

SoE 2021 Heritage Supplementary Report 5

Heritage Expert Workshops – Approach and Results

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Notes & Disclaimer

This is an independent report by the author. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

The information in this report is current to the end of January 2021.

The author has taken all reasonable care to ensure the information provided in this report is accurate. However, there may be inadvertent errors that have occurred in compiling this report. The author takes no responsibility where this is the case.

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Appendix 1 SOE 2021 Heritage Theme Expert Consultation Briefing Note

Abbreviations

ACIUCN	Australian Committee for IUCN
AHC	Australian Heritage Council
AWHAC	Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee
DAWE	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
HCOANZ	Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
SOE	State of the Environment
WHA	World Heritage Area

1 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared as a supporting document to the Australia State of the Environment 2021 Heritage chapter (McConnell et al. 2021). It documents the approach to, and results from, three Heritage Expert Workshops held in 2021 as part of the expert elicitation undertaken to provide up-to-date, expert data for the SoE 2021 Heritage chapter.

A major challenge in compiling SoE Heritage reports is the lack of empirical or other easily accessible heritage data. For this reason, heavy reliance is placed on expert opinion and data collected specifically for the 2021 Heritage chapter. The workshops, also undertaken for the SoE 2011 and 2016 Heritage reports, were one of the approaches to collecting this data used in preparing the SoE 2021 Heritage chapter.

The Heritage Expert Workshops were aimed at getting more detailed information, including on current trends and issues for heritage and for specific areas of heritage at a national level; and was intended to complement the on-line Heritage Expert Survey, also undertaken for the SoE 2021 Heritage chapter.

Consequently, Heritage Expert Workshops were conducted with national heritage bodies, in this case the Australian Heritage Council, the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee and Australia ICOMOS.

It was hoped to also hold a workshop with the Australian Committee for IUCN (ACIUCN), but no workshop was able to be organised in the SoE 2021 timeframe.

It was also proposed initially to hold a Heritage Expert Workshop with Indigenous people to look at the state and trends in relation to Indigenous heritage. However, given that a mechanism was established for broader Indigenous expert consultation (undertaken by Indigenous consulting group Murawin), it was decided to include heritage questions in this broader consultation rather than hold an additional, Indigenous heritage specific workshop. The results of this consultation are reported in Murawin (2021), an Indigenous chapter supplementary report.

The design of the Heritage Expert Workshops is outlined in Section 2 of this Supplementary Report, and the results from the workshops are presented in Sections 3 and 4.

The other expert opinion and data collected for the 2021 Heritage report is reported in other Supplementary Reports. These are:

- **Heritage Supplementary Report 1:** Annotated listing of Australian Heritage Protection Legislation (including international instruments) (McConnell & Janke 2021).
- **Heritage Supplementary Report 2:** Heritage and Protected Area Agency Survey Approach and Results (McConnell 2021a).
- **Heritage Supplementary Report 3:** Local Government Survey Approach and Results (McConnell A 2021b).
- **Heritage Supplementary Report 4:** Heritage Expert Survey Approach and Results (McConnell (2021c).

2 APPROACH

General Approach

The approach to the Heritage Expert Workshops generally followed that taken by Richard Mackay for the SoE 2016 SoE Heritage report:

- workshops were held with key national heritage bodies
- the workshops were consultative and interactive
- the workshop formats included assessing the current state of heritage and the trends in relation to condition, pressure and management effectiveness, as well as inviting general comment

A similar approach to the SoE 2016 Heritage report was seen as important to allow comparison between the 2016 and 2021 Heritage reports. To this end the ‘state of the heritage’ indicators used in 2021 closely paralleled those used in the 2016 Heritage report (kindly provided to the author by Richard Mackay). The slightly different nature of the SoE 2021 Heritage chapter however necessitated some changes to the indicators, primarily the addition of a small number of new indicators (e.g., for wellbeing).

All Heritage Expert Workshops were virtual workshop-style meetings (held by Zoom or Teams). Although face-to-face meetings would have been preferred, and were the format for the SoE 2016 Heritage Expert Workshops, this was not possible because of the in-person meeting constraints due to covid-19.

The format of each workshop was similar and comprised:

- introductions and an Acknowledgement of Country
- a brief overview to the SoE 2021, noting changes compared to SoE 2016 (e.g., new themes, Indigenous involvement, inclusion of wellbeing)
- overview of the aim, format and order of the workshop
- general discussion (roundtable) of key achievements and issues for heritage since 2016 (see *Workshop Data*, below)
- state, pressures and management trend evaluation based on a set of ‘state of the heritage’ indicators, which asked for a collective opinion on the current situation and trend for each indicator (see *Workshop Data*, below).

Each workshop was approximately 2.5 hours long. The workshops were facilitated by the Heritage theme lead author, Anne McConnell. Each of the workshops was recorded (with participant verbal agreement), and the facilitator also documented the indicator-based state, pressure and management trend evaluations for each meeting. In addition, for the first workshop (with the Australian Heritage Council), summary notes were taken of the full workshop by Roger Morrison, one of the SoE 2021 team members.

Prior to each workshop, a workshop Briefing Note (see Appendix 1) was sent to each workshop participant. This provided background to the SoE 2021 Heritage theme reporting and its broader SoE context, an outline of the purpose and format of the workshop, and information on how the SoE 2021 Heritage workshop data would be used.

Workshop data use conditions included that: the information provided will be used only for the purposes of SoE 2021 Heritage theme reporting; the raw workshop data (i.e., expert opinion), held by the author, is to be treated as confidential; and where individual comment is used in the SoE reporting, it will not be personally attributed unless permission for this is given. Participants were also advised that, given the

inability to fully report on the workshops in the actual Heritage theme report, as part of the SoE 2021 reporting a supplementary report on the approach of, and results from, the workshop would be prepared and be publicly available.

Workshop Data

General Discussion

In the general discussion, participants were asked to focus on the following topics in relation to heritage:

- the key achievements in 2016-2021
- the main issues 2016-2021
- what is needed to address issues, impacts and risk, and to
- provide comment on the Australian Heritage Strategy.

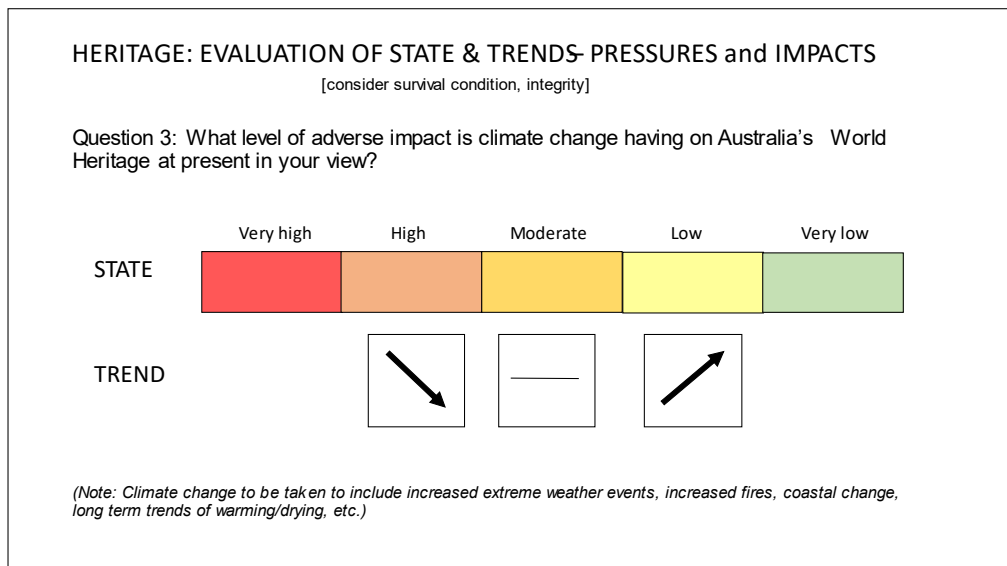
State of the heritage indicators

In the second half of the workshop, participants were asked, collectively, to assess the level (state) and trend for a number of indicators for the state of heritage.

To obtain comparable expert opinion, participants in each workshop were asked a set of standard questions relating to the state of heritage, pressures and impact on heritage and heritage management in the Australian context, but related to their expertise (e.g., Australian World Heritage for the AWHAC workshop). Each question is regarded as a state of heritage indicator.

The full set of 14 indicator questions are replicated for each workshop in Section 3 where the results of the workshop evaluations are reported (see Tables 1-3). The indicator questions were presented to the workshop as a PowerPoint display, with one slide per question (Figure 1, below, provides an example).

Figure 1 Example of Heritage Expert Workshop indicator question as presented to the workshops



For each question, participants were asked to:

- rank the level of response according to a five-level ranking (e.g., very good/good/moderate/poor/very poor) as it applies at present
- assess the trend according to three trend options (i.e., increasing/stable/decreasing) over the last 5 years, but with particular emphasis on the present situation, and
- to provide any specific comment not already covered in the general discussion.

3 THE WORKSHOPS

Australian Heritage Council Workshop

The Heritage Expert Workshop with the Australian Heritage Council (AHC) was held on the 12th February 2021. The workshop was held via a Teams meeting organised by the Heritage Branch, DAWE.

The workshop participants included:

Australian Heritage Council	Dr David Kemp	AHC Chair
	Dr Jane Harrington	AHC historic heritage expert
	Dr Steve Morton	AHC natural heritage expert
	Lyndon Ormond-Parker	AHC Indigenous heritage expert
DAWE Heritage Branch	Sian Hewitt	observer
	Tammy Malone	observer
	Anne Wynn	observer
SoE 2021	Anne McConnell	SoE 2021 Heritage theme lead author; workshop facilitator
	Roger Morrison	DAWE SoE 2021 Team; note-taker

Prof. Kerrie Wilson (AHC natural heritage expert) was an apology and Rachel Perkins (AHC Indigenous heritage expert) attended the Indigenous theme consultations rather than the Heritage Expert Workshop. The SoE 2021 Heritage theme Indigenous co-author at the time was undertaking fieldwork and not available to attend the workshop.

AWHAC Workshop

The Heritage Expert Workshop with representatives of the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) was held on the 5th May 2021. Australian World Heritage property Advisory Committee Chairs and the one Indigenous member were invited to attend. The workshop was held via a Teams meeting organised by AWHAC Chair, Luke Donegan.

The workshop participants included:

Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee	Luke Donegan	AWHAC Chair; Australian Convict Site WHA (Fremantle Prison)
	Michael Ellis	Australian Convict Site WHA (Hyde Park Barracks)
	Regina Flugge	Ningaloo WHA
	Sue Sargent	Fraser Island/K'gari WHA
	Leslie Shirreffs	Wet Tropics WHA
	Di Walker	Shark Bay WHA
	Malcolm Wells	Tasmanian Wilderness WHA
	Mike Williams	Willandra Lakes Region WHA
SoE 2021	Anne McConnell	SoE 2021 Heritage theme lead author; workshop facilitator

Terri Janke, the SoE 2021 Heritage theme Indigenous co-author at the time of the meeting, was an apology.

SoE 2021 Heritage Supplementary Report 5: Heritage Expert Workshops Approach and Results (McConnell, March 2022)

Australia ICOMOS Workshop

The Heritage Expert Workshop with Australian ICOMOS was held on the 28th February 2021. The workshop was held via a Zoom meeting organised by Australia ICOMOS. Workshop attendees included the Australia ICOMOS Executive Committee and a small number of invited (by Australia ICOMOS) expert members.

The workshop participants included:

Australia ICOMOS	Helen Lardner	Australia ICOMOS President
	Mitch Cleghorn	Executive Committee member
	Bruce Dawbin	Executive Committee member
	Tracy Ireland	Executive Committee member
	Lucy Irwin	Executive Committee member
	Wayne Johnston	Executive Committee member
	Anita Krivickas	Executive Committee member
	Liz Little	Executive Committee member
	Caitlin Mitropoulos	Executive Committee member
	Adam Mornemont	Executive Committee member
	Michael Queale	Executive Committee member
	Kristal Buckley	invited expert member
	Richard Mackay	invited expert member
	Peter Phillips	invited expert member; ICOMOS Board member
SoE 2021	Anne McConnell	SoE 2021 Heritage theme lead author; workshop facilitator

Matthew Whincop, an Australia ICOMOS Executive Committee member, was an apology. The SoE 2021 Heritage theme Indigenous co-author at the time was undertaking fieldwork and not available to attend the workshop.

4 WORKSHOP RESULTS – INDICATOR ASSESSMENT

4.1 Australian Heritage Council Workshop

The assessed state and trends for the workshop indicator questions are given in Table 1, below. The responses apply to Australian heritage generally, but with a focus on National Heritage, particularly in relation to management effectiveness.

Table 1 Australian Heritage Council Heritage Expert Workshop state and trend indicator question assessment

Indicator question	State (level)	Trend	Other comment
KNOWLEDGE AND CONDITION			
Q1 In your view how good, at present, is the understanding and recognition (in particular through listing or reservation) of Australia's heritage?	average	stable	
Q2 In your view what is the condition and integrity of Australia's heritage places and protected areas overall?	good	stable	- the trend for National Heritage noted as in fact variable from place to place - the condition and integrity of Australian heritage more generally is regarded as average, but decreasing-stable
PRESSURES AND IMPACTS			
Q3 What level of adverse impact is climate change having on Australia's heritage at present in your view?	high	increasing	
Q4 What level of adverse impact is population having on Australia's heritage at present in your view?	very high	increasing	
Q5 What level of adverse impact is industry having on Australia's heritage at present in your view?	moderate	stable	- improvement in some areas of industry noted - little improvement noted in relation to Indigenous heritage
Q6 What level of adverse impact are introduced organisms having on Australia's heritage at present in your view?	moderate	stable	
MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS			
Q7 In your view how well managed is Australia's heritage overall at present?	well	increasing	- concern was noted at the lack of real improvement in relation to Indigenous heritage management (although there are good initiatives, e.g., the Indigenous Ranger program)

Q8 In your view how well is government showing leadership in relation to heritage protection and conservation in Australia?	moderate	stable	- in relation to National Heritage it is overall variable (Darwin Statement and Dhawura Ngilan given as an example of good leadership and partnership) - it was noted that at the state/territory level leadership is very variable, particularly in relation to Indigenous heritage
Q9 In your view how well does the way in which Australia's heritage is managed contribute to human wellbeing?	well	stable	- it contributes strongly, particularly since heritage is important to identity, and identity is significant to wellbeing - it could contribute better if heritage places were better managed
Q10 In your view how well is Australia responding to and meeting international obligations and responsibilities for heritage protection?	very well	stable	
Q11 In your view how well does the statutory framework in Australia (at all levels) protect and conserve Australia's heritage?	moderate	stable	- the framework was noted as quite good, but variable; with the application of the framework being poor - the framework is in need of improvement-
Q12 In your view how well is Australia's heritage being identified and listed/reserved?	well	increasing	- identification of the broader range of Indigenous heritage values is needed - the Native Title Act is being used to improve recognition and protection of Indigenous heritage
Q13 In your view how well is the protection and conservation of Australia's heritage being funded?	poorly	stable	
Q14 In your view how well resourced is the protection and conservation of Australia's heritage with respect to the skills base and staff levels?	moderately	increasing	- this area noted as variable - staffing levels are not good, but improving in the Indigenous area - the skills base is improving due to many skills being developed

Note: The 5 'state' levels for *Knowledge and Condition* are very good/good/average/poor/very poor; for *Pressures and Impacts* are very high/high/moderate/low/very low; and for *Management effectiveness* are very well/well/moderate/poorly/very poorly.

4.2 AWHAC Workshop

The assessed state and trends for the workshop indicator questions are given in Table 2, below. The responses apply to Australian World Heritage.

Table 2 Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee Heritage Expert Workshop state and trend indicator question assessment

Indicator question	State (level)	Trend	Other comment
KNOWLEDGE AND CONDITION			
Q1 In your view how good, at present, is the understanding and recognition (in particular through listing or reservation) of Australia's World Heritage?	good	increasing	- OUVs are well recognised, but some values are still not recognised - further assessment is still needed given the ongoing changes to properties (e.g., climate change and biosecurity issues)
Q2 In your view what is the condition and integrity of Australia's World Heritage properties overall?	average	decreasing	- the situation is variable: cultural properties are seen generally as being in a good - very good state and improving; but natural properties are seen as being in a poor state and declining.
PRESSURES AND IMPACTS			
Q3 What level of adverse impact is climate change having on Australia's World Heritage at present in your view?	very high - high	increasing	- climate change is impacting cultural properties, but not as much as for natural properties
Q4 What level of adverse impact is population having on Australia's World Heritage at present in your view?	moderate	increasing	- population pressures are a major issue for Australia to resolve (to find the balance between preservation and other land use) - the impacts are not necessarily direct
Q5 What level of adverse impact is industry having on Australia's World Heritage at present in your view?	moderate	increasing	- impacts very variable across properties - the impacts are not necessarily direct
Q6 What level of adverse impact are introduced organisms having on Australia's World Heritage at present in your view?	high	increasing	- impacts are very variable across properties - some good control work has occurred/is occurring (e.g., of Yellow Crazy Ants in the Wet Topics) - the eradication of pests and diseases is difficult; control should therefore be the main goal
MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS			
Q7 In your view how well managed is Australia's World Heritage overall at present?	Moderate	decreasing	- key issues are poor governance and resourcing - some World Heritage properties are managed well as standard protected areas, but there is not the ability to manage the big issues

Q8 In your view how well is Australia's World Heritage being identified and listed/reserved?	poorly – very poorly	stable	- issues include: no strategy for nominations; slowness of progressing nominations (e.g., Cape York); no interim protection for nominated places; poor recognition of cultural values
Q9 In your view how well does the statutory framework in Australia (at all levels) protect and conserve Australia's World Heritage?	moderate	stable	- how well a statutory framework is implemented is important in how well it works - the use of both state/territory and national level legislation to manage WH properties seen as an issue
Q10 In your view how well is Australia responding to and meeting international obligations and responsibilities for heritage protection?	well	stable	- the exceptions are in relation to UNDRIP and the Paris Agreement both of which are seen as being poorly met (and climate the biggest issue)
Q11 In your view how well is the protection and conservation of Australia's World Heritage being funded?	very poorly	decreasing	- \$5.3 million recent grant funding for 20 projects does not reflect the value of Australia's World Heritage - resources are inadequate to deal with major impacts
Q12 In your view how well resourced is the protection and conservation of Australia's World Heritage with respect to the skills base and staff levels?	poorly	decreasing	- resourcing and the skills base are decreasing in terms of need, i.e., skills needs are changing (e.g., need better trained firefighters for World Heritage properties) and a greater skills mix is needed to meet the needs of the very different property types - however there are some areas of improvement (e.g., Indigenous Ranger programs)
Q13 In your view how well is government showing leadership in relation to heritage protection and conservation, in particular in relation to World Heritage, in Australia?	poorly	stable	- the government is showing leadership internationally, but not nationally (e.g., the Great Barrier Reef approach regarded as crisis management) - the advisory governance framework (i.e., advisory committees) is seen as good, but improved Indigenous participation is needed (e.g., reinstatement of AWHIN)
Q14 In your view how well does the way in which Australia's World Heritage is being managed contribute to human wellbeing?	well	decreasing	- seen as contributing to human wellbeing where well managed and presented (i.e., transmission to future generations is occurring), by 'being there', and through good accessibility

Note: The 5 'state' levels for *Knowledge and Condition* are very good/good/average/poor/very poor; for *Pressures and Impacts* are very high/high/moderate/low/very low; and for *Management effectiveness* are very well/well/moderate/poorly/very poorly.

4.3 Australia ICOMOS Workshop

The assessed state and trends for the workshop indicator questions are given in Table 3, below. The responses apply to Australian cultural heritage generally.

Table 3 Australia ICOMOS Heritage Expert Workshop state and trend indicator question assessment

Indicator question	State (level)	Trend	Other comment
KNOWLEDGE AND CONDITION			
Q1 In your view how good, at present, is the understanding and recognition (in particular through listing or reservation) of Australia's heritage?	average	increasing	- this is a complex matter as the notion of what heritage is, is changing
Q2 In your view what is the condition and integrity of Australia's heritage places and protected areas overall?	average	decreasing	
PRESSURES AND IMPACTS			
Q3 What level of adverse impact is climate change having on Australia's heritage at present in your view?	moderate	increasing	- evident impacts are bushfires (e.g., SA lost 4 state heritage listed places in 2020, and thousands of hectares of protected area have been burnt); more extreme weather events; more cyclical microclimate variation (e.g., diurnal change which affects materials such as masonry); falling water table; increased rainfall (e.g., rainwater disposal systems on many historic buildings cannot cope with higher rainfall)
Q4 What level of adverse impact is population having on Australia's heritage at present in your view?	moderate	increasing	- regional places are struggling to attract people to live and work due to low and declining populations; as a result regional heritage buildings do not get used or looked after, including those of state significance - population pressures in urban areas are allowing the argument to be made that heritage is not sustainable because they do not allow for high enough density (although this view has been shown not to be necessarily correct), which puts heritage at risk; this risk is heightened by the government response (i.e., support for urban densification)

Q4 continued			- there are particular issues for Indigenous communities (who have been displaced historically) in relation to urban and peri-urban development, as this places additional pressure on Indigenous heritage in these areas
Q5 What level of adverse impact is industry having on Australia's heritage at present in your view?	high	increasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tourism, as an industry, is impacting cultural heritage - the renewable energy sector is impacting cultural heritage - extractive industries are having a negative impact on natural and cultural heritage - industry is impacting its own heritage - urban change is impacting smaller scale urban industrial and commercial heritage - some industry makes a significant contribution to heritage conservation; it would be worth assessing how much industry is contributing in monetary terms to heritage protection, especially compared to the government contribution
Q6 What level of adverse impact are introduced organisms having on Australia's heritage at present in your view?	Moderate - high	increasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impacts are heightened at present by the covid-19 pandemic; this is occurring in different ways, including reducing important sharing of knowledge about heritage conservation; a very obvious and significant impact is the loss of revenue from tourism at tourist sites (although a rest from tourism last year [2020] has been good for some sites) - bushfires have increased the spread of invasive species and feral animals in natural environments, including protected areas, and the government response is inadequate
MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS			
Q7 In your view how well managed is Australia's heritage overall at present?	moderately	decreasing	
Q8 In your view how well is Australia's heritage being identified and listed/reserved?	well	increasing	
Q9 In your view how well does the statutory framework in Australia (at all levels) protect and conserve Australia's heritage?	moderately	decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is variable across jurisdictions - development is the greatest threat as legislation in effect permits destruction (noted as being 'designed to licence destruction')

Q9 continued:			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - even although specific protections may be reasonable, the framework as a whole is very poor at ensuring conservation - even though the framework for protection may be okay, implementation is poor - the framework is poor for protecting/conserving Indigenous heritage and historic heritage at the local level (but improvements are occurring in relation to Indigenous heritage)
Q10 In your view how well is Australia responding to and meeting international obligations and responsibilities for heritage protection?	poorly	decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some areas are operating well; what is not operating well is periodic reporting for World Heritage, underwater cultural heritage, and intangible cultural heritage - World Heritage sites are not being well managed and supported (lack of genuine concern by government) - Australia is not subscribing to enough international treaties - Australia could do more to support heritage internationally and regionally (i.e., be a good international citizen)
Q11 In your view how well is the protection and conservation of Australia's heritage being funded?	poorly	decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a major issue is decreasing funding to support heritage (e.g., tax incentives, heritage advisory service limited) - there is too much of a focus on iconic sites - there is a lack of private commercial funding, in part due to the poor incentives offered for this
Q12 In your view how well resourced is the protection and conservation of Australia's heritage with respect to the skills base and staff levels?	poorly	decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - professional expert staffing levels are poor - there is a shocking lack of skills in heritage agencies and on heritage councils - there are inadequate heritage trade skills available
Q13 In your view how well is government showing leadership in relation to heritage protection and conservation in Australia?	very poorly	decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australia ICOMOS' collective view is that leadership in relation to cultural heritage is very disappointing (seen for example in the Australian Minister for the Environment's published response to the 2020 EPBC Act review - to hand more responsibility to the states/territories, but without putting in place the standards and processes required to make this work)

<p>Q14 In your view how well does the way in which Australia's heritage is being managed contribute to human wellbeing?</p>	<p>very poorly</p>	<p>decreasing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the poor contribution has been evident in the impacts of events such as Juukan Gorge which shows we have not got it right - it would be better if people had more faith in the government's ability to protect heritage - the extent to which heritage contributes to human wellbeing is variable for different contexts - real information on this is limited - it was generally felt that cultural heritage contributes directly and is important to human well being - heritage, especially for Indigenous people, can be fundamental to peoples' identity, hence to human wellbeing
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Note: The 5 'state' levels for *Knowledge and Condition* are very good/good/average/poor/very poor; for *Pressures and Impacts* are very high/high/moderate/low/very low; and for *Management Effectiveness* are very well/well/moderate/poorly/very poorly.

5 WORKSHOP RESULTS – PARTICIPANT VIEWS

The following is a summary of the participant comment from the Heritage Expert Workshops based on the general discussion sessions in each workshop, which represent approximately an hour of discussion per workshop. It does not include comment made in relation to the indicator assessment (see Section 4). The comment is based on the transcripts of the discussion, but some use has also been made of notes taken during the workshops.

The comment has been summarised and frequently paraphrased, largely to condense the comment. Where the same general comment has been made by more than one participant in the same workshop, this has been included only once; and there has been some amalgamation of comment by participants in the one workshop where this contributes to a more coherent single comment. The comment is therefore not verbatim comment.

5.1 Positive Heritage Achievements

Broad Achievements

- An achievement (in an inverse way) was the high level of public outrage at the destruction of the Juukan Gorge rock shelters. It enabled important messages and particularly complex aspects such as heritage legislation to be covered in the media and picked up in a number of areas. Another similar such achievement is the degree of public outrage in New South Wales generated by the use of the Sydney Opera House as an advertising billboard. People suddenly understood that unacceptable damage to heritage values occurs in diverse ways.
- There appears, on the ground, to be an upswell in appreciation of cultural heritage. People are taking a step back and reconsidering, and the younger generation that is coming through have a different opinion. They might not be in charge of making business decisions yet, but it bodes well for the future because they do have a different respect and recognition for heritage assets. Some of these changes are already visible in business with an increased professionalism in practice and formalising of roles, for example there is an increasing, active interest in improving project management, in how to get project management training into archaeologists and in formalising post-archaeology heritage roles within industry.
- The change in attitude of government between 2016 and 2021 to now talking about science, and supporting climate change adaptation for heritage places. Change in government has been slow, but in a positive direction. This is highlighted by the recent bushfires and the improved post-recovery processes, including the understanding and attitudinal change in relation to the contribution that can be made by Indigenous fire management expertise.
- A positive is the growing cooperation between the Commonwealth and the different states/territories engendered through HCOANZ, and largely the outcome of working on Indigenous heritage issues, and now at a new level.
- Within the cultural heritage profession an achievement is a real rise in the visibility of participation and voice of emerging professionals. It has taken hard work to make it happen, but it is going to make a real difference in future heritage practice. It is working at the international level and now starting to happen in Australia.
- There is a growing positive change towards how Aboriginal heritage across the country is engaged with.
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- There is a much better, more exciting and optimistic appreciation of Aboriginal cultural heritage, and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples bring incredible richness, value, and distinction to our country as a whole. This is likely only to grow.
- The discussion of decolonisation, which was not happening much within, or outside, heritage 5 years ago is a real positive.
- In the Indigenous heritage area, there have been significant achievements both in terms of the amount of Indigenous Protected Areas and other land reserved for cultural purposes and, more importantly, in relation to mechanisms that genuinely empower traditional owners to have responsibility, particularly with respect to those lands.
- There has also been some slow, but positive, change in relation to Indigenous cultural heritage and to Indigenous intellectual property rights both at the international level, but also at the national level, for example through Intellectual Property Australia which has developed Indigenous policies.
- Most of the key achievements in the past 5 years have happened despite our heritage systems, not because of them.
- In relation cultural heritage management it is hard to find too many positive achievements as they are pretty much overwhelmed by the growing trends in the wrong direction.

Specific Achievements – National level

- A key achievement is the inscription of Budj Bim on the World Heritage List [this was noted as key achievement in all 3 workshops]. It contributes to a better understanding of the complexities of Indigenous cultural heritage and demonstrates the tenacity of the Gunditj Mara people over a really, really long period of time. This is encouraging evidence of a commitment to, and respect for, increasing empowerment of Traditional Owners in heritage management. Such listings also lead to an increased public focus on heritage matters for people outside of the discipline, which is a positive thing.
- The Australian Heritage Strategy is a very important achievement although it just pre-dates 2016. It is the first heritage strategy Australia has had.
- A great achievement of DAWE since 2016 is the Commonwealth Minister for Heritage responding to applications under that the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Protection Act* for emergency interventions in the states and territories where indigenous proponents have objected to destruction of their cultural heritage.
- A key achievement was the 2016 SOE Heritage report findings in relation to Indigenous heritage, which basically described the death by a thousand cuts of indigenous heritage. This had a real impact. In part this was because the Heritage report expressed the findings in a quite different way to other SOEs. Linked to this is the move in the 2021 SOE to have Indigenous co-authors across the themes – another achievement.
- The other reasonable achievement between 2016 and 2021 is the substantial monetary resource allocation for cultural heritage, albeit as part of other programs dealing with other things, or for iconic heritage projects and places. This includes for example the Australian Heritage Grants funding for the Cascades Female Factory Visitor Centre, and the Australian Museum in Sydney which has been getting multi-million dollar funding. But at the same time local heritage has had little funding.

Specific Achievements – Australian World Heritage

- The largest achievement over the period [2016-2020] in relation to World Heritage would be the cultural nomination and listing of Budj Bim because it is the first Australian site to actually be nominated by an indigenous community.
- The Best Practice Guidelines developed by AWHAC in c.2020, and published on the DAWE website.
- The increasing focus on First Nations in the decision making and management of Australian World Heritage properties, including achievements in relation to Indigenous co-management. Whilst there is certainly a huge amount of support for it, and there is broader social recognition, including from governance bodies, of the need to address the cultural heritage aspects of natural properties, there

are still challenges (see *Heritage Management*, below). As an example of what is happening in this area, with Native Title determined in 2014, the Butchulla community are now working towards co-stewardship of K'Gari-Fraser Island.

- The climate change vulnerability report being undertaken by CSIRO [Lin et al. 2021], which provides a useful current state of the Australian World Heritage properties review. (Some concern however was noted about the lack of quantitative data to support the findings). This is an important follow-up study facilitated by DAWE to the 2009 implications of climate change to World Heritage properties report.
- An increased focus on biosecurity in Australia's World Heritage properties, which is important particularly for natural properties, with weeds, pests and diseases frequently being identified as key threats in reporting. Whilst there has always been a focus on biosecurity in Australia, there hasn't been a focus on environmental biosecurity. The appointment of a Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer by the Australian Government, although not particularly well-resourced, has put environmental biosecurity on the agenda. Specific biosecurity positives are the eradication of myrtle rust on Lord Howe Island, and the near eradication of rats as well.
- Increasing focus on the need for World Heritage focused strategic plans for each Australian World Heritage property.
- A key achievement from 2016 to 2021 in relation to World Heritage is the inclusion of more national park into, or proposed to go into, some natural World Heritage properties.
- There is increased buffering for the Shark Bay World Heritage property with Bush Heritage having bought Hamelin Station (where there are a lot of good management actions happening, including taking all the goats off the property, which means a key area containing stromatolites is being properly managed).
- Resolution of the exclusion of forestry and mining development from the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area in 2016.
- The current status of AWHAC, which now has greater representation and a stronger representation for cultural properties.
- The establishment or the re-establishment of forums of World Heritage site managers has been extremely valuable and an achievement. It is important that site managers are engaged as part of this process, and this now seems to be now evident, although to a lesser extent with natural heritage places.
- The inclusion, since 2018, of AWHAC members in the annual World Heritage Forum that the Australian Government facilitates, previously open to World Heritage property executive officers and key managers only, has, importantly, significantly increased the amount of networking and knowledge exchange and enabled AWHAC to meet face-to-face.

Specific Achievements – Australian Heritage Council

- The prominence that has been given to indigenous heritage and to the development of the vision statement and best practice standard for Aboriginal heritage (i.e., the Darwin Statement and Dhawura Ngilan) under the leadership of the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand (HCOANZ), but with the AHC taking a leadership role in this, led by the AHC Indigenous experts working with Indigenous Heritage Council Chairs around Australia.
- That recognition of Indigenous heritage has risen to the top of the AHC's agenda in the last 5 years and that indigenous heritage is finally getting the recognition that it's deserved for so long is a signal achievement.
- Because of the structure of the Australian Heritage Council, which integrates the three areas of heritage, the natural and historic heritage experts have given significant support to indigenous heritage and, equally, have recognised the importance of Australia's Indigenous heritage for both the natural listings and for the historic listings.

- There have been a number of significant Indigenous places that have been added to the National Heritage list, to recognise and protect this heritage. More are being proposed and have been put on the Priority Assessment List, and Commonwealth Heritage places have been listed with their indigenous values recognised.
- In relation to natural heritage, one of the main achievements of the AHC has been to pursue thematic studies, which should be an important input into the State of the Environment report.
- Publication of the story of the National Heritage List, that tried to bring together how remarkable Australia's heritage is in order to promote Australia's heritage, is one of the AHC's achievements.
- The AHC's document on monuments in Australia was a significant document which addressed the issue of memorialising the past, and particularly the colonial past, in the context of Indigenous heritage and Indigenous perspectives on the colonial era. It showed how the concept of monuments can be recast to recognise both the white settler heritage as well as indigenous heritage.

Specific Achievements – Local level

- A better understanding of Indigenous history and cultural heritage is occurring in a number of ways in Victoria. Examples are: 1. Through changes in education, with more detailed and accurate information being provided as part of school curricula. 2. The National Trust in Victoria is partnering with Registered Aboriginal Parties to understand the Aboriginal history and values of National Trust places, and to re-do the interpretation to reflect these new perspectives. 3. At the local level the City of Melbourne have recently done a new study which has engaged key Traditional Owner groups to look at places that are already on the heritage register, to re-evaluate what's significant about these places and rewrite the citations to include the new findings.
- A state-based achievement is the empowering, in Victoria, of the Registered Aboriginal Parties through the Aboriginal heritage legislation, and greater reclaiming of cultural practices, although there is still a really long way to go.
- The amendment of the Aboriginal Heritage Act in Victoria, just to provide (explicitly) for intangible cultural heritage is an achievement. The Act is not perfect in this respect, and it has not been implemented very well or fully, but it is opening a door that no Australian jurisdictions were willing to open before, and is hopefully the start of something bigger and better.
- Broadly, the 2016 amendments to the Victoria Aboriginal Heritage Act were an achievement. There is also a current review looking at strengthening that Act because, although it might be one of the best in Australia, it could also be better.
- The guidance adopted by the Heritage Council of Victoria on better articulation of social value at the state level is also a considerable achievement.
- An achievement in relation to cultural heritage in South Australia has been the dramatic raising of the profile of cultural heritage within the community in the last couple of years, something that the community are doing themselves.
- Another cultural heritage achievement is the development (in South Australia) of a TAFE Certificate III traditional trades course to better recognise and encourage growth in the traditional trades and trades area. This is almost ready. It is a huge achievement to be able to roll this course out through the TAFE system, which is where the frontline action is for heritage work.
- At a local level, the decision to retain the Powerhouse Museum in its original location in Ultimo [Sydney] was an achievement. It was the result of some very fierce campaigning, but demonstrated a real broad community love for heritage, and how upset people become when they see things that they believe are important being threatened.
- Although a local level achievement, a state Heritage Council late last year [2020] listed a building that was built in 2001. This is a really positive action to demonstrate to the general community that heritage isn't just old buildings, but is about what places mean to people.

5.2 Australian Heritage Strategy

- The Heritage Strategy, and having a heritage strategy, is important to provide a broad understanding of the important heritage functions of government, and to allocate resources accordingly.
- A good document, but it needs to be operationalised and resourced appropriately, and this needs leadership, which has been lacking.
- The Australian Heritage Strategy is fine, even if no changes occur as a result of the review. But it needs to be actually championed, led; and there needs to be a commitment from the Commonwealth government to make it work. Instead, the Commonwealth government has abrogated its leadership. It needs ongoing championing by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment.
- The Australian Heritage Strategy is supported by AWHAC, but it needs to be resourced appropriately and to have drivers to push it forward. AWHAC has pushed to implement a number of the WHA related activities in the Strategy, and although progress has been made, it was not easy.
- It has been such a lost opportunity. At the time of the 2016 SOE it was seen as a positive, and it could have been a positive, but because of issues such as lack of leadership in taking action and the lack of accountability it has not delivered what it could. And now it is being reviewed, but without measuring how successful it has been or not been. The major departmental staff changes, with few current staff being involved in the development of the Strategy, is also an issue for the review.
- The Australian Heritage Strategy will only be effective if the notion of shared responsibility is accepted and the different players do their bits –the state governments, the territory governments, the national government, the NGOs, and the corporate sector. But these players need to be coordinated, and that needs to be done by the Commonwealth government, with the leadership and commitment of the Environment Minister and through the Council of Ministers process. That hasn't happened. It didn't happen initially in the changeover of Ministers and it is still not happening.
- An issue that needs to be considered in the Australian Heritage Strategy (and more broadly) is the issue of nature-culture separation, and the system of siloed definitions of heritage that continue to be used. This was evident for example in the consultation with Traditional Owner groups as part of CSIRO's study on impacts of climate change on World Heritage places [Lin et al. 2020], where all groups consulted stressed that all World Heritage is cultural heritage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as the importance of recognising this, even though it is classified as natural heritage. They also stressed that understanding this is important in addressing the impacts of climate change.
- The Australian Heritage Strategy is, disappointingly, a very eastern states focused document.
- How the Australian Heritage Strategy is reviewed and progresses over the next five years is really important.

5.3 Key Heritage Issues

Note: Issues noted are mainly listed under the different relevant Pressures and Management aspects

- A very major issue is that across Australia local heritage is not faring well due to the regulatory regime. This is especially because of inconsistencies in planning and regulatory regimes which, for example, may identify a heritage item or put a place in an overlay, while at the same time zoning it for high rise development, which creates an inevitable tension and results in a decision that is generally for development approval rather than for heritage protection. If we are going to identify places that warrant conservation, we should have regulatory regimes including zoning, for example, that support heritage protection, rather than conflicting with it.
- Legislative reform of the EPBC Act is needed, as well as for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Protection Act (there have been multiple reviews of this Act going back to the 1990s).
- Inadequate funding for heritage [refer *Heritage Management – Resourcing*, also *Pressures and Managing Pressures*, below].
- Climate change is the big ‘flashing light’ disaster zone for all of our heritage places. It would be really disappointed not to see it treated appropriately in the review of the EPBC Act.
- Ongoing change is a major issue, with climate change the dominant change issue for natural heritage, and the significance of this is obvious. The issue is not so much to stop change, as the natural heritage National Heritage places will go on changing, but the task is to nudge the change to these places in the right and proper, and valuable directions.
- Heritage remains vulnerable to natural and anthropogenic threats as noted in the 2016 State of the Environment report Heritage chapter, and this has increased since 2016.
- The requirement for free, prior and informed consent in relation to indigenous heritage is essential to pursuing the recognition and protection of indigenous heritage, but equally it poses very significant challenges in terms of ensuring this type of consent, and has significant resource implications.
- Leadership failure is a major issue. This was the number one message of both the Australian Heritage Strategy, and SOE 2016. It's become worse, not better, in my opinion.
- One of the biggest issues for heritage is a lack of a champion at Commonwealth level, both in terms of our politicians and the senior bureaucrats. We can see this with what is happening with the Australian Heritage Council at the moment, and in lots of other fields. Heritage is largely not important at the Commonwealth level.
- A major issue is the continuing dominance of governance-driven, top-down oriented definitions of heritage that can't encompass how communities feel about heritage places. These issues were played out in the public domain with Federation Square in Melbourne, which is a good example of public discussion of the tensions between formalistic architectural, art-historical definitions of heritage values as opposed to the emotional and wellbeing aspects. It has major implications for heritage as in the case of the Canberra War Memorial, which also demonstrates what happens if a tick box approach is taken to heritage values. In the case of the War Memorial, the assessments focus on the impact on views and architectural features, when really what is impacted (will be destroyed) is a community sense of value of a small, modest, treasured place built out of the grief of a national community in the 1940s and early 1950s. Nobody has been able to really communicate that aspect of value through the formal mechanisms to date.
- Another main issue for cultural heritage is in relation to intangible cultural heritage. In relation to historic heritage, there has been some progress made since 2016 with the traditional trades, for example with the development of an Australian Quality Framework by Australia ICOMOS who has also been advocating for this. The framework however has not yet got the strategic driver behind it, that it needs to be successful. With skilled practitioners retiring, the passing on of traditional trades skills is a related potential concern.

5.4 Pressures and Managing Pressures

Pressures - General

- Requirements for the effective management of World Heritage in the face of the various pressures include the following: 1. Collaborative policy approaches nationally and at the international level. 2. Action, especially in relation to climate change (it was noted that AWHAC produced a report on what was needed in 2019, but there has been no subsequent action in relation to the report). 3. Development of a greater awareness of, and profile for, Australia's World Heritage and its values. 4. The government needs to make protection of OUVs the management priority (currently not the case).

Climate Change

- Climate change is a process of rapid and drastic acceleration of the process of normal ecological change, so it adds a whole set of new challenges to managing that inevitable process of change. For us, as custodians now, to work out what we want to do about those places and how to nudge them in directions that we think are right is the challenge. Lack of government funding adds even more difficulty to the task of managing accelerating change under climate effects. This is a major issue.
- The threat of climate change and its potential effect on cultural heritage items is an issue, especially given that at a national level not enough is being done to combat the risks and the future impacts that will occur.
- In relation to climate change, the elephant in the room is Australia's continuing commitment to non-renewables, mining and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Climate change is one of the more significant of threats to Australian World Heritage. It is also a global crisis as all natural World Heritage properties are in danger.
- Climate change is a key issue for World Heritage, with OUVs already in decline from climate change. While loss is inevitable, there are mitigating actions that can be taken. Government does not appear to be responding to this challenge. There needs to be greater appreciation of the issue; and properties need to develop and take a strategic approach to the issue and, as part of this, the OUVs of the properties need to be clearly defined.
- Climate change is a massive issue for all World Heritage properties. The implications of climate change are very far reaching. The assessment of climate change across all the World Heritage properties shows that this isn't the case just in relation to the natural sites. For example, the Sydney Opera House concert hall is lined with beech veneer, and apparently beech veneer is becoming increasingly more difficult to source because of climate change.
- Climate change is an issue for Australian World Heritage as it is resulting in values decline. However, it is important to recognise that for different properties different pressures affect the values differently, and that specific responses have specific implications for management. As an example, the Willandra Lakes World Heritage property setting means that it's the intensity (and duration) of rainfall that is a particular concern, and this is because it results in erosion which uncovers archaeological heritage. However, the property doesn't have the resources to do the on-site management necessary for newly exposed heritage.
- Natural properties 'have taken a huge hit' from sea level rise, increased sea temperatures, or increased air temperatures, as shown for example by the major impacts on seagrass and on reef habitats (e.g., at Ningaloo and the coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef), and increased bushfire intensity and increased bushfire frequency. At K'Gari-Fraser Island, 1350 hectares was burnt by bushfire in 2019. This was a relatively small fire, but over 50% of the island was burnt in December 2020. And we are going to see more and more of these events.

- In relation to climate change, the key threat to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is seen as wildfire. In relation to managing this threat, concern about the lack of coordination in fire fighting response was noted.
- The major current issue at the moment for the Shark Bay World Heritage property is the effects of climate change on the World Heritage values, on marine park values, and also on the terrestrial landscape. For both Shark Bay and Ningaloo, in the last IUCN outlook assessment (2020) they deteriorated from being good to being good with some concerns.
- Added to the direct climate change effects on the natural environment, we have associated issues such as the recreational fishing from large boats in the Shark Bay World Heritage property, which is almost industrial scale recreational fishing, occurring further and further offshore. Native Title holders are particularly concerned about the removal of fish from the environment because they have never seen it occur on such a large scale before. There are other flow-on effects such as with pink snapper, with which there has been great success with in regrowing the population back up to 70% of what it was, but because of the interest in fishing, the government has now decided to re-allow it to be fished.
- Climate change is resulting in strong, nuanced cultural association issues for Indigenous people in relation to Australian World Heritage. As an example, for the Willandra Lakes World Heritage property climate change, in particular increased temperatures such as over 40 degrees heat in inland areas, is increasingly reducing the number of days a year that the Traditional Owners are able to visit (i.e., have access to) Country. These are new issues for cultural attachment and cultural association, and changing human use and connection to cultural landscapes.
- In relation to climate change and Australian World Heritage, it was suggested that management needs to focus on the aspects of climate change where something can be achieved. Key such areas for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, for example, were seen as fire and pathogen (biosecurity) management.
- In relation to climate change issues and Australian World Heritage, there are major things impacting on their environments that need to be dealt with. For example, while we can't address water temperature changes, we could boost landscape resilience and reduce soil erosion. But these things are not really happening.
- In relation to climate change and Australian World Heritage, as conditions are changing, greater knowledge of the impacts and effectiveness of adaptation measures are needed.
- In relation to natural World Heritage properties and climate change, there is still not an adequate understanding of the threats; and building resilience, which is essential, is still not really on the agenda.
- In relation to natural World Heritage properties and climate change, although the IUCN Outlook reports are very good, the level of monitoring needed to assess the state of properties is not being done, except for some iconic species.
- We need to get on top of the adaptation planning to try and increase property resilience and reduce risks. This is a priority need. There was a desire in AWHAC for the CSIRO WHA vulnerability report to be very much a proactive future focused report with tools for adaptation planning, but this seems unlikely as the report has relied on management agencies who do not have the capacity to provide the necessary information. It seems more likely that the report will actually provide us with little more than a list of things that are potentially going to happen, which we'll look back on in another 5 to 10 years, after not having resourced a proper adaptation planning process and not having been able to mitigate change, and say – well that was an accurate prediction. We need to be adapting now.

Biosecurity

- Covid-19 is a big issue at the moment. Financially, from a heritage perspective, it's been disastrous and will continue to be, simply because of the financial relationship between tourism and many of our heritage places. The problem is Australia has become very reliant on visitors moving around Australia and also visitors from overseas, but the financial benefits that roll particularly with international visitors aren't likely to be seen again for several years and this will continue to impact any heritage place that is reliant on tourism for its funding.
- Biosecurity is an ongoing issue in relation to World Heritage, and is not a small problem. You can't just get in and eradicate. It is an ongoing issue (process) and needs ongoing resourcing.

Population

- An issue for the Shark Bay World Heritage Area is the new proposals for more development which involve incursions into marine parks and marine nature reserves.

Industry

- The tension between development and conservation is a very significant issue, but there has been some rebalancing of the national attitude to weigh development more carefully against environmental, including heritage, issues. The EPBC Act review report was noted as being quite a significant indicator of a change in the relative priorities of development against the environment.
- One of the challenges for Australian World Heritage Areas is tourism. This comes up time and again. Tourism is seen as being one of main values of World Heritage, but it isn't a heritage value. A related issue with some properties is where management plans (e.g., in Queensland) manage tourism as a value. The problem is that excessive visitation or inappropriate visitation can actually be a threat to OUVs. Another related issue is that although tourism is not a value, the level of tourism seems to be a major criterion for funding (e.g., the Great Barrier Reef).
- Concern was expressed about the government's approach to tourism in World Heritage Areas, describing it as effectively economic 'mining'. The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area was cited as an example, and it was noted that this has been occurring of the past 15 years and is of major concern.
- For many Australian World Heritage properties that are managed as national parks, for example K'Gari-Fraser Island and the Tasmanian Wilderness, visitation and the tourism economy are highly valued, but tourism/visitation/access can be a threat to OUVs if not appropriately managed. Helicopter pads in remote areas were cited as an example.
- There is concern about increased tourism generally at a number of World Heritage properties, including Shark Bay. In relation to Covid-19, everybody is being encouraged to go out and visit natural places, with advertising campaigns focusing on places that are spectacularly natural. This is placing more pressure on these places, including the natural World Heritage properties. At Ningaloo for example recreational fishing is very big and has increased since the covid-19 pandemic with more local people fishing and creating a recreational fishing pressure on specific species.

5.5 Heritage Management

Management General

- It can be argued that the heritage system is broken and doesn't deliver what it needs to do. It is a struggle to make the system work. Most of the processes 1. create immense, undesirable red tape, and 2. poor outcomes. It is not delivering what it was expected to deliver. Some of the approaches no longer make sense. Some of the system issues are the hierarchy of heritage at different levels and the disaggregation of this; and the splitting of heritage in other ways that don't make sense, in particular to the people whose heritage it is. Although a small number are better, a lot of the trends identified in the 2016 SOE are worse.
- A key impediment to improving heritage protection in Australia is a governmental lack of interest in the environment.
- An issue is that we do not have hard information about how the heritage protection system is really working. No one is measuring the effectiveness of heritage management. We need to rely on expert opinion, but no one has this hard information.

Resourcing

- Almost every centrally important area of government at the moment is being squeezed, with new areas being the focus for funding. It reflects a system operating in the present and responding to the urgent, but lacking a strong focus on the important.
- The resourcing issue and the prominence and place of heritage, in my view, are very closely interrelated, but does not necessarily reflect heritage being regarded overall as low priority since there are areas where the government reacts rapidly (e.g., disasters such as Juukan Gorge).
- There are some things, that in my view, society (i.e., government) should take upon its own shoulders and fund publicly, for example the national park system.
- The most disappointing thing is the lack of governmental attention through funding to the care and maintenance of the NHL places. It's painful to watch the degradation of commitment to these places through poor funding and staffing.
- Funding for World Heritage is inadequate, with the funding levels effectively remaining static over the past 15 years, after having been cut.
- There is a significant funding issue. By and large, the only recurrent funding that World Heritage properties receive from the Australian Government is for the running of the Advisory Committee and for their Executive Officer. The rest of the funding is competitive through the Australian Heritage Grants program, which is inadequate. If you are trying to share \$5.3 billion out across 20 properties it is not going to go very far. Most of this funding goes to the natural properties and the cultural properties get less.
- An issue is the very small ('pathetic') amount of money for World Heritage that is on offer each year under the Australian Heritage Grants program, with 5.3 million this year for National Heritage [includes World Heritage] places.
- As a result of Departmental [DAWE] staffing levels there is a lack of relationships that are being built in the Department in relation to the whole heritage community in Australia.

- The reason that there has been a struggle for adequate resources for heritage in the last 5 years is because the Department [DAWE] as a whole struggles for resources. This can be seen in the decline in the number of staff in the Department devoted to various heritage functions. The staffing of heritage is related to staffing requirements and priorities elsewhere in the Department. What we are seeing is that larger problem of the government's resourcing priorities.
- A perception that funding priority by government is politically (vote) based, rather than needs-based as it should be, was noted.
- A resourcing issue is the EPBC Act [review], which is another example of devolution of responsibility, in this case, from the Commonwealth to the states, without any additional resources coming with it to be able to manage the process.
- It was noted that more and more responsibility is being put on protected area managers across Australia, but that resourcing for the management of protected areas has decreased. the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area was given as an example, where it was noted that while another several thousand hectares had been added to the property, funding to the property had decreased.
- Inappropriate resourcing priorities can cause problems for the protection of World Heritage, especially post-covid-19 where visitor use has changed. An example is the Willandra Lakes area where millions of dollars are being spent on incremental road improvements which allow more visitors to access the World Heritage Area, yet there has been no increase in funding to improve the property infrastructure to manage the impacts from this, or for improved interpretation (i.e., the transmission of the World Heritage values).

Governance

- How we move forward with heritage is strongly affected by how the community and government perceive heritage, it will affect the level of interest by government, including funding. An issue for heritage conservation is that government tends to define heritage more broadly than heritage professionals, which means that funding is not necessarily going to those areas that urgently need funding for heritage conservation.
- A priority action is a national approach to heritage and a national heritage system in which all of the levels of government can work together would be enormously helpful. As part of this, it would be very valuable to develop databases and uniform classifications, and to have ready access to heritage information. This is something HCOANZ could take the lead on.
- An issue moving forward is progressing protocols and policies, and even legislation that better allow for management, and the management of values, in an inclusive way. This is an area Australia at the national level is probably a little bit behind in compared to others, such as in relation to World Heritage recognised under the World Heritage Convention.
- Noted as an issue is the view within government that cultural heritage is not valuable in itself, only in relation to how it can be used, that it needs to pay for itself, and that the only reason that you might keep it is to produce an economic return. Although this view is increasing in prevalence, this has been around for a long time, as is evident in state governments [history of] selling off heritage.
- The lack of genuine cultural heritage knowledge and understanding at senior levels of government, and increasingly at junior levels of government, is an issue for heritage conservation. This is a long-term and continuing issue. The idea that you need expertise to actually think about these things and work through issues seems to be going out the window. Heritage agencies seem, at least from my experience in New South Wales, to be full of managers with little or no heritage experience and no practical heritage experience. Also, many of the people who are selected to sit on Heritage Councils and other heritage committees are not heritage experts, but are selected largely as 'public representatives'.

- Another issue is about process and the problems in process that we see manifested in all sorts of issues. We've seen it in relation to Warragamba Dam, and in relation to Juukan Gorge, and even in a protected area place type, with the Kakadu. To be resolved, these types of issue need to be elevated at the national level; and a champion, some leadership, and a higher profile for heritage are needed.
- Partnerships is an important area for heritage. For example, engagement with the tourism sector is really important.
- Concern was noted about the lack of recognition [knowledge/understanding] generally of what is happening across jurisdictions (i.e., between states/territories, and between the different levels) in relation to cultural heritage. Everyone works only within their own level, which is as far as they see they need to work. There needs to be more coordination across levels, and any overarching body should include all component jurisdictions in Australia.
- An issue in relation to cultural heritage and governance is that structurally heritage is being increasingly sidelined within government departments, and the actions of heritage agencies are being restricted. It is also difficult to get consistency when heritage agencies are being overridden by other areas of government.
- There is a high staff turnover ('a revolving door' situation) in government departments with responsibility for heritage. Every time one contacts a heritage agency, one speaks to a different person. This results in heritage being at increased risk and being destroyed.
- An issue is the inaccessibility of the Commonwealth government in relation to heritage, and their disconnection from what is happening on the ground in relation to National Heritage places. This lack of Commonwealth oversight has implications for proposed actions and whether these are properly referred.
- The bureaucratic disengagement at the national level in relation to cultural heritage is hugely disappointing. This leads to the possibility that from next month [March 2021] there will be no functioning Australian Heritage Council. The disengagement at the national level is reflected at the state and territory level and is problematic. This can be seen in the lack of appropriate skilling/expertise by those in senior positions at state and territory levels; risk averseness in heritage agencies, and an inability and unwillingness to engage constructively on matters of substance; and in the poor management of heritage generally. The ACT was cited as an example of where this is happening particularly.
- Government leadership in supporting heritage conservation initiatives is inadequate. The example of the negative bureaucratic response to a request to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment to use the emergency powers under the EPBC ACT to protect a site in the Pilbara of Western Australia being proposed for World Heritage, was noted. This indicates a lack of understanding of the issue and/or a lack in engagement, and is most disappointing.
- Another issue is that we are experiencing a systemic dumbing down of heritage capacity within the regulatory agencies. It has been happening for a long time, but it has come to the fore over the past 5 years. One of the negative effects of this is that people, owners, or projects that are actually clever, innovative and/or step outside the box, get slammed for their brilliance, which results in a tendency to mediocrity. Another negative effect is that heritage decisions are made based on narrow, inadequate rules, rather than looking, for example, more holistically at the role of heritage in the community, or values retention, or varying of development status to facilitate good outcomes. This compounds the issues with inconsistencies in the planning system.
- An issue for cultural heritage is that planning systems still treat heritage as a tick box item to a degree. There is a growing tendency to identify heritage impacts from development, but then argue that the development benefit is greater, or ignore them, in order not to discourage what a proponent might be wanting to do. As an example, in one state, a state heritage listed building is to be demolished to allow for a road improvement. The government's position is that saving people four minutes off their commute to work is more important than retaining a state heritage building. A positive in this is that the community has supported retention of the building against the government view.
- An issue in relation to cultural heritage at the local level are the frequent really poor outcomes for heritage places in the context of development. Facadism is a really big issue, as is demolition by

neglect. Another big issue is the impact on places of primarily social value (e.g., loss/transformation of the corner pub). In relation to this, it reveals a disconnect between development proposals and community expectations, and also poor understanding and recognition of social value, and intangible values. Part of the problem is the current understanding of heritage. The understanding of heritage value needs to be better positioned within place making and community understanding of place.

- In relation to development pressures, government appears to support development, rather than heritage protections, particularly through overriding heritage legislation. There is a danger in this, with heritage place owners thinking that if a building can be demolished for a minor benefit development, if the government can do it, why can't I? This is a massive issue.
- An issue, particularly in New South Wales, is that the government is overriding its own heritage protections, with the use of special project status being one example of how this occurs. This issue is unfortunately gathering pace, with one case after another, and seems to be growing in magnitude. In Sydney and Parramatta, you only have to look around and see what's happening. The high-rise blanket that is overwhelming Parramatta is the most extreme case of that, and it has happened so quickly.
- The lack of adequate consultation in relation to cultural heritage conservation decision making is an issue, as for example in NSW, with the professional level consultation on the review of the NSW Heritage Act, including within government. This was seen as being due to a lack of recognition of heritage and the value of heritage, and managers who don't have adequate experience. The situation is exacerbated by conservation successes by government heritage staff, as the effort going into protecting heritage are not visible, and therefore not valued. This also results in a lack of heritage staff appreciation, while the problems do not diminish.
- In relation to practice, the cultural heritage community need to work on new methods for interpolating endangerment and the emotional dimensions (implications) into heritage. Wellbeing and wellbeing indicators may address some of the shortfalls of existing methodologies, and should be explored. In Britain, largely because the government has enthusiastically adopted wellbeing indicators, wellbeing assessments are now starting to be included in standard heritage assessments.
- A positive is the increasing professional engagement with 21st century cultural heritage, because this presents considerable opportunity. Important in this is bringing all the players together and making their voices central to decisions about the management regime for a place. Federation Square in Melbourne is a good example of this and sets a good precedent that can be followed in the future.
- Concern was expressed at the high level of staff turnover in DAWE in the heritage area, which was noted as negatively affecting the productivity of the department, although it was noted that this was not a reflection on the work of individual staff members. Such constant changeover was seen as prohibitive to ongoing productivity, and an on-the-ball and informed work environment.
- The Australian Heritage Council and its role needs to be better promoted and understood, including at senior government levels, if it is to operate effectively.
- World Heritage Advisory Committees are under-resourced and in some cases being asked to do work that is outside their remit, although it is good to see the Advisory Committees recognised. Examples provided were: 1. Advisory Committees are keen to help, but are struggling to even achieve funding to have 2 face-to-face meetings a year, let alone do anything else. This makes it difficult to be effective, and it also means that the good will of Committee members is being drawn on and there is a risk of burn out with regards to what is being asking of them. 2. In relation to developments, proponents are seeing the Advisory Committees as a key stakeholder and management agencies are pointing proponents to the Committees as a key stakeholder, although the terms of reference of the Committees is to advise the management agencies and ministers, not proponents, directly.
- There's been a change and a great maturity in governance in relation to Australian World Heritage. AWHAC has been an amazing leader, and is a strong governance arrangement for providing a national voice. However, it has to happen with Aboriginal voices as well, and this is sorely missing at the moment. AWHAC is therefore working towards the reforming of the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN). AWHIN is also seen as having an important role in providing a national Aboriginal voice to ministers and to state parties about cultural values being embedded in natural values.

- The governance of World Heritage areas is still a highly complex thing to understand for people outside this environment, with different WHAs having different land tenures and management arrangements, and in some cases legislation. Native Title is another complexity in this. There are also capacity issues. It is a real issue therefore to get a governance system that stays stable, and to be able to mentor and support people into governance roles.
- World Heritage is a very sad space for Australia. I estimate a good half of our World Heritage properties are in deep trouble and the rest are in a bit of trouble, at least. Australia was once a proud nation on the World Heritage stage, and although it no longer holds this place, it is still pretending as though it is, living on borrowed credit from the 1980s. It is sad for those of us who have been engaged in the World Heritage process how much our star has diminished.
- Leadership in relation to managing Australian World Heritage is an issue. In the 1970s and 1980s Australia was the leader in natural resource management and park management, even in World Heritage early on, but Australia has slipped in standing in this area. We have every opportunity to become very strong leaders in World Heritage management at an international scale, but we haven't really taken the opportunities we had when on the World Heritage Committee.
- Not being able to get action on issues is an issue for Australian World Heritage. Responsible state and territory agencies, responsible ministers and the Australian Government are not acting on, or responding to, reports and letters to them about these issues even where reports provide recommendations on how to address the issues, as for the example the Climate Vulnerability Index report for Shark Bay, which is highly accessible as it is on-line. It is 'daunting' to not have these issues being dealt with properly. Action when it occurs is slow, with resources in some cases only now being provided for issues raised 20 years ago, although it is good to see these matters being addressed.
- Concern was noted about the lack of valuing of World Heritage by Australians generally. Examples given to illustrate this were: 1. In relation to the Resilient Reefs initiative, a person working in that area who has talked generically about the value of the World Heritage brand, but when specifically talking about one of the World Heritage properties and a marketing aspect being proposed, completely avoided the use of World Heritage because their consultation had shown that it wasn't recognised or being sufficiently valued for its World Heritage values to be useful in that context. 2. In relation to a WA Marine Sites Institute webinar discussion on the pillars of sustainable development the comment was made that consultation indicated that the environment was seen as less important than economic and social aspects, and with no differentiation made for important environments such protected areas and World Heritage.
- It is really concerning in relation to World Heritage that there is no attempt to get people to understand what the values are and why they're at risk. However, a positive example of providing accessible information about Australian World Heritage Areas and what is happening to them is the Shark Bay Climate Vulnerability Index report which is very good at that. A beautiful summary document has also been produced through the Western Australian Marine Sciences Institution which has put together a huge bibliography and a summary of all the research that's been going on at Shark Bay.

Indigenous Recognition and Respect

- Indigenous heritage is a moving feast and hasn't stayed static over time, and requires ongoing recognition of both past and modern indigenous heritage related practices. An example relating to repatriation was provided: This was Melbourne's Domain Parkland and Memorial Precinct, a place that was listed for its natural heritage values, but is now recognised as being a resting place or a burial site of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including individuals repatriated from New Zealand.

- Ensuring free, prior and informed consent in relation to indigenous heritage cannot be fully addressed by the Australian Heritage Council itself, or indeed by other bodies (e.g., the state heritage councils) without additional resourcing from governments. Addressing this has to be a priority for governments.
- There is an ongoing challenge in relation to Australian World Heritage in recognising Indigenous cultural values. A number of properties have very closely associated Indigenous communities, and many of those Indigenous communities are fighting for recognition of the Indigenous cultural values or their cultural connection to the property, something which should be recognised under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- It is a challenge to achieve greater recognition of the Indigenous cultural heritage values of Australian World Heritage properties which are listed for only their natural values (e.g., Purnululu). Because of the need to re-nominate a listed property if the OUVs to be included change, there needs to be a UNESCO World Heritage mechanism where a statement of OUVs can be revised or amended without going through a full new nomination process. A simpler process and/or more streamlined mechanism is required. This would not seem to be such a difficult thing to do.
- In relation to nominations and re-nominations of Australian World Heritage properties to add Indigenous cultural values, the requirements for benchmarking and thresholds are problematic because of the need to compare values for one Indigenous community with values for another Indigenous community.
- Greater Indigenous involvement in the management of Australia's World Heritage is needed.
- There is still not an adequate First Nations voice in relation to Australia's World Heritage properties
- Although there is a growing focus on First Nations in relation to Australian World Heritage, it is not necessarily something that is happening across all properties at the same level, and therefore there is still a really important ongoing challenge.
- For the K'Gari-Fraser Island World heritage property, although there was a Native Title determination made in 2014 (and a second native claim up to high water for the Butchulla people determined in 2019), it has taken several years since the Native Title determination to make real progress on co-stewardship, as it is termed by the Queensland government. Further, what should be being worked towards is co-management.
- Repatriation has been the biggest issue for the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage property for many years, in fact since Mungo Man and Mungo Lady were taken away without consent 30 years ago; and [although now returned] they have not been reburied. It has been an inordinately time-consuming process to get approval for this, and it has been difficult to resolve where and how they should be reburied. It has been challenging to have the necessary capacity and leadership to make these decisions.
- The removal of the walkway chain on Uluru, and people finally agreeing to the banning of walkers on Uluru, is an interesting example of what was iconically an Australian thing to do slowly changing, with a general acceptance by the Australian public that it was the right thing to do. As an alternative there is a walk, and now a virtual walk, around the base of Uluru; and although there are sacred sites around the base of the rock, the walks have avoided these.

Legislative, Policy and Management Framework

- One of the important issues in terms of how we protect places is the reform of the EPBC Act. Depending how this is done, and this is a very complex matter, this can help in the administration of the Act, and in improved processes, and therefore in the protection of heritage.

- The EPBC Act is an issue in relation to World Heritage protection. We have had the review, but in relation to controlled actions there is concern is that there is no mechanism for new referrals to take into consideration and fully appreciate the cumulative impacts of either climate change or of development that has already occurred, although there could be a number of different applications over a long period, which could have significant impacts in the long term.
- That the EPBC Act does not take into account cumulative impacts is an issue.
- There is a critical need to manage for all values. It doesn't matter whether they are World Heritage values or they are National Heritage values, or they are state heritage values, or they're local heritage values. They need to be managed holistically. However currently there is major separation between these values, including the issues within the Department [DAWE] of the huge separation between how World Heritage is managed administratively, and how National and Commonwealth Heritage is managed administratively. Managing values separately is creating on-the-ground confusion and duplication for people who are on World Heritage properties because they're also managing the National Heritage values and other values as well. Important in this is the understanding that heritage managers do not manage to a piece of legislation and only need to look after that particular set of values. This is also relevant to managing climate change at World Heritage properties.
- National identity is an important concept that is used in relation to heritage and affects how Australian's view heritage. It is of course enormously important in relation to Indigenous heritage, and a large part of what is behind the concern of Indigenous people to protect their heritage. The Australian Heritage Council sees the relationship between heritage and national identity as important and significant.
- Legislatively and operationally there needs to be greater flexibility in government in relation to how processes are approached, including avoiding tick box approaches.

Identification & Listing

- An issue is that, although comprehensive heritage inventories, including Aboriginal heritage, and consistent approaches to, and standards and guidelines for heritage were identified as needs in the 2016 State of the Environment report Heritage chapter, it does not feel that a lot of progress has been made in these areas.
- As, importantly, natural heritage sites cannot any longer be listed without taking account of indigenous perspectives, a process needs to be developed to ensure this occurs with National Heritage listings. This direction is absolutely vital.
- There is a need for a proper process for building the Australian World Heritage Tentative List. At present it is a political process, and this is disappointing. A proper process for developing the Tentative List is something that Australia ICOMOS has been advocating for, for a long time.
- It is worth noting in relation to Australian World Heritage and nominations and re-nominations that the Wet Tropics property was re-assessed for the National Heritage List in 2012 (to include cultural heritage values), but has been low priority to take forward to the World Heritage Committee. The K'Gari-Fraser Island extension has also been on Australia's World Heritage Tentative List for 'a very long time' now.

- A process issue for the recognition of additional values for existing World Heritage, something particularly relevant for Indigenous cultural values, is that, at the moment, to do this [i.e., include formal recognition of new OUVs] would potentially require an entirely new nomination to go through the World Heritage Committee. In relation to Indigenous values, an example of where this is relevant is Purnululu (initially put forward as a cultural property, but at the time, because the Native Title determination hadn't gone through, it was nominated as a natural property, and the cultural OUVs are not recognised). The Greater Blue Mountains is another example. This is something that not only relevant to Australia, but something that is going to be a major issue internationally. There is also the additional process issue that to add new values to an Australian World Heritage property, the property would also have to go through re-assessment for the National Heritage list along with new nominations.
- National Heritage listing of natural heritage is actually relatively mature. Most of the big, important, obvious natural heritage sites are listed. The issue for the AHC now is to reflect upon that maturity and to try to work out where the gaps might be. This is why the thematic studies are being undertaken and are important. It is being systematic about determining what gaps remain to be filled.
- The deserts of Australia still represent a bit of a gap in the NHL in relation to natural heritage.

Management Planning and Adaptive Management (monitoring, evaluation, review)

- An issue is that the management plans for some Australian World Heritage properties are extremely out of date, with some so old (e.g., dating to 1996) that major challenges such as climate change are not even mentioned. Management plans for World Heritage properties are complex and take a long time to prepare, and it is important to have plans of management that reflect all the current and contemporary issues, yet it is proving difficult to get management plan revisions happening. The lack of adequate resourcing is the major factor, with these plans not being resourced through recurrent funding and with grant funding applications needing to be made. However, as grant funding is inadequate and competitive (it requires the different World Heritage properties to compete against each other), management plans are missing out on funding.
- There is inadequate overarching strategic management planning for some World Heritage properties. Citing one Australian World Heritage property, it was noted that although there are management, planning and policy arrangements, this is fragmented, the guidance is not necessarily consistent across instruments and there is no hierarchy to guide decisions where this occurs, and there is no single strategic management plan for the preservation of the World Heritage property.
- There is a need for improved strategic [management] planning for Australian World Heritage, since not all the properties have a strategic [management] plan.
- Concern was expressed about the lack of monitoring and data generally for assessing condition of World Heritage properties and the trends. The comment was made that 'to be data deficient in 2020 I think is very poor', especially given the deteriorating trends. Lack of adequate resourcing was noted as being at the heart of being data deficient.
- Monitoring the condition of heritage is one of the main issues. This is an issue which came up in 2016, and although there has been some good work in this area in relation to National and Commonwealth Heritage places, monitoring of heritage has still not been satisfactorily addressed.
- The lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation for World Heritage properties was noted as an issue. One participant commented that in preparing for the workshop, the first thing they would normally do would be to review the monitoring and evaluation material for the property they represent so they had good information based on analysis and empirical data on which to base their comment. But they advised that they have nothing of this type – only a high-level IUCN Outlook report, also based on limited data.

- Although there has been a recent Griffith University report published on what the monitoring and evaluation regime should be for World Heritage properties, this was not done as World Heritage project, but was done under the Land Care Project, indicating ‘how hidden and palimpsest’ this type of research is.
- In relation to monitoring, a positive change has been that there is a much greater understanding of the need to not just list heritage, but to manage heritage, and acknowledgement that monitoring is a part of management.
- Major difficulty was noted in relation to at least one World Heritage property in changing the narrative of strategic planning and management, particularly in relation to the recognition of Indigenous values, even though there is an improvement in this recognition since 2016. One of the issues is the need to revise the values based on an Indigenous perspective, which will take time, but this is proving difficult as it is hard to get support for the process. A recent change in the UNESCO World Heritage Operational Guidelines, the new sub-classification for continuing cultural landscapes which recognises living cultural landscapes, will however assist.

Presentation, Education and Celebration

- There is a societal lack of understanding of the importance of heritage in some sense, which may also feed into political action/non-action on heritage. Action is required to address the lack of recognition of how important Australia’s heritage is for the nation’s future.
- Studies indicate that the main public contact with heritage is through the tourism industry. There is also not a lot of attention given to heritage in the educational system or in the general media world. An issue is ensuring public support for heritage remains at a high level.
- Funding is needed for an in-depth study of public opinion to see where the needs are in the promotion of the understanding of the importance of heritage.
- There is a role for the AHC to promote heritage through partnerships with various scientific and tourism bodies.

5.6 Case Study Suggestions

- The National Heritage Kamay Botany Bay botanical collection sites and the recent memorialisation of Cook’s arrival: The Kamay Botany Bay site’s approach essentially implemented the approach recommended by the Australian Heritage Council relating to colonial memorialisation, and moves us beyond the Cook monument and the issues with that. It did this essentially by taking into account both the view from the ship, and the view from the shore. The Indigenous leadership in the project through the architectural and other consultants that were used, and the support of the New South Wales department were very important in achieving this outcome.
- Solar wind farm development near Burra, SA: Could provide a good example of how many industries or industry players make a positive contribution to heritage beyond what is required by the regulatory system. The extent to which industry contributes additionally to heritage is unknown, but is considered to be very large. The mining industry was noted as contributor in this respect. It was seen as potentially useful to highlight this non-governmental support for heritage.

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I am extremely grateful to those members of the Australian Heritage Council and the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee, and to the Executive Committee members and other expert members of Australia ICOMOS, who participated in the three SoE 2021 Heritage theme Expert Workshops held to seek high level expert opinion on the state of heritage in Australia, the pressures that are adversely impacting this heritage and how well it is being managed. Their participation was invaluable.

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Appendix 1 –

SOE 2021 HERITAGE THEME EXPERT CONSULTATION BRIEFING NOTE

Anne McConnell, SoE 2021 Heritage Theme Lead Author, 2021

Introduction

Part of the information that will be collected for the State of Environment (SoE) 2021 Heritage theme report is expert opinion. This will be undertaken through 1. online surveys; and 2. meetings with peak national heritage bodies, including advisory bodies and NGOs.

The consultation that you will be part of is one of the expert body consultative meetings. The aim of these meetings is for the SoE 2021 Heritage theme author/s to hear the views of the participant experts on the state of Australia's heritage.

For the most part, the meetings are intended to be open discussion, but part of the meeting will include running through a set of 'state of the heritage' indicators and asking for a collective opinion on the current situation and trend for each indicator (see examples at end of Briefing Note).

Because the SoE 2021 essentially uses the DPSIR model, the discussion is intended to focus on the **present condition/state** of the heritage, the **pressures** on heritage and the **impacts**, and the **effectiveness heritage management**. The SoE 2021 Heritage report will consider heritage under the categories of – natural heritage (general), geoheritage, Indigenous heritage and historic heritage. The time frame being considered in the SoE 2021 is the last five years (2016-2021).

If you would like a better idea of the SoE Heritage reporting approach, the SoE 2016 Heritage report (prepared by Richard Mackay) is available at <https://soe.environment.gov.au/theme/heritage>

What is the SoE 2021

Under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), the Minister for the Environment is required to table a report in Parliament every five years on the state of the Australian environment. The 2021 State of the Environment Report (SoE 2021) will build on data and information published in SoE 2016 and previously. The SoE 2021 is due for completion and release in late 2021.

The SoE report assesses the current state of the Australian environment across a range of disciplinary 'themes' (including heritage) to explore how the environment and its management has changed over time. It also reports on emerging and future environmental matters. It is a source of independent and credible information and data at national and regional scales, and is compiled by independent experts.

How is Heritage Defined for the SoE 2021

The EPBC Act specifically includes the 'heritage values of places' as part of the 'environment'. In the Act, heritage values are defined as including 'the place's natural and cultural environment having aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance, or other significance, for current and future generations of Australians.

The SoE 2021 Heritage theme however takes a slightly broader approach however, with heritage taken to be places, areas, objects and intangible heritage whose values can be identified and which have been (or should be) formally identified and managed for conservation purposes. Cultural heritage might include intangible aspects such as traditional practices, knowledge and

skills; and tangible aspects such as historically important locations, objects, archaeological sites, buildings, precincts and cultural landscapes. Natural heritage might include national parks, marine parks or other parts of the national reserve system (excluding Indigenous Protected Areas), as well as significant fauna and flora habitats or geological or geomorphological sites (note – biodiversity values are seen as separate to heritage and are considered by the Biodiversity theme).

Collecting data for the SoE 2021

A major challenge in compiling the heritage theme report is the lack of empirical data or other easily accessible data. Reliance will therefore be placed on expert opinions expressed by national peak bodies and relevant advisory councils which have a strong professional interest in heritage, and gathered via on-line survey and some small workshop discussion with invited participants; as well through data solicited from national and state level heritage and protected area agencies.

The SoE 2021 data collection approach is similar to that used in the SoE 2016 Heritage report (and to a lesser extent the earlier SoE Heritage reports) to assist comparison across reports.

How the SoE 2021 heritage data will be used

The full SoE 2021 report will comprise individual theme reports plus a succinct overview volume drawn from the 12 supporting thematic papers. These reports will be provided to the Department of Agriculture, Water & Environment on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia. The data you provide will be used to inform the Heritage theme report. Because it will not be possible to fully report on the data and opinion collected in the Heritage theme report, it is also intended to prepare a supplementary report on the heritage data collection and results. All reports are made publicly available.

The information that you provide through the meetings will be used by the Heritage theme author/s for the SoE and will be treated as confidential. Where individual comments are used in the SoE reporting, these will not be personally attributed unless permission is given.

Meeting indicator question examples

To obtain comparable expert opinion meeting participants will be asked a set of standard questions relating to the state of heritage, pressures and impact on heritage and heritage management in the Australian context, and for the different categories of heritage (i.e., natural, geo-, Indigenous, historic heritage) as relevant to your organisation/body.

The questions will be in the forms shown in the following examples, as well as being asked to evaluate the trend in relation to particular matters. For example:

- How do you perceive the level of impact [very high–very low] of rising temperatures due to climate change on Australia’s natural heritage?
- How strongly do you agree [strongly agree–strongly disagree] that the majority of Australia’s historic heritage places are in good condition and retain integrity of their identified values?
- How strongly do you agree [strongly agree–strongly disagree] that Australia’s Indigenous heritage is well understood and appropriately recognised?
- How strongly do you agree [strongly agree–strongly disagree] that Australia’s geoheritage receives adequate protection through existing statutory controls?.

Each question will be asked using the following type of device. The bar indicates grading (very high – very low) and the box with arrow indicates allocated grade and current trending.

