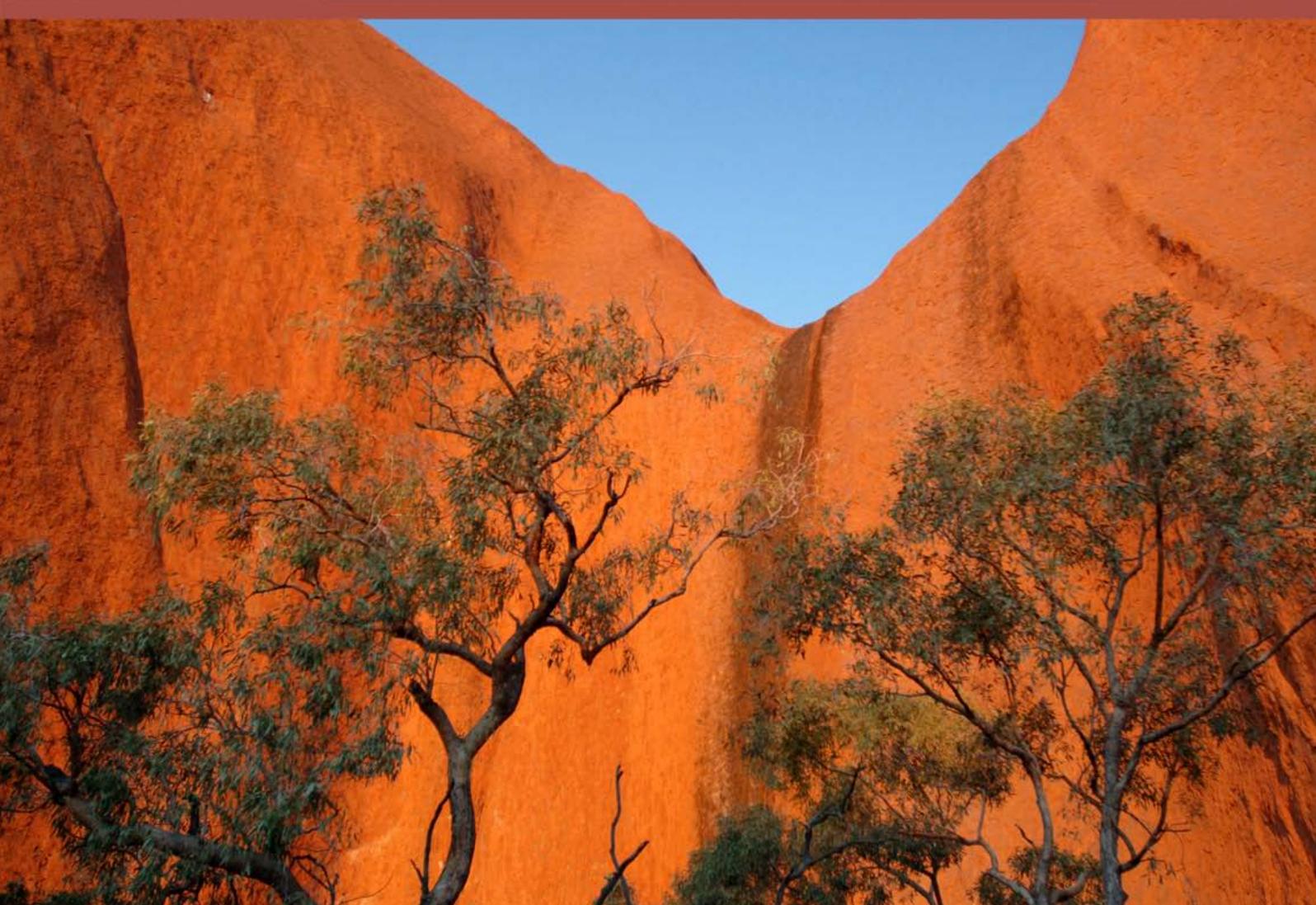


Australia ICOMOS -State of the environment 2011 workshop – summary notes

DECEMBER 2011

PRODUCED BY Richard Mackay
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.

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities - Australian Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Australia ICOMOS)

State of the Environment 2011 Workshop

Jubilee Room, NSW Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW

Friday 25 February 2011, 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Attendees List

PARTICIPANT	POSITION
Jane Harrington (TAS)	President Australia ICOMOS, World Heritage Reference Group Coordinator
Anthony Coupe (SA)	Vice President Australia ICOMOS, Consultant Contract and Copyright Group Coordinator
Helen Wilson (NSW)	Secretary Australia ICOMOS
Kevin O'Sullivan (SA)	Treasurer Australia ICOMOS
Anne Brake	Executive Committee member, WA Representative Australia ICOMOS, Annual Report Coordinator
Amy Chan	Executive Committee member, Deputy VIC Representative Australia ICOMOS
Kerime Danis	Executive Committee member, Deputy NSW Representative Australia ICOMOS, Australian Bungalow in Malta Working Group Coordinator
Tracy Ireland	Executive Committee member, ACT Representative Australia ICOMOS, Minutes Secretary, Burra Charter Working Group Coordinator
Anita Krivickas	Executive Committee member, NSW Representative Australia ICOMOS, International Scientific Committees Coordinator
Michael Queale	Executive Committee member, SA Representative Australia ICOMOS, General Publications Committee Coordinator
Peter Romey	<i>Historic Environment</i> Editorial Committee Coordinator Australia ICOMOS
Natica Schmeder (Vic)	Membership Secretary Australia ICOMOS, Blue Shield Australia Proxy Member, Disaster Management Guidelines Coordinator
Kristal Buckley	International Vice-President ICOMOS – Responsibility for Asia-Pacific (VIC), Pacific Heritage Reference Group Coordinator
Duncan Marshall	ACT member Australia ICOMOS
Joan Domicelj, AM	NSW member Australia ICOMOS
Meredith Walker, AM	Qld member Australia ICOMOS
Peter Phillips	NSW member Australia ICOMOS
Jane Lennon, AM	Qld member Australia ICOMOS
Sheridan Burke (NSW)	NSW member Australia ICOMOS and Chair International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage
Robert Bevan	NSW member Australia ICOMOS
Ruth Woods	Executive Committee member, Qld representative Australia ICOMOS
Richard Mackay, AM	Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd State of the Environment 2011 Committee

Lynette Sebo	State of the Environment 2011 Secretariat, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
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Summary Notes

Workshop Overview

Office bearers, Committee Members and other invited Australian members of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Australia ICOMOS) 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 workshop and SOE 2011 Report, 'Heritage' encompasses both natural and cultural heritage, whether formally listed or not, and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage.

This workshop had three purposes:

- 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 review and critique some of the proposed key heritage issues and messages; and
- to gather high level opinion on key messages, major issues, threats and potential responses for Australia's cultural heritage through an interactive discussion.

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. ICOMOS members were advised that this workshop is one of a number of workshops being conducted with peak heritage bodies.

Richard outlined that the aim of the workshop was to obtain the collegiate view on key messages, threats, pressures, risks and management responses as they relate to cultural 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.

Presentation by Richard Mackay

Richard Mackay delivered a presentation on proposed issues to be addressed in the SoE 2011 heritage chapter that included:

- 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 de-population leading to decline in condition of rural heritage
- Subsidiary in management of heritage and jurisdictional overlap

Open discussion

During open discussion a number of heritage issues were discussed:

- Resilience
 - Different types of heritage place have different thresholds where natural, Indigenous and other types of cultural heritage values can be lost. Discussion on the resilience of heritage often leads to a focus on materials; when loss of original fabric occurs, heritage value is lost and is no longer resilient. Recordings do not best capture stories as the original fabric may tell the story most effectively, eg. Indigenous fish traps or early European settlements. Australian communities place high value on original fabric, but values do not always vest in fabric alone.
 - Management responses to natural heritage and cultural heritage are very different; natural heritage may be offset by land management initiatives. Cultural heritage values once lost may not be recovered or may be transmitted in intangible ways such as stories. From an Indigenous heritage landscape perspective, any loss of heritage is significant.
 - The conditions for resilience of natural and cultural heritage are different:
 - natural – representativeness of the natural environment is important for resilience and often extend beyond administrative boundaries
 - cultural (tangible) – often occurs as points on the landscape with an emphasis on fabric rather than a focus on wider landscapes
 - cultural (intangible) – can be dependent on association with place, therefore preservation of places may be important
 - resilience exists in the community and is therefore a community concept that should have a focus on ethics and social considerations eg. rebuilding the community town hall
 - future focus: need to maintain connections to Indigenous stories while telling new stories
 - maintaining associations to place are important, however if an interpretation approach in lieu of a protection approach is taken, consideration should be given to contextual, physical and non-physical settings
 - the sum of small local decisions erode the cultural landscape, eg. the massive scale of impacts in the Kimberley feeds into resilience question; if there is no stocktake on what exists, how can we know what we have lost?
- Natural disaster events – fire, flood, cyclone
 - a great deal of heritage is threatened by natural events
 - there is limited funding at any level for heritage management or rebuilding post disaster
 - cultural heritage needs to be recognised as a significant factor in the recovery of community health and cohesion
 - management plans are not effectively protecting heritage, significant losses arose from recent flooding (eg. south-east Queensland) and fire (eg. King Lake)

- What are we preserving?
 - Why are we calling these things we protect heritage and what are we trying to sustain with cultural heritage? Two suggested purposes for protection are:
 1. preserving evidence by caring for items that form part of the historic record; and
 2. maintaining a sense of continuity in the environment by sustaining what matters – identifying who we are and where we have come from

- Sustainability impact on historic heritage – Green Star rating system credits the use of recycled materials but does not recognise reservoirs of embodied energy of heritage buildings.
 - (David Eades has done work on this – issues are starting to be addressed with solutions offered)
 - (Peter Phillips to provide name of QUT seminar on Sustainability - Almost Sustainable http://www.isr.qut.edu.au/downloads/qut_ewb_css_1.pdf)

- Perspectives
 - management paradigm vs an appreciation paradigm: interpretation and celebration are part of the ‘conservation’ of cultural heritage places

Drivers and factors influencing heritage discussion

Workshop participants formed groups to discuss the range of major issues, threats and potential responses for Australia’s heritage through an interactive discussion. The following issues were raised:

Issue	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a lack of government support and leadership for heritage with no national strategy or adequate resourcing for heritage protection • the national leadership void is exacerbated by the statutory limitations on the role of the Australian Heritage Council • subsidiarity issue; (ie: heritage not being managed at the appropriate level of government) contributes to the symptoms of inadequate heritage protection • current decision making powers do not reflect community attitudes • failure to link individual, public and government interests • jurisdictions handle cultural heritage differently • heritage mostly in public institutions and museums • the role of natural/national heritage trusts has changed over the last 30-40 years as heritage is now being managed in a different context • the establishment of a ‘heritage industry’ has set heritage professionals apart from former associations – eg. sustaining the viability of Indigenous communities; the ‘Heritage industry’ needs to reside within larger concerns • political focus is directed toward World, National and Commonwealth heritage lists

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus needs to be a national focus that is broader than Commonwealth government responsibilities; chopping heritage into state/territory/commonwealth counters good heritage protection and perpetuates the silo effect • National Trust/volunteer role has changed, with the increased involvement of government in heritage listing and regulation – but an important pressure/lobby role remains, as well as an important contribution to stewardship and building of social capital. • there is more in the EPBC Act that could be applied / enforced for heritage • despite continuing community interest there is a perceived loss of good will for cultural heritage with decision makers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a lack of good outcomes for heritage owing to the imperfect conceptualisation of what heritage is, in particular, Indigenous heritage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systematic failure of the planning system to protect heritage (for example, NSW Part 3A) • regulatory and planning laws are oppressive • there are no shared resourcing, planning or management systems in place for natural and cultural (tangible and intangible) heritage – all are competing for resources and not working together • Australia has a frontier mentality in its approach to planning – the starting point for planning is often to do something new rather than commencing with the old and familiar • Australia is a young nation and is still struggling with its identity and can sometimes overcompensate in an attempt to capture its identity (eg: the prolific presence of memorials)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heritage properties are managed by both the public and private individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible/Intangible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heritage institutions responsible for heritage management focus on tangible heritage • there are multi-generational and multi-cultural people with knowledge and stories who do not necessarily place value on them or know how to share them, and are often not identified or captured as part of assessment surveys (especially at local government level)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the scale and pressure of economic development, including urban development and mining, outweighs heritage which is perceived as being of no monetary value and expendable • there is a paradigm of personal wealth creation that is considered to be of greater importance than heritage; capitalisation on land and property is paramount rather than viewing heritage as a public good • in planning the focus is expedience and heritage protection is reactive rather than proactive (see Hart UK)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heritage should act as a trigger for rejuvenation not development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public attitudes and awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • surveys indicate that the public care about heritage but their actions don't demonstrate their concern. Public perception is that heritage is adequately protected as they think legislators and governments are protecting heritage. • the community are driven by local issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when natural disasters such as cyclones or fires occur, community health and wellbeing also relies on the retention and conservation of heritage places and values • Climate change is also accelerating and its potential consequences for all types of heritage are dire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heritage concepts need more adequate coverage in environmental management courses and other training that has crossover with heritage management • conservation skills needs to be incorporated into education and training for planners, architects, public and tradespeople
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and listing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure between heritage industry, government and community about identifying what we want to keep and what can be preserved through interpretation and stories (see UK research) • landscape assessment and protection is an especially challenging area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population shift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • population shift from rural areas leads to neglect and abandonment of heritage while increased population and densification in urban areas presents pressure in the form of urban encroachment and development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is an aversion by managers and the community to allow heritage to become ruins when in some cases such progression is part of a normal process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteerism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heritage protection and management has a high dependency on volunteers • local precincts are losing capacity to effectively manage, and OH&S issues are limiting volunteer capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Victorian 'State of the Historic Environment' is a good potential resource