

AUSTRALIA

Introduction

In Australia's 2011–2013 report for Heritage at Risk we noted the prevalence and impact of natural disasters across Australia. Sadly, bush fires remain the country's most threatening natural disaster with a number of bush fires occurring constantly since January 2013 across the states. We remain grateful that the impact on life has been much less than that from previous disasters, and while a loss of significant heritage values has not occurred in these events, the destruction of more local and community based values has been sorely felt.

A major achievement by the Australian Government has occurred by the release of the Australian Heritage Strategy on 9 December 2015. The Strategy sets out the Australian Government's priorities over the next decade and the actions it will take to support and promote Australia's remarkable natural, historic and Indigenous heritage.

Issues and Threats

While we continue to recognise the threat to heritage arising from natural disasters, the two major studies have not been updated since our last report in order to provide overview of ongoing threats to Australia's cultural heritage since 2013. The five-yearly Australian Government publication *State of the Environment 2016* (SoE 2016) is currently being compiled and due for completion and release by December 2016. Notwithstanding, the Australia ICOMOS Executive Committee had a workshop with the author of the SoE 2016 providing more recent data on the threats to Australia's cultural heritage to the study. The other study, UNESCO World Heritage Asia Pacific Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting 2010–12, is also due for another period reporting, but it is yet to be released. Australia ICOMOS members continued to contribute to the SoE study and its findings.

The key threats to heritage (both natural and cultural) which were identified in the *State of the Environment 2011* (SoE 2011) report remain similar: the impact of natural and human processes and a lack of public sector resourcing. While Australia at last has a national Heritage Strategy, it is, however, very high level. The Strategy sets out a framework for the next ten years to address heritage priorities against three high level outcomes:

- national leadership
- strong partnerships
- engaged communities.

The Strategy has taken some time to develop, and it is much anticipated in the heritage sector as a way of re-energising community interest and providing a much needed focus for the future. While Australia ICOMOS is still in the process of reviewing it in detail, there is much to spark interest, including the outcomes focused on leadership, partnerships and engaged communities,

consideration of a Heritage Quality Framework, engagement with the Australia ICOMOS Heritage Toolkit, a recognition of the economic benefits associated with heritage, the concept of a shared responsibility for heritage management, and the very exciting national lottery proposal.

Notwithstanding that the strategy is good, unless it is embraced by individual state governments, NGOs and community groups, its key objectives will be impossible to achieve. In recent years, public sector funding across the states has declined for heritage education, conservation, good conservation studies, and grant programs. The strategy needs resourcing by both State and Commonwealth governments. Major public infrastructure, land releases and mining are increasingly threatening the cultural sites at a landscape scale.

As noted above, in the preparation of the SoE 2016 report, Australia ICOMOS had the opportunity to contribute through a workshop session, which involved review of a survey that was responded to by more than 150 Australia ICOMOS members. The table includes summary results of that survey for the SoE 2016.

While in some cases there has been marginal improvement in the protection of heritage places in Australia, in particular for some of Australia's World Heritage sites, key threatening factors remain. Many have already been identified above and those listed below stand out, and remain, as additional issues. While the Periodic Reporting process arises in the context of World Heritage properties, it was clear from the questionnaires and workshops that the implications for heritage management exist in many national entities across all heritage places and values:

- incomplete inventories (in both extent and diversity)
- inadequate tentative lists
- inadequate legal frameworks
- lack of management plans or ineffective/incomplete plans
- failure to engage in effective monitoring programs
- lack of heritage training (including traditional trades and skills training) and access to experienced people
- need for consolidated research programs
- inadequate involvement with local and traditional communities
- impacts from tourism activities and visitation
- impacts from development (for example the attached case study)

Arguably one of the strongest challenges that has been identified in the Australian context and reflected across the region relates to communication and awareness raising at the grass roots level. The impetus for conservation and protection of heritage values can be best instilled through education programs, whether school based or mature-age programs, and through mechanisms for information exchange, discussion, debate and learning. However, this is but one of a tool set of activities and mechanisms that need to be put into play to help reduce the threats we are facing to heritage within Australia. One of the key messages coming out of processes such as the State of Environment and Periodic Report-

Issue	Summary of Responses
State/Trend: Historic Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no significant progress has been made in the collection data relating to statutory listing process for historic heritage although the number of listed cultural heritage places has increased and there have been more systematic, thematic historic heritage assessment projects these are not at the desired level the majority of Australia's cultural heritage places are not in good condition and do not retain integrity of their identified values
Pressures: Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is an increased pressure and high impact of rising temperatures, changing rainfall, rising sea level, altered fire regimes and extreme weather events
Pressures: Population Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community perception of value of both natural and cultural heritage remains disconnected from the allocation of public resources, and for some places heritage values are perceived as expendable population shift also has high impact on the intensive land uses and pressures from increasing land values and infrastructure demand resulting in destruction of heritage places to make way for new development, inappropriate changes to heritage places, and impacts on their setting
Pressures: Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resource extraction (mining), development and tourism remain key threatening factors for heritage places, with mining and development having very high impact on the protection and survival of the heritage places
Management Effectiveness – Historic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia's cultural heritage is not well understood and appropriately recognised inadequate resources are available for the survey, identification and assessment of Australia's cultural heritage places understanding of management needs and processes are marginally improved by those responsible for managing Australia's cultural heritage places there is a lack of appropriate management plans or other mechanisms
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a lack of adequate protection through existing statutory controls decision regarding cultural heritage places is not well-informed by an understanding of heritage values and the principles of the Burra Charter
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a lack of appropriate governance structures to coordinate and manage cultural heritage in Australia
Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is some degree of appreciation and presentation of cultural heritage places in Australia contributing to the community's sense of place

ing is that the recommendations in these publications are of little value unless they are acted on and reviewed in a timely, regular and proactive way. Waiting for another five or six years for the next report in these programs devalues the efforts that have gone into their creation. Although it is not an extensive survey, this has been confirmed by the results of the survey of the Australia ICOMOS members for the SoE 2016.

The new Australian Heritage Strategy has brought an opportunity for increased communication between Australia ICOMOS

and the Federal Government. Australia ICOMOS is in the process of further discussion and collaboration with relevant government and other bodies, both nationally and regionally, to ensure that the key heritage objectives of the Heritage Strategy, including establishment of Quality Heritage Framework, tentative list and provision of adequate public sector funding for conservation, comprehensive heritage studies and grant programs, are embraced and achieved by all levels of government bodies, NGOs and community groups.

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References

State of the Environment Committee 2011, *State of the Environment 2011*, Independent report prepared to the Australian Government Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/soe/2011/report/index.html>.

Australian Heritage Strategy 2015 available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/publications/australian-heritage-strategy>

State of the Environment 2016 Australia ICOMOS Executive Committee workshop presentation, 21 February 2016, non-public, by Prof Richard Mackay, AM
Australia ICOMOS members survey for the State of Environment 2016, non-public

Case Study: Lake Burley Griffin and Lakeshore Landscape

Background

Located in the approximate geographic centre of Australia's capital, Canberra, Lake Burley Griffin is the centrepiece of the City. The lake system is a fundamental feature of the visionary prize winning plan by Walter Burley Griffin and Marian Mahony Griffin of 1911 that initiated the idea of a lake with a parkland perimeter as a central feature of the Canberra design. It was not until 1958, under the encouragement of Prime Minister Robert Menzies, that the lake works commenced with a reduced size and slightly modified alignment. The lake, its landscaping, two bridges and a dam were completed in 1963, retaining its conceptual vision and has since acquired great beauty. There is no other designed landscape of this scale and success in Australia.

Lake Burley Griffin and lakeshore landscape is of outstanding significance for its aesthetic and ethereal beauty experiences and as a planar base for the valued vistas across water to the wooded hills and mountain ranges. The lake unifies the city and contains the crossing of the lands and water axial vistas and

attest to a concern for the protection of the values by heritage legislation.

Commercialisation of the foreshore began in the 1990s with a land exchange of the Canberra Hospital site for a new National Museum of Australia. Kingston Foreshore was devolved to the ACT Government where an extensive urban apartment estate has since been developed.

Concerns

There is no encompassing heritage protection for the lake and its lakeshore landscape. Heritage protection is just for a few areas: the Central Basin including Commonwealth and Kings Parks have Commonwealth Heritage protection and Yarralumla, the Governor General's Estate, has Commonwealth Heritage List protection. Jerrabomberra Wetlands and Weston Park have ACT Heritage Register protection. The lake system is part of the National Heritage List assessment for Canberra that has been waiting on finalisation by agreement from the ACT Government since 2013, with the assessment now delayed until 30 June 2017.

Although Lake Burley Griffin is a core Canberra heritage icon and essential to the national significance of Canberra, its integrity is being incrementally diminished by divided government (Com-



The 1911 prize winning plan for Canberra by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin (Source: Canberra following Griffin by Paul Read, 2002 National Archives of Australia)



The West Basin section of the 1913 plan by Walter Burley Griffin (Source: segment from Griffin, Walter Burley & Australia. Department of Home Affairs. (1914). Canberra Federal Capital of Australia preliminary plan, retrieved April 9, 2016, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-230041959>)

landscaped perimeter. It provides landscapes of public parklands for people, arboreta, native woodlands, native grasslands, and wetlands for wildlife including international migratory species. The water and parklands deliver climate amelioration. It is loved and used by Canberra citizens and is the venue for numerous local, national and international events. It is the restful heart for the City.

Heritage nominations for the Lake and lakeshore landscape have been proposed: initially in 1999 to the Register of the National Estate, in 2011 to the Commonwealth Heritage List, and in 2011, 2014 and 2016 to the National Heritage List (NHL), which

monwealth and ACT) responsibilities, successive developments and changing land use practices. The proposed development would have a significant impact on the heritage significance of the cultural landscape.

Recently, sites in the Kingston Foreshore of the boat maintenance complex and a rowing club have been relocated to the established lakeside parks and their Kingston sites sold for more development.

Currently, an urban estate development is proposed for Acton Park, West Basin under the ACT Government's *City to the Lake* project. This was initially proposed in 2003 and has grown



West Basin in 1964 showing the alignment of the extant lake and the horseshoe shape of the Basin (Source: Clough, R. 1964 Fully Filled West Basin from Air from above Australian National University (ANU) 1964, Canberra. The National Library of Australia)



The proposed urban development of the West Basin; note the changed shape of the Basin from Fig. 3 (Source: ACT Government, Land Development Agency: <http://www.lda.act.gov.au/en/city-to-the-lake>)

from approximately 50% park coverage to approximately 80%. It involves infill of a segment of the lake in the Griffin Plan alignment – a claim that rebuts the significance of the extant lake shape developed in 1963. The development will appropriate the West Basin's public parkland, damage vistas across the lake and blight the significant symbolic route of the Commonwealth Avenue to Parliament House. It will unbalance the urban form of the City and the perimeter lakeshore parklands. It will add environmental damage of a heat bank, water and night light pollution.

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