Welcome to the first edition of World Heritage Connect, a newsletter produced by the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) that encourages the sharing of ideas, knowledge and experiences about managing and protecting Australia’s internationally significant places.

Special thanks to those who contributed to the first edition. We look forward to receiving articles and stories from you all in the future. World Heritage Team, EHP, Queensland Government.

Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area

The Ningaloo Whaleshark Festival is held each year in May, celebrating the annual aggregation of whale sharks that visit Ningaloo Reef between March and early August and the World Heritage listing of the Ningaloo Coast in Western Australia (WA).

This year’s festival was a huge success with more than 500 people (local community and visitors) visiting the WA Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) tent to learn about the World Heritage area and values (which includes whale sharks), threats to the area and how the area is managed to ensure the habitats and species are protected.

The highlights were the new whale shark mascot and naming competition, a whale shark presentation by Dr Mark Meekan from the Australian Institute of Marine Science, storytelling with “Ningalulu” the whale shark, tours of the DEC patrol boat with marine rangers, talks at the aquarium and touch pool, quizzes, games and prizes.

On the following day there was free entry into the Cape Range National Park in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area and guided activities with DEC staff allowing visitors to explore and learn more about the World Heritage area.

Chelsea Godson
Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area Program Manager
Australian Fossil Mammal Site

Visit to Naracoorte
The Riversleigh Community and Scientific Advisory Committee held their first 2013 meeting in February at Naracoorte, the site of the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites World Heritage Area in Queensland.

Ms Deborah Craven-Carden, Manager of Naracoorte, provided an overview of Naracoorte and discussed some of the management challenges.

The Riversleigh advisory committee is currently reviewing the Riversleigh Management Strategy, in collaboration with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the Waanyi Traditional Owners and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources in South Australia.

An archeological dig was held at Riversleigh in July 2013 to coincide with the Community Scientific Advisory Committee meeting. Palaeontologist, Henk Godthelp provided an introductory tour of the site for the committee.

Further information:
www.australianmuseum.net.au/Riversleigh
www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/boodjamulla-riversleigh/about.html
www.create.unsw.edu.au/research/riversleigh.html

The Greater Blue Mountains

Blue Mountains Cultural Centre – World Heritage exhibition
The Advisory Committee has been pleased to participate in the preparation of a World Heritage exhibition at the recently opened Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba, New South Wales.

National Heritage List re-nomination
The Greater Blue Mountains (GBM) World Heritage Area Advisory Committee is currently focused on the preparation of a re-nomination of Greater Blue Mountains to the National Heritage List.

The re-nomination will include significant additional areas, which correspond more closely to catchment and values boundaries, as well as Aboriginal cultural values (both tangible and intangible), historic cultural heritage and geo-heritage values.

In order to bring together the necessary documentation, the Advisory Committee has identified a series of subject areas and appointed small groups to prepare background essays. Liaison has occurred with the Australian Heritage Council, the aim is for the re-nomination to be lodged by the end of 2013.

Co-management
The GBM Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) continues to meet and to provide a forum for discussion between our six Aboriginal language groups and an opportunity for engagement between these groups and the Advisory Committee.

The ARG is preparing a co-management plan and is involved in the GBM National Heritage List re-nomination.

Prof. Richard Mackay
AM Chair Greater Blue Mountains
Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee
The Great Barrier Reef

Strategic assessment

One of the key ways the Australian Government is securing the future of the Great Barrier Reef is through a comprehensive strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and adjacent coastal zone.

The Australian and Queensland governments formally agreed to undertake the comprehensive strategic assessment, in accordance with section 146 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), which will enable a landscape-scale approach to environment and heritage protection.

The comprehensive strategic assessment has two key components—a marine component and a coastal component.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is leading the marine component which will look at the arrangements in place to manage and protect the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and World Heritage Area.

The Queensland Government is leading the coastal component which will look at coastal development such as planning for urban, industrial and port development.

GBRMPA and the Queensland Government are expected to release their strategic assessment reports for public comment for a period of no less than 28 days later this year.

Supporting research

The Australian Government has invested in new research to inform the comprehensive strategic assessment.

This research will complement the wide variety of established research and literature also informing the strategic assessment.

Reports will be publicly released on GBRMPA website after they have been finalised.

A factsheet about the research will be made available on the department’s website shortly www.environment.gov.au.

Referral guidelines

The Australian Government is developing referral guidelines to assist any person proposing to undertake a development, activity or action that may impact on the outstanding universal value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area decide whether the action will require approval under national environment law.

In the meantime, Interim Guidelines on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area for Proponents of Actions have been prepared and contain some useful information for proponents.


Outstanding Universal Value

The Australian Government has prepared a fact sheet on understanding Outstanding Universal Value, using the Great Barrier Reef as a case study. The factsheet, titled Understanding World Heritage: what is outstanding universal value?, can be found at: http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/great-barrier-reef/values.html

Find out more

www.environment.gov.au/coasts/gbr

Strategic assessment and EPBC Act


National Environmental Research Program


Sustainable Regional Development Program


Emma Heywood
Project Officer, Strategic Assessment
Great Barrier Reef Taskforce, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Willandra Lakes

Management Plan upgrade

In April this year, consultation was undertaken for the upgrading of the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area Plan of Management.

From the consultation process, an issues and options paper will be prepared to reflect stakeholders priorities for the future and opportunities for appropriate representative arrangements for the advisory committees.

Youth Project

Efforts are underway to prepare for this year’s Mungo Youth Project with support from the Catchment Management Authority and the Indigenous Heritage Program. A conference is planned for early September, and a program is currently being developed for schools leading up to the conference.

To find out more visit the website mungo.com.au.

The Mungo Centre

The Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife (FNPW) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are committed to the Mungo Centre project.

A business case has been prepared and NPWS aims to deliver a compelling case for government to support the Centre. The project has been given the highest priority in business planning for the NSW Far West region.

Scientific partnership

Art Durband is a paleoanthropologist interested in the ancient history and early inhabitants of Australia. Art received permission from the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area (WHA) Elders Council to use Computed Tomography (CT) to scan ancient fossil remains of individuals housed at the Australian National University in Canberra. CT Scanning is a medical imaging procedure that uses X-rays and digital computer technology to create detailed two or three dimensional images of the body.

Several of the Willandra Lakes WHA remains were scanned in 2010 and more earlier this year.

Art hopes that the scans will give detailed measurements of the long bones that can be used to understand patterns of mobility, to determine how much travelling these ancient people had to do on a regular basis to hunt and gather. It can also reveal previous injuries such as fractures that subsequently healed.

The CT Scanning will also mean any future studies on remains from the Willandra Lakes WHA can be taken from the data provided from the CT scanning as the Elders aspirations are to have the material returned to country in the future. We hope to have Art back in Canberra in May to conduct some more detailed scanning.

Leanne Mitchell
Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Officer
Department of Environment and Heritage, NSW Government

Language project

In February 2013, Steve Curran and Ricky Mitchell conducted recordings of welcome in language that took place in Buronga, Dareton and Hay. The recordings are of people from the Paakantji, Mutthi Mutthi and Ngyiampaa tribes. This information will be added to the interpretation welcome signs at the entrance to Mungo NP.

When you enter the park from the south you will be welcomed by the Mutthi Mutthi. From the west you will be welcomed by Paakantji and from the north you will be welcomed by the Ngyiampaa people.

There has also been a recording completed for Turlee Station Stay describing the history of the property.

Ricky Mitchell
Community Projects Officer
Department of Environment and Heritage, NSW Government

Discovery Rangers

National Parks and the Willandra WHA unit staff are currently designing more training programs for Discovery Rangers. The program aims to continue to develop skills for the current program of guided tours and also for the delivery of new activities to engage with the many school groups interested in learning about Mungo as part of the National Curriculum. Discovery Rangers are also involved with Wilder Quest, a program to extend the knowledge of interpreters.

Walls of China
Image courtesy of Environment NSW
Gondwana Rainforest of Australia

Witnessing an Outstanding Universal Value in action—Gondwana Rainforests of Australia WHA

One of the outstanding universal values of the Gondwana Rainforest of Australia World Heritage Area (WHA) which traverses the NSW and Qld borders is that it provides outstanding examples of significant ongoing geological processes. This value is difficult to appreciate as most of the geological story spans millions of years and its changes are imperceptible during our lifetime. So to witness this value in action is rare.

In late January 2013, ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald changed the topography of the property in many areas but most visibly in Main Range National Park. Receiving a deluge of rain within a very short time, tiny mountain rivulets were turned into thundering muddy waterfalls.

The tremendous force of water unearthed boulders and tall mature rainforest trees and created landslides and flooded creeks.

Three of the landslides are of a size that has not been seen at least since the park was declared in July 1909.

Some slips occurred in areas that have not previously presented any evidence of slip risk, where the vegetation was mature rainforest. The result was key tracks to both Mount Cordeaux and Mount Mitchell were cut. There were four landslides on Mount Cordeaux.

This erosion contributes to the slow westward retreat of the eastern escarpment of what was the western side of the Main Range volcano.

Six months on and a lot of track work later, the track to Mount Mitchell is open and work has commenced on Mount Cordeaux.
The Wet Tropics

Wet Tropics celebrates 25 years of World Heritage

On 9 November 1988 the Wet Tropics of Queensland was considered to be of such exceptional significance worldwide that it was offered World Heritage listing and permanent protection for its natural values.

Celebrating the 25th anniversary provides the Wet Tropics Management Authority with an opportunity to reinvigorate awareness and importance of the World Heritage Area.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority has developed a promotional pack, which includes 25 year anniversary logos to assist with the promotion of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The logos which can be downloaded from the Wet Tropics website can be used where the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is promoted. For example, tour operators in the Wet Tropics can use either logo on their brochures and other branding material.

The Authority is producing a special brochure about the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Area highlighting the historical context of its listing, its ancient landscape, and the significance of its natural values.

The World Heritage Area is also recognised on the National Heritage List for its Rainforest Aboriginal cultural values.

The Authority will be showcasing the area at the Cairns Botanical Gardens between October 2013 and January 2014 through a display that cuts across the diverse aspects of the World Heritage Area.

To promote and acknowledge the 25th anniversary visitor information centres and local volunteer groups are also invited to hold local birthday celebrations.

Every year the Wet Tropics Management Authority recognises the members of the community who contribute to the conservation, presentation and promotion of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

This year’s Cassowary Awards will make a special acknowledgement of past award recipients and their extraordinary initiatives to maintaining and rehabilitating the World Heritage Area.

Image courtesy of Campbell Clarke
**Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area**

**Green Guardians**

Green Guardians is a Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) initiative that provides sustainable experiences in Tasmania’s national parks and reserves for tourists on commercial guided tours. Guests participate as volunteers in a conservation project chosen by PWS field staff to support their work and make a tangible difference to the environment.

Program coordinator Sam Cuff said there were a range of benefits that this unique program offers.

“PWS receives support for its conservation projects and it encourages greater community advocacy for our work and community partnerships with local businesses. Commercial operators receive a niche marketing opportunity, a PWS partnership and make a valuable contribution to the local area. Finally the guests enjoy a strong ‘feel good’ experience, as they enjoy their trip while also making a positive contribution to a conservation effort,” he said.

This season’s projects included about 100 volunteers state-wide participating in the Parks and Wildlife Service’s Green Guardians program over the past six months, for the third year of the program.

Interstate and international volunteers have been removing some of the debris that is impacting on some of Tasmania’s remote beaches and tracks in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). Cradle Mountain Huts and Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences are facilitating litter removal along the Overland Track. Rafting company Water by Nature is conducting fauna surveys on the Franklin River, where sightings of the endangered azure Tasmanian kingfisher have been reported.


**Wildcare SPRATs**

Wildcare SPRATs (Sea Spurge Remote Area Teams) was formed in early 2007 to implement part of the Tasmanian Beach Weeds Strategy, and complete a Remote Coastal Weeds project over 10 years to remove sea spurge and other weeds from Tasmania’s wilderness coastline from Macquarie Harbour to Cockle Creek.

In January 2013, six years into the project, 74 volunteers covered 600 km of coastline from Macquarie Heads to Cockle Creek over 943 days, removing sea spurge and marram grass. Due to the huge amount of work volunteers have put in, the project will switch to an ongoing maintenance approach in the years to come, with a small team visiting sites annually to monitor weeds.

More information on the SPRATs team: www.wildcaretas.org.au/groups_details/sprats

**Wildcare**

Wildcare Inc is an incorporated charitable organisation. Members form local action groups, which apply for funding either internally, through Wildcare Inc internal grants, or externally via Caring for Our Country. Wildcare Inc volunteer activities contribute millions of hours to the TWWHA, and groups are provided with in-kind support from Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service staff.

**Wildcare Friends of the Franklin River**

Friends of the Franklin River, a group of Wildcare Inc volunteers, got together in March to raft the Franklin and remove blackberry shoots along the river. The trip supplements the efforts of the Parks and Wildlife Service which monitors the Franklin about every two years.

For great footage, see the clip from ABC News reporter Selina Bryan, on her own experience joining the group weeding blackberry along the banks of the river Franklin at www.abc.net.au/news/2013-03-23/extreme-weeding-on-the-franklin-river/4590352. For more information on the Friends of the Franklin River group: www.wildcaretas.org.au/groups_details/franklin_river.

*World Heritage Connect is a regular communication planned to be distributed quarterly by email. Your feedback and draft articles for the our next edition planned to be published in mid October are appreciated. Please send draft articles of 300 words or less accompanied by an image to lisa.watts@ehp.qld.gov.au.*