



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:
 - one or more of the World Heritage criteria;
 - the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity;
 - 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 history**, 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:
 - 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.



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.

NHL Nominations open in December!



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.



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