

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

## World Heritage Listing: Criteria and Process

A World Heritage Forum Special Event – Caring for Culture



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# What is World Heritage?

- A property can be placed on the World Heritage list if it is found to have Outstanding Universal Value.
- Outstanding Universal Value means the place has cultural and/or natural significance which is important for present and future generations of all humanity (World Heritage Convention Operational Guidelines).
- To date Australia has 20 properties which have been inscribed on the World Heritage List.



**Above clockwise:** Kata Tjuta inscribed on the WH list in 2007; Willandra Lakes inscribed in 1981; Kakadu National Park inscribed in 1981 and lastly a birds eye view of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape inscribed in 2019.

## World Heritage Standard

- In determining whether a property is to be placed on the World Heritage List, the World Heritage Committee and its Advisory Bodies consider whether the property meets:
  - $\circ$  one or more of the World Heritage criteria;
  - the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity;
  - $\circ$  the requirements for protection and management.

All three must be in place for a property to be judged to have OUV.

## World Heritage Criteria

(i) to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

(ii) to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

(iii) to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

(iv) to be an outstanding example of a **type of building**, **architectural or technological** ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) **significant stage(s) in human history**;

(v) to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

(vi) to be directly or tangibly associated with **events or living traditions**, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works

of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

(vii) to contain **superlative natural phenomena** or areas of **exceptional natural beauty** and aesthetic importance;

(viii) to be outstanding examples representing **major stages of earth's histor**y, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

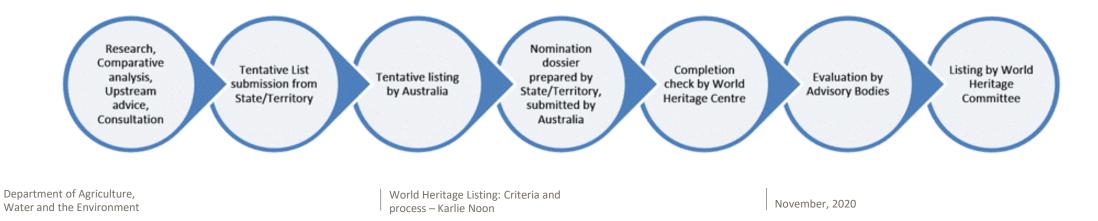
(ix) to be outstanding examples representing **significant on-going ecological and biological processes** in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

(x) to contain the most important and significant natural

**habitats** for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

#### Entry into Australia's World Heritage Tentative List - The Australian Government process

- State and territory governments are responsible for:
  - o Submitting proposals for the Tentative List to the Australian Government, and
  - Undertaking the necessary research and consultation to support the case for tentative listing.
    - This includes consultation with all relevant people with rights and interests in the property such as Traditional Owners, local communities, and owners and occupiers of the area.
- The Australian Government is responsible for submitting updates to its Tentative List to the World Heritage Centre.
- A property must be on the Tentative List for at least **one year** before it can be nominated for WH listing.
- A successful World Heritage listing process will take at least two and a half years from Tentative Listing.
- There is no deadline for Tentative Lists to be updated. The World Heritage Committee notes all Tentative List submissions that are received by 15 April.



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#### Entry into Australia's World Heritage Tentative List – The National Heritage List

- To be nominated for Australia's Tentative List a place must first be on the **National Heritage List**.
- The NH list recognises places that are of outstanding heritage value to the nation. These are places that contribute to the Australian story.
- To determine whether a place has outstanding heritage values, it is compared to other, similar types of places. This is done in order to determine whether a place is nationally outstanding.





#### Entry into Australia's World Heritage Tentative List - Identifying serial sites

- Unlike the WH List, the NH List does not provide for serial listing, but can accommodate multiple places of a similar theme, e.g.: Burra and Moonta Cornish Mining Sites National Heritage listings.
- The National Heritage listing process can help identify and distil which sites around Australia are outstanding, in a way which lays the foundation for the work of a WH nomination.

#### **Case Study: The Australian Convict Sites**

- A nation-wide process was undertaken to identify the best potential sites for inclusion in the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Listing.
- The 11 sites chosen were selected for their ability to represent key elements of the story of forced migration of convicts.
- More than 3000 other convict sites around Australia are significant, but were not best placed to contribute to a WH nomination that met the high standard of OUV.



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# What the Australian Government looks for in a World Heritage nomination

- Nomination dossiers need to follow the format provided in the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Committee, and include (among other things):
- It is important that a nomination presents a robust comparative analysis of the claims of the nominated property against other properties internationally, including those that are on the WH list and the Tentative Lists.
- Proposals for Australia's Tentative List are considered by the Australian Government against those from other states and territories and should establish a clear case for significance and genuine potential for WH listing.
- Nominations should also address issues of management and monitoring, including identifying and addressing any stakeholder issues.
- For places being nominated for Indigenous cultural heritage values, consent and agreement of the local Traditional Owners must be obtained.

## More Information...

## Available through the following links

- Australian Government information on identifying World Heritage: <u>https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/about/world/management-</u> <u>australias-world-heritage-listed/managing-world-heritage-australia/identifying-</u> <u>world-heritage</u>
- UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention: <u>http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/</u>
- UNESCO manual on preparing World Heritage nominations: <u>http://whc.unesco.org/en/preparing-world-heritage-nominations/</u>
- Indigenous Communities Guide to the National Heritage List

https://environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/824056e4-b75c-43b2-b325-3149ccc745f8/files/nhl-nominating-places-guide.pdf