in management of heritage and jurisdictional overlap

## **Workshop discussion**

The findings from the workshop have been grouped into the following categories:

- Key messages and global heritage issues (global issues relate to those issues that can impact on all types heritage across all jurisdictions)
- Natural heritage
- Indigenous heritage
- Historic heritage

Topics raised during the workshop discussion include:

- Heritage governance, identification, planning and management
- Heritage funding and resourcing
- Integration of all types of heritage and with other domains
- Understanding of heritage definition, values and benchmarks
- Heritage as a public good, social connection and community attitudes to heritage
- Commemoration of heritage
- Cultural landscapes

## Australian Heritage Council – identification of issues and potential information sources

### Key messages and global heritage issues

Issue	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SoE 2011</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SoE 2011 needs to get heritage messages out and give the issues some profile in order to promote national discussion</li> <li>• There is a need for national leadership, so that heritage becomes part of the Australian narrative and is celebrated by the community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governance</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low prominence is currently given to heritage on the political agenda</li> <li>• there is currently no national heritage strategy and there is a need for overarching principles</li> <li>• heritage can be a 'policy tool'; the power that resides in policy tools is not fully appreciated</li> <li>• effective policy tools are tenure blind and permit effective management across boundaries and regardless of ownership, tenure or jurisdiction</li> <li>• continued government reorganisation and name changes hinder effective management of heritage</li> <li>• there is a need for a clear definition of roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Planning</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there needs to be defined protected 'no go' areas that have a holistic management approach, eg. Biosphere reserve concept</li> <li>• need greater clarity between 'no go' and multi use zones; previous 'no go' zones are often zoned as 'multiple use' which opens opportunity for development and industry</li> <li>• long term strategic planning is required with adequate geographic and bioregional representation</li> <li>• need to integrate heritage into the community and into planning mechanisms at all levels</li> <li>• many LGAs have done Aboriginal studies, however few LGAs have incorporated them into planning and management</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Population Shift</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is directly affected by the dual processes of rural population decline and urban intensification</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identification</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is concern that if place does not make it to the National Heritage List it is perceived as unimportant</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Management</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a need for proactive responses to heritage management; if a proactive approach is not taken it will be too late to protect some heritage assets</li> <li>• protective measures often result in response to development actions</li> <li>• need to generate a culture of long term care in the management and maintenance of heritage</li> <li>• education beyond the rule book: incentives eg. Broken Hill, City of Melbourne</li> <li>• a lack of information /data (natural environment): better understanding</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Integration of all types of heritage</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a lack of integration in the management and evaluation of natural and cultural heritage</li> <li>• the Kimberley is a good example of an integrated approach to the protection of natural, Indigenous and historic heritage where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heritage definition and integration with other domains</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is limited integration of heritage with other domains, ie. population and sustainability domains, consequently the scope and role of 'heritage' is not well defined; there is a need to build an argument within the national discourse to maintain heritage values</li> <li>• the National Landscapes project offers an example of this kind of integrated narrative</li> <li>• if the heritage community has not clearly defined heritage to itself, conveying the concept of heritage to the general community will be difficult</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Benchmarks</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what are the benchmarks for measuring the integrity and condition of our heritage?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indigenous heritage is more than just pre-1788</li> <li>- natural heritage – what is 'natural'?</li> <li>- historic heritage – integrity of values?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Public good</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• heritage should be promoted as a public good; this could be achieved through a move away from a protection focus to public availability and use (for those places not already protected).</li> <li>• heritage can be promoted through:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- economic injection</li> <li>- increase positive attitudes to heritage</li> <li>- provision of facilities required by tourists</li> <li>- integration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community awareness and attitudes</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purity of heritage vs popularity of heritage; there is a disconnect around what people think heritage means</li> <li>• a lot of heritage management and conservation is done well; highlighting exemplary heritage management outcomes can help promote community interest</li> <li>• there is huge support for heritage, yet the heritage industry is not adequately connecting with, or embracing these attitudes</li> <li>• heritage is integral to the quality of life and the 'human' relationship to the environment manifests in heritage; important relationships between people and place that contribute to the quality of life need to be promoted and maintained</li> <li>• current generation life choices do not support heritage values, though there is a change in the current generation's experience of natural heritage</li> <li>• communities have become more dynamic which has led to a breakdown of people's association to place and a reduced awareness and concern for heritage</li> <li>• development and destruction erodes human linkages to heritage</li> <li>• history is 'great' and stories need to be shared that convey this</li> <li>• Community education beyond the rule book: incentives eg. Broken Hill, City of Melbourne</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cultural landscapes</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural landscapes are not yet well understood; the wider</li> </ul>

	landscape needs to be considered and managed as whole rather than focussing on sites within a landscape
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### Natural Heritage

Issue	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there is variation between the Commonwealth and states/territories in the approach for management of natural heritage values – need to be proactive in how values are defined – have come a long way but notable information gaps still exist</li> <li>reserved lands should be representative</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there is notable knowledge about the natural environment, however full knowledge about what is there and how it works is inadequate, eg. hydro-ecology in the tropics; if it is not fully understood it cannot be adequately monitored</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Heritage Trust (NHT) abandonment has led to the loss of Natural Resource Management (NRM) regional plans that direct project implementation and an integrated approach to natural heritage management</li> <li>new management approaches are required to take account of the range of tenures and different jurisdictions that occur outside of national parks</li> <li>need to recognise the private contribution to biodiversity outcomes; an increased number of private land owners are managing for biodiversity outcomes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an outward focus toward natural heritage that occurs outside of parks is required</li> <li>wider landscape management of natural heritage needs attention in order for the landscape to survive</li> <li>the natural heritage estate does not consist of reserved and listed lands only; it also includes other bioregion conservation activities such as private conservancies</li> </ul>

### Indigenous Heritage

Issue	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural diversity/values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Commonwealth should not seek to unify Indigenous heritage; a national heritage strategy must recognise the diversity of Indigenous heritage, its complexity and variety of institutions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain funding to manage significant lands</li> <li>there is a need for funding incentives to bring natural and indigenous management and implementation to a higher level</li> <li>distribution of funding is scattered through Caring for Our Country and Natural Resource Management (NRM) programs</li> <li>distribution of funding and priorities should be driven by values</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous Protected Areas are the greatest addition to the protected area estate in the last 10 years and cover many bioregions that do not occur in parks; IPAs receive funds for management of natural areas which in turn support increased Indigenous</li> </ul>

	<p>employment in regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large integrated place assessments for areas such as the Kimberley, Burrup and Cape York, conducted by multi-skilled and multi-jurisdictional teams (beyond national parks staff) can lead to good outcomes for heritage if the timing is right; these places present as good examples of the fundamental need to maintain links between all types of heritage</li> <li>• previous destruction and development in the Burrup has led to pressure to list the site for its archaeological (as opposed to intangible) values; the assessment approach for the Burrup is now an accepted approach, with a high level of places recorded during assessment</li> <li>• Indigenous heritage management and funding programs need to be revisited</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social connection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous people’s stories of spiritual connection with land and water form a core part of the nation’s heritage; they present an understanding of spiritual connection to Country and the continuum and evolution of the land; this message needs to be conveyed to the community</li> <li>• Indigenous heritage stories provide a connection between natural, Indigenous and historic heritage and is an effective means of connecting the wider community with Indigenous heritage; examples of cultural stories that can be shared include bogong moth dreamtime stories and stories associated with missions, cattle stations, reserves, massacres, good relations, early integrated communities and the Tent Embassy</li> <li>• children’s literature has been used successfully to educate young audiences about Indigenous heritage</li> </ul>

### Historic Heritage

Issue	Comment
Political potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong political interest in historic heritage is currently lacking, but is an area of unrealised potential</li> </ul>
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• funding of the historic environment is inadequate; funding only permits management of a limited number of sites</li> <li>• there is a false perception that government is adequately funding heritage management needs; current funding from the Commonwealth of \$4.4m is inadequate</li> <li>• Jobs Fund funding was well spent with good outcomes and the establishment of good systems that are now in place; while the contribution from the Jobs Fund stimulus was notable, a shortfall still exists and the process needs to be repeated</li> <li>• the private sector makes a large contribution to historic heritage and need incentives and recognition; Port Arthur is an example of the value of public sector investment</li> <li>• more funding through regional programs is required</li> <li>• there is dated but interesting data comparing investment (per heritage place /area / by population) across UN, NZ, UK</li> </ul>

Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• there are a number of mechanisms for managing historic heritage that include re-use, managed ruins and management incentives</li><li>• there are many examples of re-use of old facilities – ‘living heritage’ – that include the University of Notre Dame, an impressive example of a whole precinct transformed from warehouse to academic facilities; Argyle Stores in the Rocks, Sydney and Abbotsford Convent, Melbourne</li><li>• there are indirect benefits to local communities through the re-use of historic heritage structures</li></ul>
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• historic heritage does not consist of only buildings; there needs to be a landscape focus as there is limited protection of cultural landscapes</li></ul>
Commemoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• historic heritage policy aims to protect, preserve and commemorate;</li><li>• commemorative obligations need to be built into legislation</li><li>• existing commemorative events include broad-ranging programs such as Heritage Week, and site-specific events such as the Myall Creek commemorative service</li></ul>