



GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE AREA



STRATEGIC PLAN

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Mountains National Park. Part of Greater Blue
Mountains World Heritage Area

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Endorsed by the GBMWA Advisory Committee.

GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE AREA

MINISTERS' FOREWORD

Comprising over a million hectares of spectacular eucalypt and mountain landscapes, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in November 2000. The area supports outstanding biodiversity values, with over 100 eucalypt species occurring in sclerophyll ecosystems in an extraordinarily diverse area rich in natural and cultural values that extends to within 60km of the centre of Sydney, the largest city in Australia.

The GBMWhA incorporates the largest integrated system of protected areas in New South Wales, providing outstanding opportunities for the conservation of natural communities and processes. It includes the most extensive aggregations of temperate eucalypt wilderness in south-eastern mainland Australia.

In addition to the World Heritage-listed values of the GBMWhA, the area has numerous other important values which complement its World Heritage Values. Some of these may qualify for listing on the National Heritage List, and also may have the potential to be nominated for World Heritage listing following further research and documentation. Protection of these values is an integral component of managing the GBMWhA.

This magnificent tract of country occupies a special place in the hearts and minds of very many people, for many different reasons, and this places a special responsibility on all levels of government to ensure that it is managed with care and diligence, and that decision-making is soundly based on science and guided by public consultation.

This Strategic Plan provides the broad management principles for the area, and establishes the framework for the integrated management, protection, interpretation and monitoring of the values of the eight reserves that comprise the GBMWhA. Land management of the area is carried out by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which is part of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change, with additional resources provided by the Australian Government through the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.



The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt
Minister for Climate Change and the Environment



The Hon. Peter Garrett
Federal Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts



THE MANAGEMENT VISION

THAT THE OUTSTANDING NATURAL AND CULTURAL VALUES AND INTEGRITY OF THE GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE AREA ARE IDENTIFIED, PROTECTED, AND CONSERVED AND PRESENTED IN AN ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE MANNER.



CONTENTS

STRATEGIC PLAN	1	Management background and regional setting	18
MINISTERS' FOREWORD	1	Regional context.....	18
THE MANAGEMENT VISION	2	Land tenure.....	19
Introduction	4	Native Title.....	19
Purpose of the Strategic Plan.....	5	Adjacent land uses.....	20
Preparation and planning process.....	6	Administration.....	20
WORLD HERITAGE BACKGROUND AND VALUES	7	Environmental Impact Assessment Process.....	21
World Heritage Background.....	7	Legislation.....	22
The World Heritage Convention	7	Threats.....	23
Ownership and control.....	8	Management strategies.....	24
World Heritage management obligations.....	8	Strategic management objectives.....	24
World heritage values.....	9	Key issues.....	24
Other values.....	11	1 — Integrity.....	25
Geodiversity and Biodiversity	12	2 — Major impacts.....	27
Water catchment.....	12	3 — Biodiversity.....	28
Indigenous values	13	4 — Geodiversity.....	30
Historic values.....	13	5 — Water catchment protection	31
Recreation and Tourism.....	14	6 — Cultural heritage.....	32
Wilderness.....	15	7 — Landscape, natural beauty and aesthetic values.....	33
Social and economic.....	15	8 — Recreation and visitor use.....	34
Research and education.....	16	9 — Social and economic issues.....	36
Scenic and aesthetic	17	10 — Education, community participation and consultation.....	38
Bequest, inspiration, spirituality and existence	18		

SUMMARY OF MAJOR DESIRED OUTCOMES	39
Integrity.....	39
Major impacts.....	40
Biodiversity	40
Geodiversity.....	40
Cultural heritage.....	40
Landscape, natural beauty and aesthetic values	41
Recreation and visitor use	41
Social and economic issues	41
Education, community participation and consultation.....	42
Implementation and review of this Strategic Plan.....	42
IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW	42
Review and evaluation.....	42
SELECTED REFERENCES.....	43
DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS	44

APPENDICES.....	46
Appendix 1 Land Tenure of the Reserves of the GBMWHA.....	46
Appendix 2 Key examples of the GBMWHA's World Heritage values.....	47
Appendix 3 Terms of Reference – GBMWHA Management Committee and Advisory Committee.....	50
Appendix 4 New South Wales Statutory Protective Arrangements.....	52
Appendix 5 Status of Plans of Management for Parks and Reserves in the GBMWHA (as at July, 2008).....	53
Appendix 6 Local Government Areas, State & Federal Electorates & Indigenous Language Groups of the GBMWHA	53
Aboriginal Nations:	53
State electorates:.....	53
Federal Electorates:	53
NOTES.....	54

INTRODUCTION

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (referred to as the GBMWA throughout this document) is comprised of eight protected areas: Blue Mountains, Kanangra-Boyd, Gardens of Stone, Wollemi, Nattai, Yengo and Thirlmere Lakes National Parks and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve (refer to map inside rear cover for their location and Appendix 1 for details).

The area of the GBMWA is approximately 1,032,649 hectares. There are 12 areas managed under the National Parks and Wildlife Act which adjoin GBMWA totalling approximately 165,100 hectares including two national parks, 2 nature reserves, five state conservation areas, one regional park, one karst conservation reserve and one Aboriginal Place.

World Heritage listing is the highest level of international recognition that may be afforded to an area, acknowledging its outstanding universal values and global significance. The GBMWA was inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of its outstanding natural values. It represents outstanding examples of major stages of the Earth’s ongoing biological processes and of biological diversity. A wide range of plant and animal lineages and communities with ancient origins in Gondwana survive in the reserves, many of which are restricted largely or entirely to the GBMWA. The GBMWA also provides the principal habitat for many threatened species of plants and animals.

One of the main reasons for which the region was inscribed on the World Heritage List is its representation of ecosystems dominated by eucalypts. The eucalypt forest communities of the Greater Blue Mountains are the most diverse and intact hard-leaved (scleromorphic) forests in the Earth’s temperate zone, with more than 100 different types of eucalypts — 14% of the world total and the greatest concentration of eucalypt diversity on the continent. This abundance is partly due to the area’s complex landscape and mostly infertile soils which have promoted evolutionary variation.

They range from the tall open forests of the high tops and deep valleys to open woodlands and mallee

shrublands. These forests together with non-eucalypt ecosystems including rainforests, heaths and wetlands protect a significant proportion of Australia’s total biodiversity, which is unique and important on a global scale.

In nominating the Greater Blue Mountains for World Heritage listing, the Australian Government, on behalf of the people of Australia, accepted an obligation to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, rehabilitation and presentation of the GBMWA and its transmission to future generations. Day-to-day management of the sites within the GBMWA, however, remains primarily the responsibility of the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). World Heritage listing has not affected ownership or control of the reserves included in the GBMWA.

The GBMWA is an important recreational resource, providing the settings for a range of nature-based recreational activities. It attracts a large and growing number of local and overseas visitors, contributing significantly to the economies of local communities. At the same time, this level of visitation places extra responsibility on managers to provide appropriate recreational opportunities without compromising ecological sustainability or the values that lie behind the GBMWA’s World Heritage listing. Thus, the high levels of visitation, along with fire management and invasion by pest species, are the issues that currently create the greatest challenges for the State agencies charged with the responsibility for protecting and conserving the GBMWA’s World Heritage values. The appropriate presentation and interpretation of those values is also a priority for managers. In early 2001 a committee of senior agency officials (the GBMWA Establishment Project Steering Committee) was established to develop strategic policy directions for the GBMWA. One of the Steering Committee’s primary roles was to oversee the development of this Strategic Plan.



PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This Strategic Plan has been prepared to assist in meeting Australia’s international responsibilities under the World Heritage Convention. It will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the GBMWA’s World Heritage values by managers when developing management prescriptions for the GBMWA reserves, and that they are developed and implemented in a consistent and coordinated way.

The document also serves as a public statement of the commitment of the management agencies to the long-term survival of the GBMWA. The Strategic Plan is part of the overall planning framework for the GBMWA and does not attempt to provide detailed management prescriptions for the individual reserves in the GBMWA, which are provided for in reserve plans of management.

The Strategic Plan outlines strategies proposed for the management of the GBMWA over the next 10 years. Under its framework, the respective State agencies will continue to undertake day-to-day management, but with a greater level of coordination and consistency. The Strategic Plan is not intended to be a statutory document in its own right. However by agreeing to the content of this document, Governments will make a commitment to abide by its principles and to implement the strategies outlined. These will be put into effect by the relevant Governments through decisions made by the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (which includes the NSW and Federal Ministers for the Environment), government policies, statutory plans of management and other planning instruments.



Xanthorrhoea sp. Wollemi NP.

PREPARATION AND PLANNING PROCESS

The Strategic Plan seeks to ensure that management of all the reserves within the GBMWhA is consistent, coordinated and complementary. It has been prepared by the GBMWhA Establishment Project Steering Committee, for the Australian and NSW Governments to provide direction and guidance to the managing agencies in the formulation of their policies and in the development of other planning instruments.

Preparation of the Strategic Plan has been guided by information in the documents published for the nomination of the GBMWhA for World Heritage listing, existing management arrangements and government policies, and consultation between all of the management agencies involved and with the community.

A series of community consultation workshops in the region surrounding the GBMWhA was held during August and September 2002. A separate report is available which lists the issues raised at these community workshops. These were considered during the preparation of the draft Strategic Plan.

The GBMWhA Advisory Committee reviewed that document and recommended changes to it in November 2006.

Each of the existing (and draft) plans of management for the individual reserves in the GBMWhA (see Appendix 5) will be subject to a review process within five years of approval of this plan. One aim of the reviews will be to ensure that the plans of management reflect the obligations of signatories to the World Heritage Convention and facilitate the cooperative management of the GBMWhA at strategic policy and operational levels.

The Strategic Plan will be current for ten years from the date of its approval and will be reviewed after five years. A ten-year timeframe has been selected as a medium-term planning horizon that provides a realistic period within which the identified management responses can be implemented and

their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes evaluated. The review and evaluation process is outlined on p.42.



Banksia sp. Blue Mountains NP

WORLD HERITAGE BACKGROUND AND VALUES

WORLD HERITAGE BACKGROUND

THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

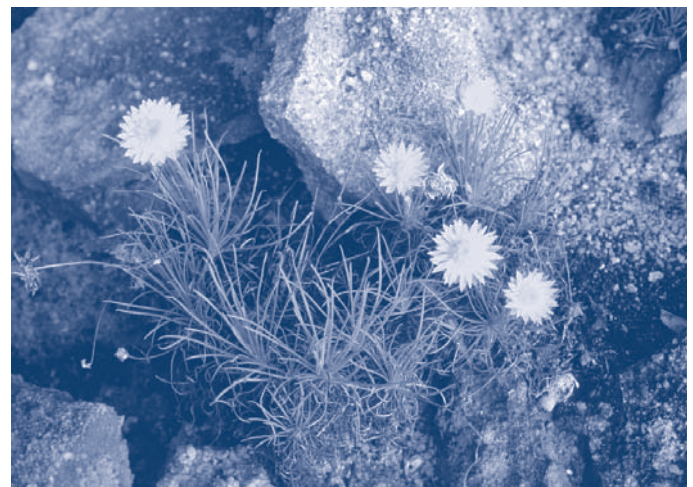
The World Heritage Convention was established under the auspices of the United Nations in 1972. It aims to promote cooperation among nations to protect the world’s natural and cultural heritage. By ratifying the Convention in 1974, Australia became one of the first of 184 countries to commit to the identification, protection, conservation and presentation of World Heritage sites.

The Convention is administered by the World Heritage Committee, which comprises 21 nations elected from the signatories to the Convention. Under the Convention a list of properties having outstanding universal value has been established. Only the national government of a country that is a party to the Convention may nominate an area or site within its area of jurisdiction for World Heritage listing. There are 17 World Heritage areas in Australia and 878 throughout the world at the time of publication of this Plan. Included on this list of globally important sites are the Great Barrier Reef of Australia, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Grand Canyon of the United States of America, Mount Everest and the Great Wall of China.

In order to qualify for the World Heritage List, a nominated area or site must meet specific natural and/or cultural criteria and associated integrity conditions. At least one criterion and relevant standards of integrity must be met before a property can be inscribed on the List (see <http://whc.unesco.org/opgulist.htm#para43>).

The GBMWH was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 because it satisfies two of the criteria for natural values of outstanding universal significance, that sites should:

- 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; and
- 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.



Pagoda Daisy, *Leucochrysum graminifolium*. Gardens of Stone NP.

OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

World Heritage listing does not affect ownership rights or control of World Heritage properties. In the case of the GBMWA, the individual reserves remain under the jurisdiction of the New South Wales Government and are managed by the relevant State agencies in accordance with relevant legislation (see Management Background and Regional Setting – Legislation section p.22 and Appendix 4).

The seven national parks and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve are managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which is now part of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). The management and administration of the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve passed to DECC on 1 July 2006 with the exception of the Visitor Use and Services Zone, which will transfer when a plan of management is in place and management arrangements are finalised.

Care and control of the Visitor Use and Services Zone is currently managed by a Trust under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. The Director General of DECC is responsible to the Minister for Climate Change, the Environment. As a signatory to the World Heritage Convention, the Australian Government has an international obligation to protect, conserve and present all of Australia's World Heritage properties (see below). The responsible Australian government agency is the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.



Thirlmere Lakes NP.

WORLD HERITAGE MANAGEMENT OBLIGATIONS

Under Article 5 of the World Heritage Convention, signatories are required to:

- ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, each signatory to this Convention should endeavour insofar as possible and as appropriate for each country;
- adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of the heritage into comprehensive planning programs;
- set up within its territories, where such services do not exist, one or more services for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage with an appropriate staff and possessing the means to discharge their functions;
- develop scientific and technical studies and research and to work out such operating methods as will make the signatory capable of counteracting the dangers that threaten its cultural or natural heritage;
- take appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage; and
- foster the establishment or development of national and regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field. UNESCO (1972).

Australia has enacted legislation to implement its obligations under the World Heritage Convention. The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) came into effect on 16 July 2000. The EPBC Act ensures the protection of World Heritage by providing a direct link to Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention.

Under the EPBC Act, an action that will have or is likely to have a significant impact on World Heritage values may be taken only if the action is approved by the Australian Government Environment Minister or is taken in accordance with a management plan accredited by the Australian Government Environment Minister. In order to be considered for approval, a proposal must be referred to the Australian Government for environmental impact assessment through either an Australian Government impact assessment process or an accredited NSW State impact assessment process. Under the EPBC Act, the onus is on the person who takes or is considering taking an action to ensure that it will not have a significant impact on World Heritage values. Substantial civil and criminal penalties apply for breaches of the Act. The regulations to the EPBC Act prescribe Australian World Heritage management principles. The Australian Government and its agencies must take all reasonable steps to comply with these management principles. Further information about the EPBC Act and its operation is available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/index.html> (see also Legislation section, p.22 for information on recent amendments to the EPBC Act).

WORLD HERITAGE VALUES

World Heritage values are those values directly related to the criteria for which an area is included on the World Heritage List (see p.7 for those criteria in this case). The GBMWA was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 because it satisfies two of the criteria for natural values of outstanding universal significance. It contains:

- outstanding examples of ongoing ecological and biological processes significant in the evolution of Australia's highly diverse ecosystems and communities of plants and animals, particularly eucalypt dominated ecosystems (former criterion ii); and
- significant natural habitats for the in situ conservation of biological diversity, including the eucalypts and eucalypt dominated communities, taxa with Gondwanan affinities, and taxa of conservation significance (former criterion iv).

The following key examples of values under each of these criteria are taken from the Indicative World Heritage Values Table prepared by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (see Appendix 2). They are not intended to be comprehensive and further information should be sought from the selected references listed in this plan (pages 43 and 44) and via the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts web site: www.environment.gov.au.

Ongoing evolutionary processes (former criterion ii)

The eucalypt-dominated ecosystems found in present day Australia have evolved over millions of years under the influence of climatic, geological, biological and ecological processes. The complex of plant communities now found in the GBMWA represents an outstanding example of the ongoing evolutionary processes which resulted in a shift in dominance from primitive Gondwanan flora to the diverse scleromorphic (i.e. small leaved with hardened cuticles) plant communities which are now so characteristic of Australian vegetation.



Of the three regions in the world which exhibit particular scleromorphic diversity (the other two being parts of southern Africa and the southwest of Western Australia), the GBMWHHA represents the best example of the juxtaposition of scleromorph diversity with species of the original Gondwanan vegetation from which the explosion of scleromorphs emerged. It is the only one of the three regions largely dominated by trees and without a Mediterranean climate.

Although the number and extent of primitive species with Gondwanan affinities in the GBMWHHA does not rival the Wet Tropics or western Tasmania, some of the best single examples of such species are present. The best known of these are the Wollemi pine *Wollemia nobilis* and the dwarf mountain pine *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii*, which survived millions of years of climatic change by retreating to a handful of moist cliff or canyon refuges.

The GBMWHHA is a centre of diversification of eucalypts, providing an outstanding record of the products of evolutionary processes associated with the global climatic changes of the late Tertiary and the Quaternary. It includes the major part of the area of highest eucalypt diversity in Australia, with an exceptional representation of species from all major groups and sub-groups and outstanding examples of the ecological processes which drive the evolution of new species.

Biological diversity (former criterion iv)

The GBMWHHA includes significant habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including the eucalypts and eucalypt-dominated communities, taxa with Gondwanan affinities and taxa of conservation significance.

As well as the Wollemi pine and dwarf mountain pine, several other lesser known but significant primitive taxa are represented in a variety of habitats within the GBMWHHA (e.g. *Acrophyllum australe*, a monotypic genus in the small Gondwanan rainforest family Cunoniaceae, and *Atkinsonia ligustrina*, the most primitive extant root parasitic genus).

The more than 100 eucalypt species (increased from the 91 species that had been identified at the date of listing) within the Area represent more than 14% of the global total of approximately 700 species. They display extraordinary taxonomic, structural and ecological diversity, ranging from tall open forest to mallee shrubland and occurring in a range of environments from wet to dry environments, from low-nutrient to fertile environments as well as fire-prone environments. More than 70 plant communities, including 56 open forest and woodland communities, contribute to the exceptional diversity of eucalypt-dominated ecosystems within the GBMWHHA.

The exceptional diversity of eucalypts is matched by the outstanding diversity of plants at different taxonomic levels (152 families, 484 genera and about 1500 species) and for all three scientific measures of species diversity (i.e. local and regional species richness and species turnover across environmental gradients). The exceptional diversity of habitats within the GMBWHA has contributed to high levels of species diversity within many plant families (see Appendix 2 for examples). A very high diversity of scleromorphic taxa is represented within 20 plant families, including families such as the Myrtaceae, Proteaceae, Fabaceae and Epacridaceae which contain so many of Australia's well known and distinctive trees and wildflowers. Many plants are of conservation significance including relict species, species endemic to the Greater Blue Mountains, rare or threatened plants (approximately 127 in total, of which almost half are contained in the Greater Blue Mountains) and species with a restricted range.

Habitat diversity has also resulted in an outstanding representation of Australian fauna with more than 400 vertebrate taxa recorded including 52 native mammals, 265 birds (one third of the Australian total), 63 reptiles and more than 30 frogs. Notable amongst the invertebrate taxa are the Lepidoptera, with at least 120 butterfly species and an estimated 4,000 moth species, and the 67 cave invertebrate taxa found at Jenolan Caves (one of the richest recorded in temperate Australia). There are species of global significance (such as the platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus* and the echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*) and numerous species which are endemic,

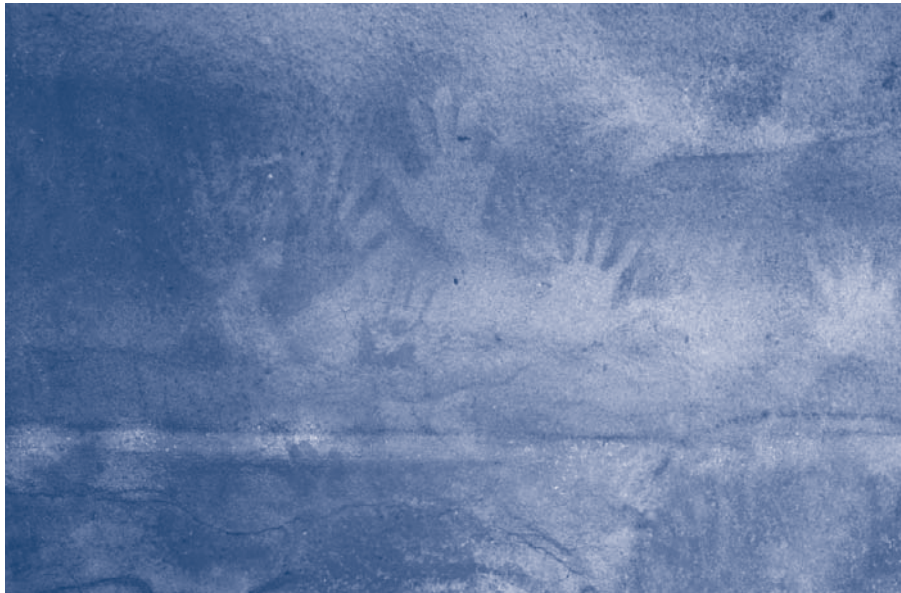
“World Heritage values are protected and enhanced by the largely undisturbed landscape within which they occur”

rare or threatened (including 40 vertebrate and 12 invertebrate taxa) or which have a restricted range.

These World Heritage values are protected and enhanced by the largely undisturbed landscape within which they occur. The high wilderness quality and high environmental integrity of most of the GBMWH and some of the adjoining lands greatly enhance the protection of those values and significantly assist their proper management.

OTHER VALUES

Apart from those particular features which have been recognised by the World Heritage Committee as having World Heritage value, the GBMWH has numerous other important values which complement and interact with its World Heritage values. Some of these may have the potential to be nominated for World Heritage listing following further research and documentation. Protection of these values is an integral component of managing individual reserves as well as the GBMWH as a whole.



Red Hands Cave, Blue Mountains NP.



T3 Lookout, Wollemi NP.



GEODIVERSITY AND BIODIVERSITY

A number of important natural values were documented during the process of preparing plans of management for individual reserves and during the preparation of background reports for the World Heritage nomination. In particular, the GBMWHIA incorporates the largest integrated system of protected areas in NSW, representing outstanding opportunities for the conservation of natural communities and processes.

In addition to its outstanding diversity of plant and animal species and communities, the area also has a diversity of landscapes and geological features including:

- extensive dissected sandstone plateaux representing ongoing geological processes;
- the most extensive sandstone canyon system in eastern Australia;
- a significant geological boundary between the Lachlan Fold Belt and the Sydney Basin as evidenced by the diversity of geology and topography in Kanangra-Boyd National Park and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve;
- karst landscapes with several cave systems of importance for their antiquity, scientific, and recreational values (e.g. Jenolan Caves being the world's oldest open cave system);
- a number of palaeontological (i.e. fossil) sites including evidence of the once widespread Gondwanan flora;
- prominent basalt-capped peaks and other significant features associated with periods of volcanic activity;
- quaternary alluvial deposits which support significant heath and woodland vegetation with an unusual mix of species and plant communities; and
- a series of 'perched' perennial freshwater lakes (in Thirlmere Lakes National Park) of considerable geomorphological and biological significance because of their great age and geomorphic stability.

WATER CATCHMENT

As most of the GBMWHIA lies in the steep and rugged landscape behind the coastal plains, it experiences relatively high rainfall and is the source of several major river systems. The area includes a number of wild rivers which have been identified within plans of management for further investigation and declaration under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. While the Kowmung River within Kanangra-Boyd National Park was declared a wild river in July 2005, parts of the Colo River in Wollemi National Park and the Grose River in Blue Mountains National Park, are also likely to be declared as wild rivers during the term of this Plan.

The GBMWHIA protects a large number of pristine and relatively undisturbed catchment areas, some of which make a substantial contribution to maintaining high water quality in a series of water storage reservoirs supplying Sydney and adjacent rural areas. They also make an important contribution to the maintenance of water quality and natural flow regimes in the Hawkesbury-Nepean and Goulburn-Hunter river systems. The GBMWHIA also forms part of the upper catchment of the Lachlan and Macquarie Rivers.



Xanthorrhoea sp., overlooking Lake Burragorang. Blue Mountains NP.

INDIGENOUS VALUES

The GBMWA encompasses the traditional Country of at least six different Aboriginal language groups (see Appendix 6) including several associated with the earliest contact with European settlers in Australia. Although no comprehensive surveys have been undertaken, a widespread and diverse sample of Aboriginal sites has been recorded, preserving a vital record of the social interactions and artistic activities within as well as between these different language groups.

Known sites provide evidence of at least 14,000 (and possibly 22,000) years of Aboriginal occupation of the area, but traditional beliefs connect Aboriginal people with the landscape back as far as the creation stories. Several prominent landscape features with spiritual significance are linked with creation stories, for example Mt Yengo in Yengo National Park and the Coxs and Wollondilly River valleys (Blue Mountains National Park).

Recorded sites of archaeological significance include a widespread sample of the Sydney Region's distinctive Aboriginal rock art, which incorporates two synchronous forms (i.e. pigment and engraved forms) on a scale unique in Australia. A number of scientifically important rock art sites with an unusually large number of individual motifs have been recorded within the GBMWA and continue to be revealed, such as the Eagles Reach site.

Given the wilderness nature of the area and the limited archaeological surveys to date, there is enormous potential for uncovering further significant sites which will contribute to a better understanding of Aboriginal use of the area over many millennia. The area is important to contemporary Aboriginal groups. Formal co-management arrangements with those groups is underway (see sections Native Title, p.19 and Key Issue – Cultural heritage values, p.32).

HISTORIC VALUES

The GBMWA includes numerous places of historic significance, some dating back to the earliest years of European settlement and exploration in Australia. Many locations within the GBMWA are recorded in the journals of the earliest explorers and surveyors. Recorded sites demonstrating post-1788 human use are associated with:

- rural settlement, pastoral use and timber-getting, for example Euroka and Burralow Creek (Blue Mountains NP), a number of small graziers' huts in Wollemi National Park and cedar logging roads and stock routes in Kanangra-Boyd National Park;
- mining, for example the ruins of oil shale mines at Newnes and Baerami (Wollemi NP), lead/silver/gold mines at Yerranderie (Blue Mountains NP) and coal/shale mines in the Jamison and Grose Valleys (Blue Mountains NP);



Early postcards
Blue Mountains NP
(circa 1898 courtesy
Macleay Museum).

- road and rail transport routes, for example parts of the Old Great North Road and the Putty Road/Old Bulga Road (Yengo NP) which linked Sydney with the earliest settlements in the Hunter Valley and remnants of a mid 19th century pumping station (Thirlmere Lakes NP) which supplied water for steam engines on the main southern railway line; and
- tourism and recreation; for example Jenolan Caves was one of the first tourist attractions in Australia, with visitation dating back to the early 1800s, and the Reserve contains numerous historic relics related to tourism and the village's infrastructure; many lookouts and walking tracks on the central Blue Mountains ridgeline (including Blue Mountains NP) have been in continuous use since the late 19th century.

As well as recorded archaeological and historic sites, the GBMWhA has a long history of human attachment and care for the landscape, evidenced by the early reservation of Crown lands for purposes such as public recreation and catchment protection, early conservation campaigns associated largely with the bushwalking movement and modern community action for protection and World Heritage listing.

RECREATION AND TOURISM

Most of the reserves in the GBMWhA are located along the Great Escarpment behind the coastal plains. Because of their intrinsic beauty, natural features and accessibility from the major population centres, the GBMWhA has high recreational values. The GBMWhA provides settings for recreation and tourism that are outstanding and increasingly rare by world standards, on the doorstep of Australia's major city.

A wide range of recreational opportunities exists in the reserves, including some of state or national significance because of the relative scarcity of suitable landscapes elsewhere, for example canyoning. Bushwalking, rock climbing, nature observation, scenic driving and photography are popular activities, with picnic sites and basic camping facilities available in many of the reserves. An extensive system of historic lookouts and walking tracks along the central

Blue Mountains ridgeline have provided an important focus for visitor activity over a period of at least a century. Jenolan Caves is another major focus for visitors, with the reserve and adjacent areas catering for cave tours, adventure caving, picnicking and walking. A major visitors' centre is located at Govetts Leap in Blue Mountains National Park and all of the DECC offices near the GBMWhA, as well as the Jenolan Caves visitor centre, provide a range of visitor information and services.

A range of formal accommodation and camping facilities is available on the reserves, from resort accommodation at Jenolan Caves House and self-contained cottages within the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve to formal camping areas at various locations within Yengo, Wollemi, Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd National Parks and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve.

Investigations are underway for the possible construction of a number of major tourism related projects in the Blue Mountains including: a Cultural Centre in the township of Katoomba, which will include World Heritage interpretive facilities, improved tourism and visitor facilities along Bells Line of Road and a new eco-resort and nature conservancy in the Wolgan Valley.

More than three million visitors come annually to the GBMWhA. Visitors who come to the GBMWhA specifically for nature-based tourism number more than 600,000 per annum. The Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve attracts approximately 220,000 visitors per annum.



Jenolan Caves House. (Courtesy Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust).

WILDERNESS

The GBMWA contains some of the largest forested wilderness areas in eastern mainland Australia, including the largest declared wilderness (Wollemi Wilderness at 361,113 ha). Extensive natural areas have the capacity to protect and conserve a greater diversity of habitats in better health than smaller or more modified areas. Wilderness often represents the only opportunity to maintain the integrity, gradients and mosaics of ecological processes that constitute native biodiversity at the genetic, species, community and landscape levels. Wilderness also has many cultural values, providing not only opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation, but also aesthetic, spiritual and intrinsic value. Unroaded except for management trails and largely free of exotic species, they are rare examples of the indigenous Australian landscape. Protection of wilderness was one of the main reasons for the establishment of many of the national parks within the GBMWA.

Formal recognition of wilderness through the provisions of the NSW Wilderness Act (1987) has been given to over 551,000 hectares of wilderness areas in the GBMWA, in the Blue Mountains, Kanangra- Boyd, Nattai and Wollemi National Parks (see Appendix 1). Another area of 139,900 hectares in the Yengo National Park has been identified as wilderness and a proposed wilderness declaration of 120,300 hectares has been exhibited for community input.

Management of these areas aims to preserve their capacity to evolve in the absence of significant human interference (see Appendix 4). It is therefore linked closely to the World Heritage natural criterion (ii). The wilderness condition and integrity of many of the key areas in the GBMWA were greatly influential in the success of its nomination for World Heritage listing.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

The regional economy surrounding the GBMWA is increasingly supported by specialist tourism. The reserves within the GBMWA have considerable social and economic value and contribute directly and indirectly to the employment, income and output of the regional economy. Although visitation to specific locations may be static or declining, overall visitation to the GBMWA is increasing, reflecting the region’s increasing importance as a tourist destination for day trips and longer stays.

Because most of the reserves only offer basic camping facilities, many visitors stay at nearby towns or guesthouses. It has been estimated that, for every 10,000 visitors to regional national parks, between four and six jobs are created in the local area. The Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve generated \$6.5 million in tourism revenue in 2006 and Jenolan Caves House provide an important source of additional employment in the otherwise rural local area.



Jenolan Caves postcards (courtesy Christopher Woods collection) Brush tailed rock wallaby. K James DECC 2007.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

The variety of ecological communities and landscapes and associated cultural sites makes the GBMWHa ideal for research and educational visits.

Information arising from the scientific research conducted to date in the GBMWHa supported the World Heritage nomination. In fact, the current state of knowledge about the GBMWHa's World Heritage values is directly related to the levels of research undertaken. This information however is far from comprehensive, highlighting the need for further research in the GBMWHa. The high scientific value of the GBMWHa therefore reflects not only what has been discovered, but also what remains to be discovered. Large gaps in knowledge remain, especially regarding Aboriginal use and occupation of the area and the ecological needs of threatened species and communities.

As some communities and species are found only in the GBMWHa, it is inevitable that there will be ongoing scientific interest in the GBMWHa. As effective management will rely increasingly on future research work to understand the GBMWHa's complex natural systems and their significance, this interest should be fostered. Facilitating increased levels of scientific research is directly related to the obligations under the World Heritage Convention to encourage scientific research into the identification, conservation and rehabilitation of the GBMWHa's World Heritage values, as well as fostering best management practice and abatement of threatening processes.



Camping at Wheeney Creek, Wollemi National Park

The educational values of the GBMWHa are heightened by the accessibility of many of its reserves and their proximity to several universities, namely, the Universities of Western Sydney, Charles Sturt and Newcastle. These institutions all offer biological science and/or resource management courses. Several of the reserves in the GBMWHa have an established history of providing field sites for students from tertiary, secondary and primary education institutions. Changes to the school curricula, with their greater emphasis on environmental and cultural education, are resulting in increased use of the reserves.

In addition, the formation of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, a non-profit research organisation, provides a further opportunity to develop and implement a collaborative, inter-disciplinary and strategic approach to research, training and education in the area.



Cycling T3 Trail, Wollemi National Park

SCENIC AND AESTHETIC

The GBMWA includes some of the most dramatic scenery in Australia, with its best known landscapes dominated by striking vertical cliffs and waterfalls. With many vantage points on ridges and escarpments, the GBMWA offers outstanding vistas, from uninterrupted views of forested wilderness covered by natural vegetation to the contrasts of steep forested slopes surrounding cleared valleys. The Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve provides a different but still dramatic scenic landscape, and the outstanding aesthetic values associated with its extensive caves have attracted a large number of visitors since the early days of tourist activity. In more recent times, the spectacular complex of narrow sandstone canyons and pagoda rock formations found largely in Wollemi and Gardens of Stone National Parks have become more widely known and appreciated.

The area's scenic and aesthetic values are demonstrated in a variety of ways, for example:

- by the large body of contemporary art (visual, performance and written) and photography inspired by the landscape;
- the significant levels of visitation to scenic vantage points within the GBMWA and its increasing popularity as a scenic backdrop for weddings (including those of international tourists);
- the diverse scenic landscapes and natural features of the GBMWA have been the subject of photographers for a period of more than a century and they feature prominently in Australian wilderness, wildlife and natural history books; and
- the increasing visitation to a number of well known and publicly accessible indigenous rock art sites.



Blue Gum Forest, Blue Mountains NP.

BEQUEST, INSPIRATION, SPIRITUALITY AND EXISTENCE

One of the goals of World Heritage management is to ensure that future generations can experience and appreciate the uniqueness of these areas. This goal explicitly recognises an area's bequest values and the importance of Aboriginal cultural continuity.

The wild and rugged landscapes, diverse flora and fauna, and opportunities for solitude and quiet reflection are attributes that promote inspiration, serenity and rejuvenation of the human mind and spirit. Such feelings are valued by individuals and society, and lead to contributions in the fields of philosophy, painting, literature, music and photography. The GBMWhA has inspired such contributions and these have promoted a sense of place for all Australians who then want such places protected.

Existence values derive from the community's pleasure from simply knowing that places such as the GBMWhA exist and are protected, even though they may never visit them.

MANAGEMENT BACKGROUND AND REGIONAL SETTING

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The GBMWhA consists of approximately 1.03 million hectares of mostly forested landscape on a sandstone plateau extending from 60 to 180 kilometres inland from central Sydney, NSW. It includes eight protected areas separated by the Great Western Highway, a major transportation and urban development corridor stretching from Penrith in the east through Springwood and Katoomba to Hampton in the west, and two other main transport routes, Bells Line of Road from Richmond to Lithgow, and Putty Road from Windsor to Singleton. Major population centres within 100 kilometres of the GBMWhA boundaries include the whole of the Sydney Basin, the Central Coast, Newcastle, Wollongong, Lithgow, Oberon, Bathurst, Mudgee, Singleton and Goulburn — a population in excess of six million people.

The region is one of the most popular tourist destination centres in Australia for domestic and international tourists. Most of the reserves in the GBMWhA are accessible from major population centres via sealed or gravel roads and the most heavily visited areas are also accessible by public transport. There are more than three million visits to the GBMWhA each year.

LAND TENURE

The GBMWHa comprises eight reserves ranging in size from approximately 641 hectares (Thirlmere Lakes National Park) to 499,879 hectares (Wollemi National Park). Tenure includes seven national parks and one karst conservation reserve. Boundaries of the GBMWHa are illustrated on map inside rear cover and the individual reserves and their tenure are listed in Appendix I.

NATIVE TITLE

Several of the reserves are currently subject to claims under the Australian Government’s Native Title Act 1993. This plan does not effect any extinguishment of native title rights and interests by the operation of the Native Title Act 1993 or the Native Title (New South Wales) Act 1994. Nothing in this document is intended to diminish native title in any way.

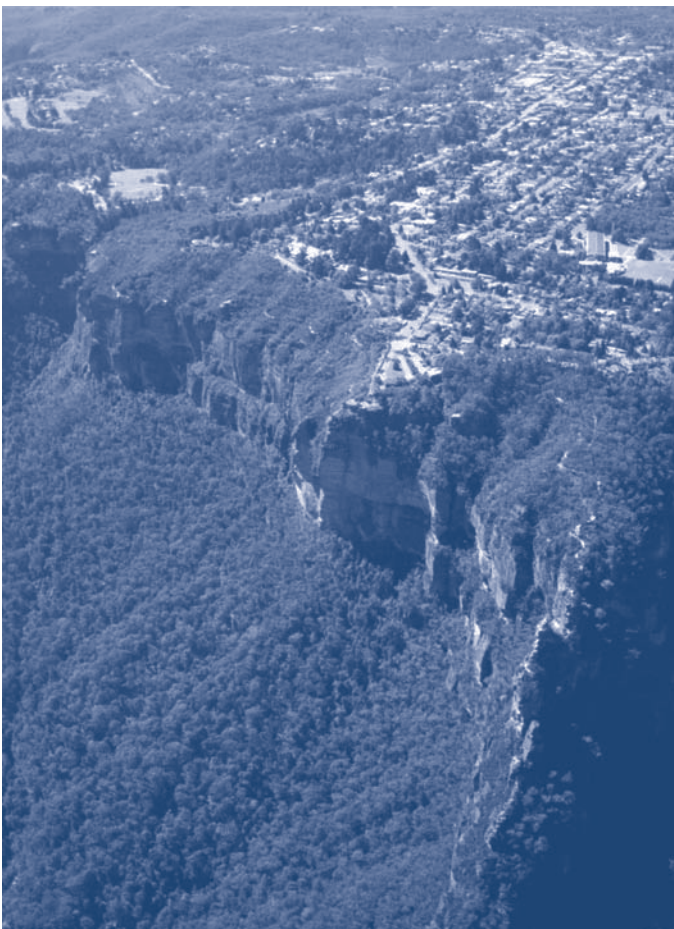
The New South Wales and Australian Governments are committed to co-management of the GBMWHa with local Aboriginal communities (see Key Issue — Cultural heritage p.32). To this end DECC established the Living Country project. The aims of this project are:

- To recognise and respect traditional connection with Country;
- To establish dialogue that ensures that the needs and views of traditional indigenous people are heard and respected and that affords to the indigenous communities ownership of the process; and
- To achieve co-management of the GBMWHa.

The Co-management Strategic Plan for the GBMWHa was developed from a series of regular forum workshops held at various venues around the GBMWHa. All Aboriginal people with traditional connection to the Countries that comprise the GBMWHa and local Aboriginal organisations were invited to attend the workshops.

Although development of formal co-management arrangements are the aim of the project, an aim that has been welcomed by all participants, the project is also focusing on capacity building, identifying training and employment opportunities on Park, developing consultation protocols and improving the relationships between Aboriginal communities and the DECC.

it's living Country!



Echo Point escarpment, Blue Mountains NP. BMR Interpretations 2006.

ADJACENT LAND USES

The total perimeter of the GBMWA is estimated to be approximately 5,000 kilometres, which means that adjacent land uses have the potential to significantly impact on the values of the GBMWA.

In addition to adjacent protected areas, the GBMWA adjoins a very large number of freehold properties, including areas of significant urban development regulated by 12 different local government areas (see Appendix 6). Other land uses adjacent to or near the reserves include tourism facilities, grazing, forestry, agriculture, manufacturing and mining. Siltation of streams, pesticide drift from aerial spraying, fire, straying cattle and companion animals and the spread of exotic plants and animals are potential threats posed by these land uses.

The reserves in the GBMWA are in places contiguous with other protected areas and Crown reserves. In these cases, the management of the adjacent areas needs to be consistent with the protection of the World Heritage values in the listed areas.



Pulpit Rock Lookout, Blue Mountains NP.

ADMINISTRATION

The GBMWA is administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service which is part of NSW DECC. The Director-General of DECC reports directly to the NSW Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water.

The seven National Parks included in the GBMWA are administered by DECC's Central Coast-Hunter Range Region (based at Gosford), the Blue Mountains Region (based at Katoomba) and the Sydney South Region (based at Audley). Each region is further subdivided into areas with management responsibility for a given geographical area, with administrative centres located at Gosford, Bulga, Mudgee, Richmond, Blackheath, Oberon and Picton. The management and administration of the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve passed to DECC on 1 July 2006 with the exception of the Visitor Use and Services Zone which will transfer when a Plan of Management is in place and management arrangements are finalised.

The GBMWA Management Committee, comprising senior officials and on-ground managers from DECC, Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust and the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, has been established to facilitate the cooperative management of the GBMWA at strategic policy and operational levels. One of the Management Committee's primary roles is to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan (See Terms of Reference for the Management Committee – Appendix 3).

The Environment Protection and Heritage Council makes policy decisions in relation to all World Heritage Properties across Australia, including the GBMWA.

A GBMWA Advisory Committee has been established to provide advice on the planning and management of the GBMWA. The Committee includes both community consultation and technical and scientific advice functions. The terms of reference of the new GBMWA Advisory

Committee are attached (see Appendix 3). The Committee does not replace existing DECC advisory bodies or processes but will provide advice on matters relating directly to the obligations of the Australian and New South Wales governments that arise from World Heritage listing.

Further community consultation continues through the existing National Parks Regional Advisory Committees and the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council. Scientific and technical advice is also provided by officers employed by the management agencies and by formal committees established by DECC and the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust.

In April 2004, the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute was founded. The Institute's founding members included DECC, the Royal Botanic Gardens Trust, the Australian Museum, Blue Mountains City Council, the Sydney Catchment Authority, Sydney University, University of Western Sydney and the University of New South Wales. The Institute is a collaborative research and education organisation specifically focused on addressing policy issues within the World Heritage Area. The Institute has developed a strategic research framework from the management responses herein, which identifies priority research areas for GBMWhA.

An important component of Living Country is the Mapping Country project, which is a partnership between the DECC, Blue Mountains City Council and the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute (BMWHI), managed by the BMWHI. Mapping Country aims to map the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Greater Blue Mountains, and to develop strategies to incorporate the values of this heritage into land management and planning decisions in a culturally appropriate manner to assist land management agencies and Aboriginal communities to work in partnership.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Proposals for works, activities and other development proposals within and adjacent to the GBMWhA will be assessed using the normal environmental impact assessment processes applied by the Australian and New South Wales governments under their respective legislation.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Kedumba vast landscapes of gorges, waterfalls, fern filled glades, deep canyons, windswept heath & unique hanging swamps

The central part of the World Heritage Area has delighted literally millions of visitors each year. The unique scenery, the climate, and the history of the area combine to present an unforgettable experience of wild country - wide open for your enjoyment.

Since before the first white people saw the Country, its landscape was known for and used by Aboriginal people. Important cultural sites, like the Three Sisters (initially seven sisters in Aboriginal lore), were spoken of and sung about.

The city of Blue Mountains established the park, along a ridge followed by early explorers (1815 crossing by Blackford, Lawson and Wiseman). The current Great Western Highway follows the route, and is flanked by 24 towns and villages, each with walking tracks and special places to explore.

In each Blue Mountains National Park and the very special Blue Gum Forest are reminders of the need to be loyal to our country's great conservation.

Blue Gum Forest

Located in the depths of the Gross Gorge, where Govevess Brook joins the Gross River, Blue Gum Forest has an interesting history that is closely linked to the beginnings of Blue Mountains National Park.

In 1932, Alan Righty and friends from the Sydney Bushwalkers' Club met with the members of the Blue Gum Forest while they were bushwalking. They discovered that the remaining forest areas were privately owned and hence determined to preserve this important natural feature of the Mountains.

The Sydney Bushwalkers' and Phoomung Youth Club raised the sum of 120 pounds (\$240) and bought out the land, thus ensuring that the Blue Gum Forest - a reserve for public recreation. In 1934, the land was added to a National Park which was initially declared as the Gross Gorge and encompassed 62,000 hectares. Today the park is in the centre of the national reserve Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

There is no camping in Blue Gum Forest, but Bushwalkers can walk in and camp at Annis Flat Camping Area. It is about a 400 metre descent and ascent.

There are several tracks. Check with the visitor information office (02) 4787877 for accurate up to date information on routes as tracks can be closed at any time.

The camping area is a full stove only area. NO CAMPFIRES ALLOWED. Tables are provided. They enjoy of drinking water and bring your rubbish out with you.

The camping area is a full stove only area. NO CAMPFIRES ALLOWED. Tables are provided. They enjoy of drinking water and bring your rubbish out with you.

WORLD HERITAGE

Information sign, Central Kedumba Sector, BMR Interpretations 2007

LEGISLATION

The GBMWA reserves are subject to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and the Wilderness Act 1987. These Acts cover the protection and management of areas such as national parks, nature reserves and wilderness.

Relevant key management principles from these Acts are summarised in Appendix 4. Other relevant legislation includes the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the Sydney Water Catchment Management Act 1998 and the Heritage Act 1977. State statutory regulations require the preparation of plans of management for the individual reserves in the GBMWA. The status of plans of management for these reserves is given in Appendix 5.

World Heritage is a matter of national environmental significance for the purposes of the Australian Government’s Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. This legislation (summarised in the World Heritage section, p.8-9) therefore applies throughout the GBMWA to ensure the protection of World Heritage values.

The Australian Government has introduced a new heritage system that operates through:

- a list of places of national heritage significance — the National Heritage List;
- a new Commonwealth Heritage List; and
- an independent expert body to advise the Minister on the listing and protection of heritage places — the Australian Heritage Council.

The National Heritage List comprises places or groups of places that are of outstanding significance to the nation.

The list of places of national heritage significance is an additional matter of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act. This means that, in general, the Minister must give approval before anyone can undertake activities that have, will have or are likely to have a significant impact on the

heritage values of a place on the National Heritage List.

Australia’s listed World Heritage properties were included on the National Heritage List in May 2007 for the outstanding universal values for which the places were inscribed on the World Heritage List. The GBMWA is currently being assessed by the Australian Heritage Council for all its values for potential National Heritage listing. These include natural, Indigenous and historic. Any subsequent renomination of the GBMWA for the World Heritage List for values for which it is not currently listed would proceed only if the GBMWA has already been listed on the National Heritage List for those values

Provision for management plans and conservation agreements for the National Heritage List places are similar to those already in the EPBC Act for World Heritage properties, allowing the Australian Government to make agreements with owners, including private landowners, to help conserve heritage places. A management plan for a National Heritage place will be based on the application of National Heritage Management Principles and set out how to protect the heritage values of the place. If there is an existing management plan for a place, the plan may be amended to allow for the management of any additional heritage values.

As well as legislation and statutory regulations, management of the GBMWA is influenced by policies set by a number of national, state and regional agreements and planning documents, for example the DECC Corporate Plan and the Special Areas Strategic Plan of Management prepared jointly by the Sydney Catchment Authority and DECC (see Selected References for other relevant documents).



THREATS

In common with many protected areas, the GBMWhA faces a range of threats to its immediate and long-term integrity. These threats vary greatly in scale from incompatible land use on an adjoining property through to global climate change. The management strategies outlined below address primarily those threats that are of strategic importance to the overall integrity of the GBMWhA's World Heritage values, and therefore require a strategic, coordinated and consistent approach by the management agencies. Threatening processes that are specific to particular locations will, more appropriately, be dealt with in the context of management planning for each reserve. Whilst the origins and causes of human enhanced climate change are beyond the scope of this document, there are some management actions that may reduce the potential and existing impacts of that change.

The strategic threats fall into six categories:

- uncontrolled or inappropriate use of fire;
- inappropriate recreation and tourism activities, including the development of tourism infrastructure, under the increasing visitor pressure from Australian, overseas and commercial ventures;
- invasion by pest species including weeds and feral animals;
- loss of biodiversity and geodiversity at all levels;
- impacts of human enhanced climate change; and
- lack of understanding of heritage values.

Each of these factors is considered a substantial threat to the ongoing viability of the GBMWhA's World Heritage values. Wilderness areas provide protection against the scale of impacts from each of these threats. Any significant diminution of wilderness condition therefore could threaten the ecological integrity of the GBMWhA's World Heritage values.

The potential for these threats to degrade the

World Heritage values of the GBMWhA is exacerbated by the property's mostly rugged terrain and close proximity to urban development. These make on-ground management measures, such as fire management, pest animal and weed control, storm water control and the regulation of access extremely difficult.

The nature of the property also means it has many neighbours. In addition to adjacent protected areas, the GBMWhA's neighbours include numerous private holdings regulated by 12 different local government areas (see Appendix 6). Properties adjoining the GBMWhA with prominent vantage points are highly valued and under pressure for residential and tourist development. Such development has the potential to diminish the scenic values for others. The diversity of local government zonings and policies creates the potential for inconsistency in planning processes that in turn could lead to incompatible development or land use at the Property's boundary.

The management strategies provide strategic directions for both proactive management and rehabilitation of threatening processes through involvement, education and consultation, as well as seeking to ensure the support and cooperation of neighbours and the broader community for the World Heritage objectives.



Blechnum sp. Blue Mountains NP.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

World Heritage status is the highest level of recognition that may be afforded to an area. It places an important responsibility on Australia to apply the highest possible standards of management practice.

A set of key management objectives for the GBMWhA, which provides a philosophical basis for the management of the GBMWhA and guidance in the formulation of operational management strategies, has been derived from the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines. These objectives are consistent with the Australian World Heritage management principles, which are contained in regulations to the Australian Government's EPBC Act (see World Heritage management obligations P.8).

Strategic objectives for management of the GBMWhA are to:

- identify, protect, conserve, present, transmit to future generations and, where necessary, rehabilitate the World Heritage values of the GBMWhA;
- integrate the protection of the GBMWhA into a comprehensive planning program;
- give the GBMWhA a function in the life of the Australian community;
- strengthen appreciation and respect for the GBMWhA's World Heritage values, particularly through educational and information programs, and keeping the community broadly informed about the condition of the World Heritage values of the GBMWhA;
- take the appropriate scientific, technical, legal, administrative and financial measures necessary for implementing these principles;
- provide for continuing community and technical input in managing the GBMWhA; and
- manage the broad range of values, both World Heritage and non-World Heritage, ensuring

that achieving the long-term conservation of the reserves' World Heritage values is the over-riding principle.

In order to achieve these objectives a number of key management issues need to be addressed. The remainder of this document outlines the proposed objectives and management responses to achieve identified desired outcomes over the next ten years.

KEY ISSUES

In common with many protected areas, the GBMWhA faces a range of management issues which may impact on its immediate and long-term integrity. These issues vary greatly in scale from an instance of incompatible land use on an adjoining property through to global climate change. This document addresses primarily those issues that are of strategic importance to the overall integrity of the GBMWhA's World Heritage values, and therefore require a strategic, coordinated and, where possible, consistent approach by the management agencies.

The key management issues have been grouped into the following categories:

1. integrity
2. major impacts
3. biodiversity
4. geodiversity
5. water catchment protection
6. cultural heritage (i.e. historic and indigenous)
7. landscape, natural beauty and aesthetic values
8. recreation and visitor use
9. social and economic issues related to commercial tourism
10. education, community participation and consultation.

The strategies outlined in the following sections provide strategic directions for both proactive management and rehabilitation of threatening processes, as well as seeking to ensure the support and cooperation of neighbours and the broader community for the World Heritage objectives.

I — INTEGRITY

Objective

To maintain, and wherever possible, improve the current and future integrity of the GBMWhA.

Background

The wilderness quality of the GBMWhA makes a significant contribution to its World Heritage value and has historically ensured the integrity of its component land systems. The formal declaration of a number of wilderness areas ensures that management is directed towards maintenance and restoration of the area's unmodified state (see Appendix 4). The GBMWhA is the largest integrated system of protected areas in NSW, representing outstanding opportunities for the conservation of natural communities and processes and to put in place measures to minimise the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.

The potential for impacts on the integrity of the GBMWhA arise largely from its long and complex boundary (including some private inholdings) and large number of adjoining landholders and land uses.

Complementary management of adjoining land by both private landholders and government agencies is critical to maintenance of the area's integrity. Current Local Government Area (LGA) planning instruments for areas adjacent to the GBMWhA may not necessarily provide adequate measures for minimising impacts on the GBMWhA's World Heritage values. Some potential and existing major impacts have been identified which are more specifically addressed under the following Key Issue — Major Impacts.

The plans of management for individual reserves identified the need for the addition of some private or Crown land to existing reserves in order to reduce fragmentation and potential impacts. Over 37,000 hectares have already been added to these reserves since the GBMWhA was established (for example, lands within the Warragamba Special Area). See Appendix I for more detail.

A process for investigating the addition of local government and Crown reserves within the City of

Blue Mountains to the Blue Mountains National Park is already well advanced.

In the medium to longer term, environmental changes resulting from global climate change have the potential for significant impacts on the integrity of the GBMWhA. The integrity of the GBMWhA also depends on ensuring that appropriate long term legislative, regulatory and institutional arrangements are in place. Administrative arrangements that encourage co-ordinated, consistent and cooperative management between agencies have been established or are in the process of being established. Plans of management have been adopted for six of the eight reserves and the remaining two plans are in preparation (see Appendix 5). An aim of



Grand Canyon, Blue Mountains NP.

this Strategic Plan is to ensure that these plans adequately address World Heritage values and management obligations and the maintenance of the GBMWHA's integrity.

There is an opportunity in the Greater Blue Mountains to capitalise on the public and organisational support for the World Heritage Area, by establishing a mechanism to encourage appropriate management of the Area's adjoining lands. These lands could be managed not only to contribute to the protection and conservation of heritage values within a 'core' area, but importantly, could provide 'buffer' and 'transition' zones to actively manage incursive threatening processes to the core area.

This might best be achieved by adopting the 'biosphere reserve' concept to which adjoining landholders could subscribe. In fact a number of World Heritage Area sites are also part of biosphere reserves (eg Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park, Tasmanian Wilderness and Macquarie Island WHAs). The biosphere reserves within New South Wales are Kosciuszko National Park and Yathong Nature Reserve.

A biosphere reserve is a unique concept which includes one or more protected areas and surrounding lands that are managed as core, buffer and transition zones to combine both conservation and sustainable use of natural resources (Department of the Environment and Heritage, 2004). The core area for the Greater Blue Mountains is the World Heritage Area. The basic elements of a biosphere reserve system are:

- Each biosphere reserve conserves examples of characteristic ecosystems of one of the world's natural regions, managed for their protection and study;
- It is a land and/or coastal/marine area in which people are an integral component, and which is managed for objectives ranging from complete protection to intensive yet sustainable production;
- It is a regional centre for monitoring, research, education and training on natural and managed ecosystems;
- It is a place where government decision makers, scientists, managers and local people

cooperate in developing a model program for managing land and water to meet human needs while conserving natural processes and biological resources;

- Finally, each biosphere reserve is a symbol of voluntary cooperation to conserve and use resources for the well being of people everywhere.

The adoption of a biosphere model for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area would allow the voluntary signing up of adjoining landholders to a set of management principles which are aimed at both conservation and ecologically sustainable use of those adjoining lands.

Desired outcomes

- Areas of potential outstanding universal value or that improve the integrity of the GBMWHA are evaluated as additions to the GBMWHA.
- The location and extent of World Heritage values within the GBMWHA is comprehensively documented.
- Knowledge of World Heritage and other values of the GBMWHA is improved through research.
- Biodiversity policies and programs including on-the-ground conservation activities are consistent with the strategies and actions outlined in the National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan 2004 – 2007.
- Local communities support any proposed additions to the GBMWHA.
- Policy formulation and planning for the GBMWHA is undertaken strategically, considering the implications for the entire GBMWHA.
- All the GBMWHA reserves are covered by World Heritage-relevant statutory plans of management and, where necessary, operational plans such as fire, introduced species, catchment action and visitation management plans.
- Effective inter-governmental and inter-agency administrative arrangements are in place to ensure the cooperative, coordinated and consistent management of the GBMWHA.
- Adjoining land uses are compatible with the conservation and presentation of World Heritage values.

- Wilderness and wild rivers are formally identified, declared and protected.

Management Response

- I.1 Ensure that statutory plans of management of all GBMWHA reserves are reviewed and amended to specifically address World Heritage objectives and meet the requirements of the Australian World Heritage management principles and this Strategic Plan and that they contain provisions for evaluating and monitoring their effectiveness.
- I.2 Assess existing reserved areas not within the GBMWHA for potential addition to the GBMWHA and seek the addition of suitable qualifying areas to the GBMWHA.
- I.3 Acquire high conservation value and/or strategically located freehold land within or adjacent to the GBMWHA, on a voluntary acquisition basis.
- I.4 Support and encourage appropriate “off-park” conservation programs and, where appropriate, negotiate Voluntary Conservation Agreements with adjacent landholders.
- I.5 Investigate and pursue the establishment of a Greater Blue Mountains Biosphere Reserve which encourages the compatible management of lands adjoining the World Heritage Area.
- I.6 Provide ongoing and proactive input to the establishment and implementation of effective local government planning and land management controls for land adjacent to the GBMWHA.
- I.7 Establish a system for formal auditing and reporting on the state of the GBMWHA’s World Heritage values based on systematic monitoring of the impact of threatening processes (including environmental changes partly or largely attributable to global climate change).
- I.8 Maintain and enhance the wilderness and wild river quality and values of the GBMWHA through formal declaration and appropriate management programs (see also Key Issues — Biodiversity).
- I.9 Collaborate with the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute and the GBMWHA Advisory Committee to identify gaps in existing databases of both indigenous and scientific

knowledge, and develop and implement appropriate research programs which will assist in management of the GBMWHA, maintenance of its integrity and in identifying National and additional World Heritage values (see also Key Issues — Major Impacts, Biodiversity, Geodiversity, Water catchment protection and Cultural heritage).

Many of the management responses which address key issues in the following sections are also aimed at maintaining the GBMWHA’s integrity.

2 — MAJOR IMPACTS

Objective

To reduce the potential for major impacts to adversely affect the integrity of the GBMWHA.

Background

The potential for particular types of development to adversely impact on the GBMWHA’s World Heritage and other values has been highlighted during planning and community consultation processes over many years.

Developments or activities with potential and existing major impacts include increasing urbanisation of adjacent land, adjacent or underlying mining operations, the proposal for a “superhighway” along the existing Bells Line of Road which traverses east-west through the centre of the GBMWHA and upgrading of telecommunications, electricity, water supply and other infrastructure.

These developments or activities are generally beyond the direct control of the GBMWHA’s State management agency (DECC). However, under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 any action that will or is likely to have a significant impact on World Heritage values may be taken only if it is approved by the Australian Government Environment Minister, either directly or via an approved plan of management (see p.8-9).

Desired outcomes

- Local, regional and statewide planning instruments and catchment blueprints for areas adjacent to the GBMWHA adequately address the need for protection of the GBMWHA's World Heritage values.
- Effective inter-governmental and interagency administrative arrangements are in place to ensure the cooperative, coordinated and consistent processing of development proposals which may adversely impact the GBMWHA.
- Developments and activities with an unknown but potentially significant impact on the World Heritage and other values of the GBMWHA are either modified to minimise the risk of impact on those values or do not proceed.
- The impacts of surrounding land use on World Heritage values are better understood and monitored.

Management Response

- 2.1 Ensure that environmental impact assessments for proposals that may affect the GBMWHA (whether or not on the reserves themselves) adequately address potential and existing impacts on World Heritage values and are carried out in accordance with the principles of the EPBC Act and, where required, referred to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment.
- 2.2 Provide information to local and state government authorities and other relevant organisations (for example, those responsible for infrastructure) about the GBMWHA's World Heritage values and ensure they are aware of legal provisions to protect these values.
- 2.3 Work with local councils to develop suitable local and regional planning instruments (e.g. Local and Regional Environment Plans) for areas adjacent to the GBMWHA.
- 2.4 Where there is doubt about the potential impacts of an action on World Heritage values the precautionary principle shall be applied; every effort will be made in consultation with the relevant parties to minimise any risk of adverse impacts.
- 2.5 Continue to work with the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute to better understand and monitor the impacts of surrounding land uses on World Heritage values.

3 — BIODIVERSITY

Objective

To conserve the GBMWHA's biodiversity and ensure the ecological viability and capacity for ongoing evolution of its World Heritage and other natural values is maintained.

Background

To conserve the GBMWHA's World Heritage values, management aims to maintain species richness and genetic diversity, to ensure populations of threatened species remain viable, to control threatening processes and to maintain opportunities for continued natural evolution.

Management responses need to be based on an adequate knowledge and understanding of species, communities and ecosystems as well as the impact of threats such as weeds, feral animals, fire and increasing visitor use. Specialists within the management agencies currently provide scientific and technical advice on the management of the GBMWHA. However, effective management is currently constrained by limited knowledge of species and communities' ecological requirements and best practice management, an incomplete database on natural resources and visitor use and inadequate systems for the storage and distribution of resource data and research results.

Each of the agencies managing the GBMWHA has its own priorities and policies in relation to nature conservation. These require coordination at the operational level, particularly in relation to fire, introduced plants and animals, visitor management and threatened species. The GBMWHA Management Committee has been established to coordinate operational matters within the GBMWHA (see section Administration, p.20).

Invasion by pest species (both plants and animals) is a potential major threat to the area's World Heritage value. More than 60 declared noxious weeds are known to occur in the GBMWHA and many hundreds of environmental weeds of concern have the potential to invade disturbed areas. While their present extent is limited largely to catchments



adjacent to or immediately downstream of urban and rural areas, their potential for spread may be a serious threat to biodiversity conservation in the future, particularly in the face of global climate change. Areas subject to disturbance by bushfire, past activities such as mining, timber harvesting and road/ track construction and present activities such as construction of visitor facilities or increasing visitor use, are particularly vulnerable to invasion by pest species. The spread of pest species from the GBMWhA into adjoining private lands is also an issue of concern to both managers and nearby private landholders.

Policies and priorities for control of introduced plants and animals have been identified in reserve plans of management and area pest management plans. Some adjoining LGAs have comprehensive bush regeneration and volunteer Bushcare programs which play an important role in reducing impacts on the GBMWhA. Effective implementation of these plans and programs depends on adequate funding and continued cooperative action between all relevant management agencies, private landholders and neighbouring communities. A need has been identified for more formal mechanisms to reduce the potential for spread of pest species into the GBMWhA from catchments upstream of the GBMWhA, for example the City of Blue Mountains has prepared a Bushland Protection Order which will assist in reducing the potential and existing impacts of weed invasion on World Heritage values.

Fire management is another significant factor affecting biodiversity conservation. DECC is a fire authority and a public authority under the Rural Fires Act 1997. As a public authority, the DECC has an obligation to minimise the occurrence and to prevent the spread and escape of fires from the lands they manage. This extends to responsibility for the protection of life and property and other values, including World Heritage values, from damage by inappropriate fire regimes. The DECC fire management objectives, policies and procedures are outlined in the DECC Fire Management Manual and the DECC Strategy for Fire Management. Priorities and programs for individual reserves that balance the protection of life and property with the protection and management of conservation

values are outlined in reserve plans of management and fire management plans. Fire management plans for reserves within the GBMWhA have been completed or are nearing completion.

Desired outcomes

- Terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and their associated ecological processes, species, populations and genetic diversity are all protected and conserved in-situ.
- Conservation of the reserves' World Heritage values is the primary consideration in their management.
- Management objectives, policies and activities are coordinated between agencies, consistent with World Heritage objectives and improved in line with best practice.
- Research results are widely promulgated and a comprehensive biological and visitor use data set is available to managers in all agencies.
- An appropriate regime of monitoring is in place to enable assessment of the state of the World Heritage values of the GBMWhA.
- Management decisions are guided by independent scientific and technical advice.
- Promote connectivity of the GBMWhA with adjacent natural areas.

Management Response

- 3.1 Support and undertake relevant co-ordinated research programs, in conjunction with the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute and other organisations, which will assist managers, particularly in relation to threatened species, monitoring, fire management, pest species control and impacts of visitor use.
- 3.2 Develop an integrated data storage and retrieval system accessible to managers in all relevant agencies to provide information relevant to improved management of World Heritage and other values.
- 3.3 Review current pest species management and fire management priorities and programs to ensure they are adequate for conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of World Heritage values.
- 3.4 Strengthen and expand existing cooperative pest species management programs, with particular emphasis on programs which encourage ongoing community and neighbour involvement.

- 3.5 Encourage and assist local councils to develop suitable statutory controls (e.g. vegetation management orders or animal management orders) in areas which may impact on the GBMWhA to prevent the spread of weeds and introduced animals into the GBMWhA.
- 3.6 Give priority to the implementation of threat abatement plans and the preparation and implementation of recovery plans for all endangered ecological communities, endangered populations and threatened species within the GBMWhA.

4 — GEODIVERSITY

Objective

To protect the GBMWhA's geodiversity.

Background

The GBMWhA represents a major geological feature of eastern Australia. It is a dissected upland plateau extending from the Southern Tablelands in the south to the Hunter Valley in the north, and from the Central Tablelands in the west to the Cumberland Plain in the east. The altitude of the plateau surface ranges between about 1000m and 200m, falling from the uplifted Great Divide and Central Tablelands in the west towards the coastal lowlands around Sydney in the east and the Hunter Valley in the north. In places where this fall is sudden, the plateau is edged by steep escarpments (e.g. southern rim of the Hunter Valley).

Numerous narrow gorges and steep ridges have been eroded into the plateau surface during the westward incision of eastward-flowing streams, creating a deeply dissected and topographically complex landscape.

The GBMWhA falls entirely within the larger sedimentary structure of the Sydney Basin with its kilometre-thick Permian-Triassic sequence (290-230 million years old) of sandstones, shales and other sediments. Most of the GBMWhA is made up of sub-horizontal layers of quartz sandstone, with associated sandy infertile soils which are often skeletal. The broadly level surface of the sandstone tablelands is punctuated by higher peaks of remnant basalt.



Narrow belts of Silurian limestone are a particularly significant component of the folded metasediments, producing the karst landscapes of Jenolan Caves, Colong, Tuglow, Little Wombeyan, Billys Creek, Church Creek and Blue Rocks in the Capertee Valley. Jenolan is an extensive cave system, and is one of the most ancient and densely cavernous sites in Australia.

Dramatic pagoda formations (sandstone pinnacles) are another special feature, occurring on the western part of the Narrabeen Sandstone, in Wollemi and Gardens of Stone National Parks. The geology and geomorphology of the GBMWhA underpin the World Heritage natural values, because of their crucial role in the evolution of the Area's ecosystems and plant and animal communities.

Desired outcomes

- Geodiversity is conserved, managed, presented and interpreted.
- Sound understanding of geodiversity throughout the GBMWhA, and informed decision-making, particularly of karst environments and processes, through targeted research and capacity building in staff.
- The geodiversity values of the GBMWhA are better understood and their significance is formally recognised at State, National and World Heritage level as appropriate.

Management Response

- 4.1 Support and undertake geodiversity research and education programs, in conjunction with the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, the Australian Speleological Federation and other relevant research organisations to better understand the relationship with World Heritage values.
- 4.2 Research, record and assess the significance of the geodiversity values of the GBMWhA against State, National and World Heritage listing criteria and seek formal recognition as appropriate.
- 4.3 Support and undertake geodiversity research and education programs to inform and support a program of better protection of geodiversity.
- 4.4 Prevent or minimise unnatural chemical and mechanical weathering and other damage to geological features/diversity through intervention, monitoring and stabilisation.

- 4.5 Develop infrastructure and maintenance regimes developed at Jenolan Caves to protect the karst environment there, while still meeting visitor needs, as appropriate.
- 4.6 Finalise and implement the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve Plan of Management.

5 — WATER CATCHMENT PROTECTION

Objective

To maintain and improve the water quality and water catchment values of the GBMWhA.

Background

As previously mentioned under Other Values (p.12), a number of largely undisturbed catchments within the GBMWhA make a significant contribution to water quality in the Hawkesbury-Nepean river system and the water storage reservoirs which supply Sydney and adjacent urban areas. Because of the geography of the GBMWhA, the potential for adverse impacts on water quality from urban and industrial land uses, particularly stormwater runoff and sewage pollution, arise largely within the City of Blue Mountains, upstream from Blue Mountains National Park, and to a lesser extent from the local government areas upstream of the southeastern section of Wollemi National Park and Nattai National Park. The combination of nutrient enrichment and water extraction from these sources reduces water quality and poses a potential threat to the maintenance of World Heritage values, including some threatened species.

While statutory catchment protection controls are largely the responsibility of other agencies, the DECC has been working with relevant state and local agencies over recent years to reduce the impacts of sewage pollution and stormwater runoff on the parks' waterways, for example through involvement in the interagency Blue Mountains Urban Runoff Control Program which aims to reduce impacts of stormwater runoff in the City of Blue Mountains. DECC also has a joint management arrangement with the Sydney Catchment Authority to protect the Warragamba, Metropolitan and Blue Mountains Special Areas which are declared over

parts of the GBMWhA. Joint management of these Special Areas is undertaken in accordance with a jointly sponsored Special Areas Strategic Plan of Management prepared under the Sydney Water Catchment Management Act 1998.

Potential and existing impacts on water quality within the GBMWhA also arise from smaller urban settlements and rural land uses upstream from its major river systems and from existing or expanded visitor facilities and use. Past and present mining activity at the head of the Wollangambe River catchment and adjoining Gardens of Stone and Nattai National Parks poses a potential threat to downstream water quality and ecosystems. The potential impact of new developments, including mining, is addressed under Key Issue — Major Impacts (see p.27). Specific catchment protection policies and actions are outlined in relevant reserve plans of management and catchment blueprints, for example the Hawkesbury-Lower Nepean Catchment Management Blueprint.

Desired outcomes

- Any adverse impacts on water quality and quantity within the GBMWhA arising from park management activities, upstream land uses or visitor use are eliminated or, at least, minimised.
- Improved understanding of visitors, neighbours and nearby communities of their potential impact on the GBMWhA's World Heritage value and their role in minimising adverse impacts on water quality.

Management Response

- 5.1 Review current catchment protection priorities and programs and co-operative management arrangements to ensure they are adequate for the maintenance and improvement of World Heritage and other values of the GBMWhA.
- 5.2 Support and encourage catchment education and research programs in conjunction with the Sydney Catchment Authority, catchment management authorities and the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute.

6 — CULTURAL HERITAGE

Objective

- **To identify, formally recognise and protect the cultural heritage values of the GBMWhA.**
- **To manage the GBMWhA jointly with local Indigenous people.**

Background

The long history of Aboriginal occupation and connection to the Countries that comprise the GBMWhA, as well as its diversity of non-Aboriginal cultural sites, and the history of early conservation campaigns, were factors cited in support of its nomination under the World Heritage Convention's cultural criteria, a proposal which was subsequently not endorsed by the World Heritage Committee due to lack of adequate information available at the time.

The potential for listing of the GBMWhA under the criterion relating to outstanding universal cultural associations needs to be further explored. The GBMWhA is rich in evidence of the cultural continuity of its Aboriginal occupants and their artistic and spiritual expression. Indigenous groups have an active interest in the protection and management of the area's cultural values.

Also significant, in terms of post-colonial cultural associations, is the large number of historic relics and places within the GBMWhA, particularly the network of historic walking tracks, staircases and lookouts in Blue Mountains National Park and other historic values associated with a long period of visitation to the area. While some research and survey work has been undertaken to document the GBMWhA's cultural values, further work needs to be done.

Desired outcomes

- The cultural heritage values of the GBMWhA are retained and better understood, and their significance is formally recognised at State, National and World Heritage level as appropriate.
- Management of the GBMWhA is undertaken co-operatively with the Aboriginal people who have traditional connections to the Countries that comprise the GBMWhA.



"Connections" newsletter & Living Country logo. GBMWhA Co-management initiative. Backdrop: Language areas GBMWhA.

- The cultural, traditional and social significance of the landscapes within the GBMWhA to Aboriginal people is widely acknowledged and respected.
- The social and historical significance of the landscapes within the GBMWhA to non-Aboriginal people is acknowledged and respected.

Management Response

- 6.1 Continue and further develop close consultation with local Aboriginal peoples through the Living Country Aboriginal Co-management Project and the Central Coast / Hunter Range Region Co-management Committee.
- 6.2 Through the Mapping Country Project and in partnership with local Aboriginal communities, appropriately document the Indigenous cultural values of the GBMWhA.
- 6.3 Ensure valid native title is recognised and Indigenous Land Use Agreements negotiated, consistent with Australia's obligations under

- the World Heritage Convention and the restrictions on land use imposed by law.
- 6.4 Through the Living Country Co-management Project, prepare and implement agreed GBMWhA Indigenous heritage strategies, consistent with government and agency cultural heritage policies (e.g. Cultural Heritage Conservation and Cultural Heritage Community Consultation Policies).
 - 6.5 Investigate the feasibility of establishing an Aboriginal employment / capacity-building program and develop strategies for working towards Aboriginal co-management of the GBMWhA reserves.
 - 6.6 Research, record and assess the significance of the cultural heritage values of the GBMWhA against State, National and World Heritage listing criteria and seek formal recognition as appropriate.
 - 6.7 Encourage cultural heritage research projects which assist with the protection and management of the GBMWhA's cultural heritage values.
 - 6.8 Emphasise the importance of Indigenous culture and history, by identifying suitable Aboriginal words for naming / co-naming the GBMWhA and its reserves.
 - 6.9 Ensure recognition of non-Aboriginal heritage values, including art inspired by the landscape, relationships between people and the environment, early conservation campaigns, built heritage, and recreational activities and infrastructure.

a major contribution to the positive experiences of domestic and international visitors to the area and contribute to the significant levels of visitation.

They are also of special significance to neighbouring communities, as evidenced by the large body of contemporary literature and artwork inspired by the landscape which has been produced by these communities over a long period. These affect all the senses – sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste – and include the wilderness value of solitude. While the central ridgeline of the Blue Mountains and the Jenolan Caves/Kanangra Walls area have traditionally been the focus for recognition of these values, there is increasing awareness of the extensive natural beauty and scenic landscapes which occur throughout the GBMWhA. The potential for social and economic benefits to local communities surrounding the GBMWhA is enhanced by these values (see also Key Issue – Social and economic Issues).

Scenic values can be compromised by inappropriate developments in prominent locations adjoining the area. Properties adjoining the GBMWhA with prominent vantage points are highly valued and under pressure for residential and tourist development. Such development has the potential to diminish the scenic values for others. The diversity of local government zonings and policies creates the potential for inconsistency in planning processes that in turn could lead to incompatible development or land use at the GBMWhA's boundary.

7 — LANDSCAPE, NATURAL BEAUTY AND AESTHETIC VALUES

Objectives

To protect the landscape, natural beauty and aesthetic values of the GBMWhA.

Background

The aesthetic beauty of the landscape of the GBMWhA was not recognised by the World Heritage Committee as being of outstanding universal significance, nonetheless the area's natural beauty and scenic landscapes unquestionably make

The GBMWhA's wilderness qualities have particular aesthetic value to local communities and park visitors alike. The undisturbed natural environment is one of the important qualities that attracts residents to live in areas adjoining the GBMWhA. Potential threats to the appreciation of the area's aesthetic values include inappropriate lighting as well as overflights by helicopters, low-flying jets and other aircraft. A Fly Neighbourly program has previously been established in the Blue Mountains National Park to minimise impacts of aircraft but this needs to be reviewed and stronger and more extensive controls applied.

Desired outcomes

- The natural beauty and aesthetic values of the GBMWhA are identified, better understood and their significance is formally recognised at State, National and World Heritage level as appropriate.
- Any adverse impacts on the natural beauty and aesthetic values are prevented, eliminated, or at least minimised.
- Recreational and tourist overflights do not interfere with the natural quiet, biodiversity and GBMWhA aesthetic values.
- Adjacent lands are managed so as to retain the landscape values of the GBMWhA.

Management Response

- 7.1 Research, record and assess the significance of the natural beauty and aesthetic values of the GBMWhA against State, National and World Heritage listing criteria and seek formal recognition as appropriate.
- 7.2 Ensure that management activities and visitor use within and adjacent to the GBMWhA have minimal impacts on the area’s scenic and aesthetic values.
- 7.3 Improve visitor identification of the GBMWhA as a region, develop a sense of arrival at entry points, and ensure development of visitor facilities / interpretation of appropriate character, design and construction.
- 7.4 Ensure that the impact of new developments within and adjacent to the GBMWhA on the area’s scenic and aesthetic values are considered, including any adverse impacts associated with lighting.
- 7.5 Continue to work with the relevant agencies, aviation industry and military to implement and monitor the existing Fly Neighbourly program to ensure that any impact of aircraft on the GBMWhA (especially wilderness areas), park visitors and neighbouring communities is minimised.
- 7.6 Seek the establishment of a Restricted Area under the Air Services Regulations to provide statutory restrictions on tourist flights over the GBMWhA.
- 7.7 Work with local government authorities to introduce appropriate development controls for lands adjoining and within, scenery catchments of the GBMWhA.

- 7.8 Assess scenery catchments, particularly at approaches, access points and visitor facilities to identify negative features and develop short and long-term amelioration measures.

8 — RECREATION AND VISITOR USE

Objective

To provide for an appropriate range of recreation and visitor use, consistent with the protection of World Heritage and related values.

Background

The GBMWhA caters for a wide range of nature-based recreation activities, largely in natural and wilderness settings, as well as a range of commercial tourism activities centred on formal visitor facilities (such as lookouts and walking tracks) and nature-based adventure activities. Apart from a number of basic camping areas within the GBMWhA and accommodation facilities at Jenolan Caves, overnight accommodation is largely catered for in the towns and tourist resorts adjacent to the World Heritage area.

Its location near one of the international gateways into Australia and its close proximity to the large populations resident in the greater Sydney and adjoining Hunter and Wollongong regions, means that the GBMWhA is under increasing pressure from both international and domestic visitors. Uncontrolled visitor use can result in environmental degradation and conflict between different user groups, as well as adverse impacts on local communities. With the greater Sydney region’s expanding population, and the increasing popularity of potentially high impact recreation activities, there is greater pressure for use of the GBMWhA for activities that would more appropriately be catered for elsewhere.

A number of specific recreation and access issues were identified during the community consultation for this plan. Many of these issues are covered in reserve plans of management, which identify appropriate recreation uses and outline specific

management policies/actions aimed at enhancing visitor experiences and reducing visitor impacts. Ongoing liaison with relevant user groups is required to ensure that management policies are understood and supported. Education and interpretation programs are also essential to raise awareness of the area's important values and ensure that visitors and the broader community minimise their impact on those values (see Key Issue — Education, community participation and consultation).

While regional off-reserve recreation opportunities are considered before defining the appropriate level of visitor use and facilities for individual reserves, there is no formal recreation and visitor management strategy which guides or controls visitor use across the broader region.

Visitation to the GBMWHa causes a diverse range of environmental impacts, many of which are difficult to discern and quantify. Management of these problems is complicated by the involvement of numerous agencies. There is a requirement for increased liaison between the various agencies. This would improve the identification of inappropriate uses of the GBMWHa and the development of strategies to reduce them.

The provision of adequate signposting, visitor orientation and interpretive material is essential to enhance visitor experiences and assist in visitor management. The Interpretation & Visitor Orientation Plan for the GBMWHa was adopted in early 2003 following a public exhibition. The plan identifies key themes and messages to be communicated and outlines a range of strategies for conveying these messages in co-operation with other relevant agencies and tourism bodies. Some of these strategies are already being implemented, for example the production and sale of an orientation/ touring map for the GBMWHa and upgrading of signage.

Desired outcomes

- Appropriate use of the GBMWHa is catered for with minimal impact on its World Heritage and other values.
- The role of the GBMWHa in providing a particular type of nature-based visitor experience, compatible with protection of

World Heritage values, is widely recognised, and supported.

Management Response

- 8.1 Ensure that the prime consideration in the face of increasing pressures for recreation and access is the conservation and protection of the values of the GBMWHa.
- 8.2 Facilitate and contribute to the development of regional cross-tenure recreation and visitor management strategies across the GBMWHa.
- 8.3 In consultation with other relevant agencies and tourism bodies, develop and implement a co-ordinated system for visitor use monitoring across the GBMWHa to assist in the development of visitor management strategies.
- 8.4 Continue to work co-operatively with user groups to develop and implement specific recreation management strategies aimed at protecting World Heritage and related values while providing for appropriate use conditional upon consistency with the Plans of Management of the individual reserves.
- 8.5 Provide opportunities for ongoing community consultation regarding decisions on visitor use and management within the GBMWHa through the existing National Parks Regional Advisory Committees, the Trust, the GBMWHa Advisory Committee and additional consultation forums on specific issues as they arise.
- 8.6 Progressively implement the Interpretation & Visitor Orientation Plan for the GBMWHa, in co-operation with other relevant agencies and tourism bodies.

9 — SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

Objective

Consistent with the protection of World Heritage and other values, optimise the potential and existing social and economic benefits derived from visitation to the GBMWhA.

Background

Commercial tourism based on the area's natural and cultural values has long been a major source of economic benefits to the central Blue Mountains. World Heritage status has enhanced the potential for wider social and economic benefits to both indigenous and non-Aboriginal communities, as evidenced by implementation of the Federally-funded World Heritage Business Opportunity Project and the Blue Mountains Business Advantage project. This economic potential is increasingly being recognised in other local government areas adjacent to the GBMWhA.

However there is some concern that benefits will not be evenly spread, that larger business interests may dominate at the expense of both Aboriginal tourism enterprises and smaller, locally based and more eco-oriented tourism enterprises and that a high turnover in tourism and hospitality operators (due to business failures) may be detrimental to the quality of visitor services. Also, increasing visitation potentially conflicts with the needs of local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and as noted in the previous section, may adversely impact on World Heritage and related values.

While the primary consideration of World Heritage management agencies is to protect World Heritage values (see preceding Key Issues), they also have some obligation to consider the social and economic impacts of decisions related to visitor facilities and use within the GBMWhA and to ensure equity and quality in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage and commercial opportunities within the area. World Heritage management agencies liaise closely with local councils, state and local tourism organisations, Aboriginal groups and relevant industry bodies to ensure that the needs and concerns of interested

parties are taken into consideration, without compromising World Heritage and related values. DECC makes decisions in relation to commercial activities based on DECC policy and statutory plans of management. Commercial activities within national parks are licensed on a user-pays system.

The Interpretation and Visitor Orientation Plan for the GBMWhA acknowledges issues such as the need for broad distribution of social and economic benefits and includes some strategies which will assist in improving economic benefits while minimising adverse social and environmental impacts, for example the promotion of touring routes which encourage visitation to all local government areas adjoining the GBMWhA.

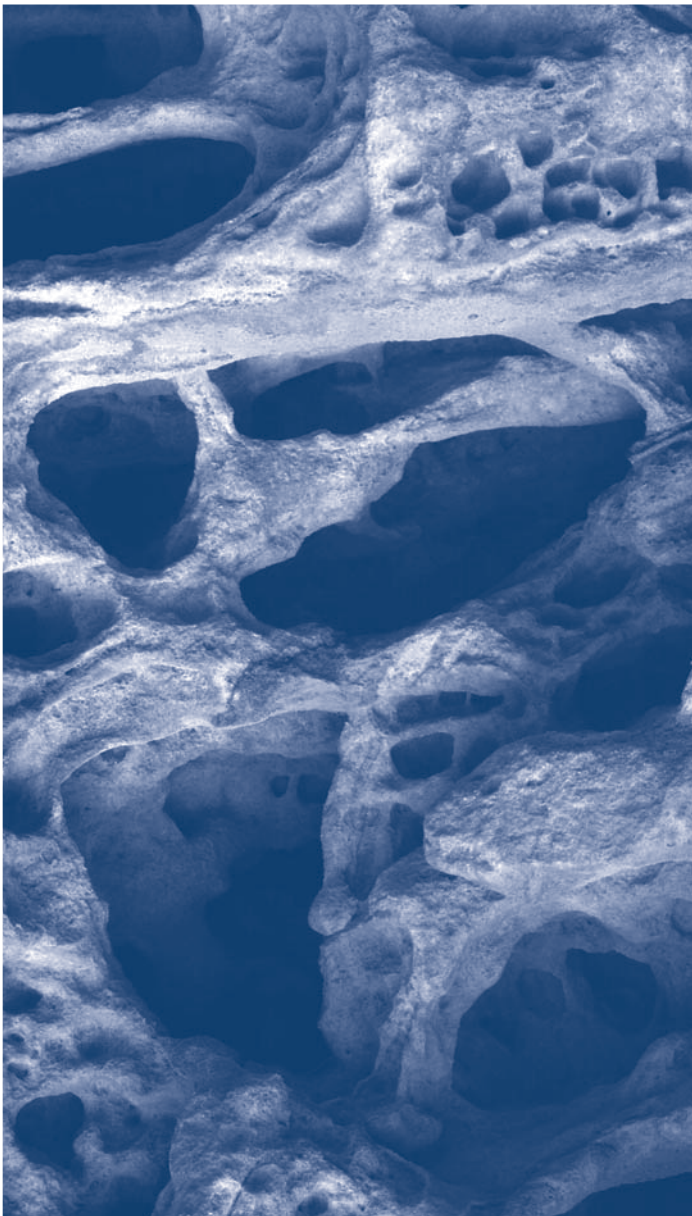
The principle of “user pays” is increasingly being applied within the reserves in order to assist in maintenance of visitor facilities. However, there may be scope for greater return of economic benefits from tourism and visitor use to contribute towards management of the GBMWhA.

Desired outcomes

- Potential and existing social and economic benefits of the GBMWhA are widely recognised and broadly distributed without adverse impact on World Heritage and related values.
- A proportion of the economic benefits arising from the GBMWhA is applied towards improved management of the GBMWhA.

Management Response

- 9.1 Collaborate with local councils, tourism agencies, Aboriginal groups, industry bodies and local operators and businesses to ensure that economic benefits are realised without compromising World Heritage and other values or adversely impacting on local communities.
- 9.2 Formally adopt and implement the Interpretation and Visitor Orientation Plan for the GBMWhA.
- 9.3 Investigate the possibility of establishing gateway facilities near major entrance points to the GBMWhA in conjunction with local government, tourism organisations, Aboriginal groups, businesses and communities.



Sandstone, limestone features. Anvil Rock, Blue Mountains NP.

9.4 In consultation with other relevant agencies, Aboriginal groups and tourism bodies, investigate options for some return of economic benefits to contribute to management of the GBMWSHA.

10 — EDUCATION, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

Objective

To encourage community stewardship of the GBMWSHA through education, consultation and the provision of opportunities for community participation in its protection.

Background

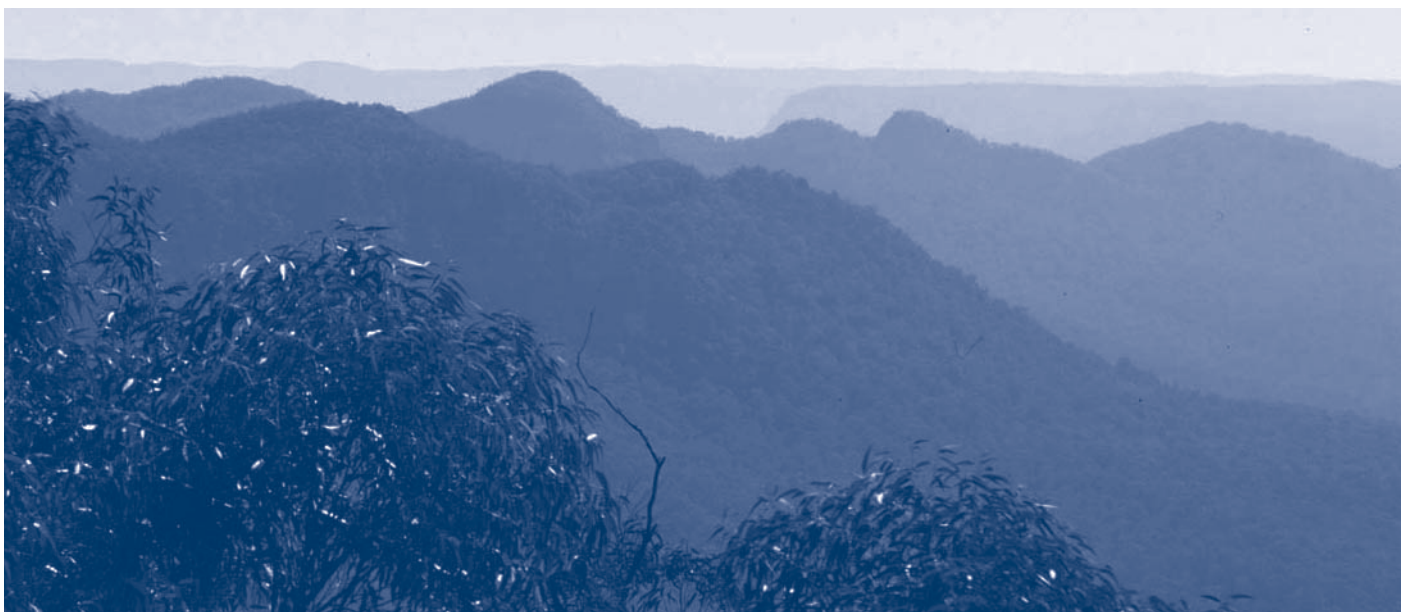
As recognised in the World Heritage Convention, a sense of community “ownership” of the GBMWSHA is essential to achieving the stated strategic objectives of conserving and transmitting its outstanding universal values to future generations. Community members who have a sense of connection to the area and understand their important stewardship role will be more likely to support the area’s conservation into the future and less likely to oppose management proposals aimed at enhancing the area’s integrity and conserving its significant values.

Education and interpretation programs such as the DECC Discovery program have a key role to play in engaging visitors and the broader community in this regard, as do visitor centre and management agency staff. The Interpretation and Visitor Orientation Plan for the GBMWSHA outlines some strategies to ensure that agency staff and others involved in providing information about the GBMWSHA have a good understanding of its World Heritage and related values.

Active community partnerships can assist in achieving a wide range of management objectives, particularly in relation to biodiversity conservation, fire management, pest species control, catchment protection and visitor use management. Special consultation and community involvement measures are required in relation to management of Indigenous heritage values (see Key Issue-Cultural Heritage).

The Councils of the local government areas adjoining the GBMWSHA will play a key role in implementing the GBMWSHA Strategic Plan. Regular liaison with the Councils is essential to develop and maintain active participation as conservation partners.

Consultation regarding management decisions provides the opportunity to raise awareness of management issues and potential impacts on World Heritage and related values. While community



View over Burragorang Valley, Kanangra-Boyd National Park.

consultation is part of statutory planning processes and has occurred in relation to this Strategic Plan, there is a need for more formal mechanisms for ongoing consultation with local and non-local stakeholders on strategic management issues.

Desired outcomes

- Visitors to the GBMWhA and the broader community understand the area's World Heritage and related values and the potential impacts of their own actions on those values.
- Reserve neighbours, local communities and visitors to the GBMWhA are recognised as valuable conservation partners and are involved in community partnerships with management agencies to protect its World Heritage and other values.
- The World Heritage and other values of the GBMWhA are a focus for environmental education in the surrounding regions.

Management Response

- 10.1 Work with reserve neighbours and local communities to develop and implement new partnership programs, for example World Heritage Neighbourhood Watch and GBMWhA "Ambassadors".
- 10.2 Establish a forum for information exchange and neighbour input into the management of the GBMWhA.
- 10.3 In partnership with local agencies, support and expand community-based volunteer rehabilitation programs to maximise the effectiveness of pest species control programs and rehabilitation of degraded areas.
- 10.4 Support and expand education programs for tourism operators (as per the GBMWhA Interpretation and Visitor Orientation Plan).
- 10.5 Support and expand education programs regarding the GBMWhA such as DECC Discovery and seek interagency support and external funding for improved education packages, particularly for use in schools and other environmentally based community activities, such as the Earth Journeys Schools program.
- 10.6 Support the GBMWhA Advisory Committee and effectively engage the community and the National Parks Regional Advisory Committees

in the implementation of this Strategic Plan. (See also Key Issue — Cultural Heritage re partnerships with Aboriginal groups).

- 10.7 Support and assist local Aboriginal people to develop further educational cultural heritage programs and activities for schools, visitors, and local communities regarding the GBMWhA.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR DESIRED OUTCOMES

The Strategic Plan will be assessed by the GBMWhA Management Committee, in consultation with the Advisory Committee (for a description of these committees refer to section Administration, p.20) to evaluate management priorities according to the major desired outcomes as identified under each of the Key Issues, and summarised below:

INTEGRITY

- Areas of potential outstanding universal value or that improve the integrity of the GBMWhA are evaluated as additions to the GBMWhA.
- The location and extent of World Heritage values within the GBMWhA is comprehensively documented.
- Knowledge of World Heritage and other values of the GBMWhA is improved through research.
- Biodiversity policies and programs including on-the-ground conservation activities are consistent with the strategies and actions outlined in the National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan 2004 – 2007.
- Local communities support any proposed additions to the GBMWhA.
- Policy formulation and planning for the GBMWhA is undertaken strategically, considering the implications for the entire GBMWhA.
- All the GBMWhA reserves are covered by World Heritage-relevant statutory plans of management and, where necessary, operational plans such as fire, introduced species, catchment action and visitation management plans.

- Effective inter-governmental and inter-agency administrative arrangements are in place to ensure the cooperative, coordinated and consistent management of the GBMWHA.
- Adjoining land uses are compatible with the conservation and presentation of World Heritage values.
- Wilderness and wild rivers are formally identified, declared and protected.

MAJOR IMPACTS

- Local, regional and statewide planning instruments and catchment blueprints for areas adjacent to the GBMWHA adequately address the need for protection of the GBMWHA's World Heritage values.
- Effective inter-governmental and inter-agency administrative arrangements are in place to ensure the cooperative, coordinated and consistent processing of development proposals which may adversely impact the GBMWHA.
- Developments and activities with an unknown but potentially significant impact on the World Heritage and other values of the GBMWHA are either modified to minimise the risk of impact on those values or do not proceed.
- The impacts of surrounding land use on World Heritage values are better understood and monitored.
- Promote connectivity of the GBMWHA with adjacent natural areas.

BIODIVERSITY

- Terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and their associated ecological processes, species, populations and genetic diversity are all protected and conserved in-situ.
- Conservation of the reserves' World Heritage values is the primary consideration in their management.
- Management objectives, policies and activities are coordinated between agencies, consistent with World Heritage objectives and improved in line with best practice.

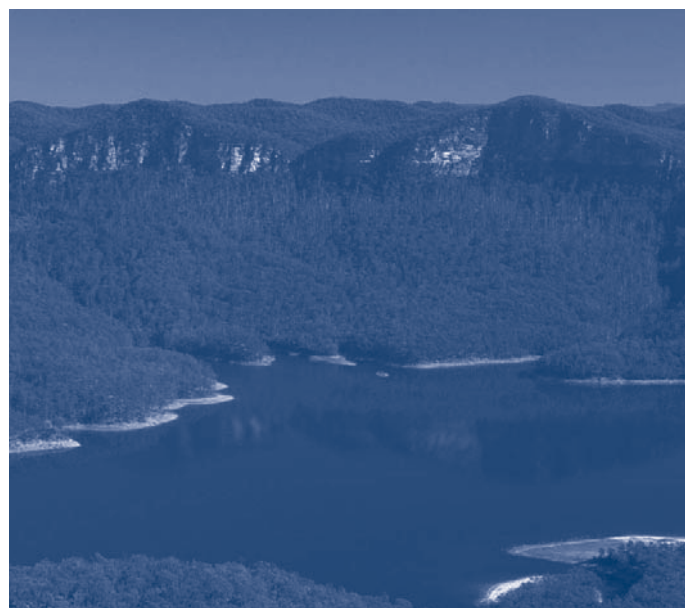
- Research results are widely promulgated and a comprehensive biological and visitor use data set is available to managers in all agencies.
- An appropriate regime of monitoring is in place to enable assessment of the state of the World Heritage values of the GBMWHA.
- Management decisions are guided by independent scientific and technical advice.

GEODIVERSITY

- Any adverse impacts on water quality and quantity within the GBMWHA arising from park management activities, upstream land uses or visitor use are eliminated or, at least, minimised.
- Improved understanding of visitors, neighbours and nearby communities of their potential impact on the GBMWHA's World Heritage value and their role in minimising adverse impacts on water quality.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

- The cultural heritage values of the GBMWHA are retained and better understood, and that their significance is formally recognised at State, National and World Heritage level as appropriate.



Lake Burratorang. Nattai NP.

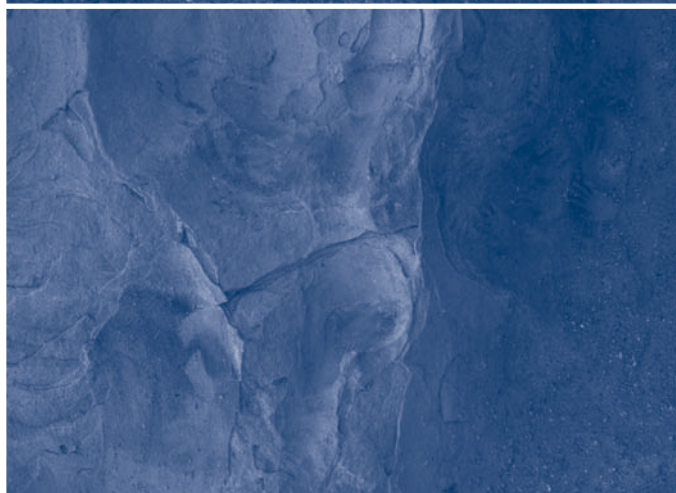
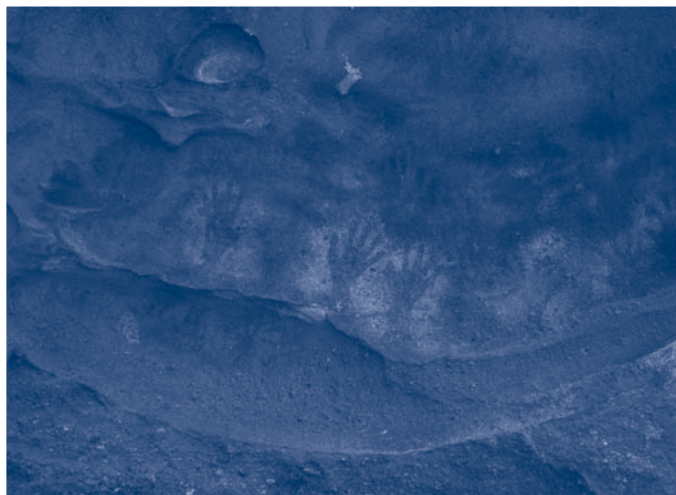
- Management of the GBMWH A is undertaken co-operatively with the Aboriginal people who have traditional connections to the Countries that comprise the GBMWH A.
- The cultural, traditional and social significance of the landscapes within the GBMWH A to Aboriginal people is widely acknowledged and respected.
- The social and historical significance of the landscapes within the GBMWH A to non-Aboriginal people is acknowledged and respected.

LANDSCAPE, NATURAL BEAUTY AND AESTHETIC VALUES

- The natural beauty and aesthetic values of the GBMWH A are identified, better understood and their significance is formally recognised at State, National and World Heritage level as appropriate.
- Any adverse impacts on the natural beauty and aesthetic values are prevented, eliminated, or at least minimised.
- Recreational and tourist overflights do not interfere with the natural quiet, biodiversity and GBMWH A aesthetic values.
- Adjacent lands are managed so as to retain the landscape values of the GBMWH A.

RECREATION AND VISITOR USE

- Appropriate use of the GBMWH A is catered for with minimal impact on its World Heritage and other values.
- The role of the GBMWH A in providing a particular type of nature-based visitor experience, compatible with protection of World Heritage values, is widely recognised, valued and supported.



Babies Feet Cave, Growee Gulf. Wollemi NP.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

- Potential social and economic benefits of the GBMWH A are widely recognised and broadly distributed without adverse impact on World Heritage and related values.
- A proportion of the economic benefits arising from the GBMWH A is applied towards improved management of the GBMWH A.

EDUCATION, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

- Visitors to the GBMWHa and the broader community understand the area’s World Heritage and related values and the potential impacts of their own actions on those values.
- Reserve neighbours, local communities and visitors to the GBMWHa are recognised as valuable conservation partners and are enthusiastically involved in community partnerships with management agencies to protect its World Heritage and other values.
- The World Heritage and other values of the GBMWHa are a focus for environmental education in the surrounding regions.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

Implementation of this plan is the responsibility of the NSW DECC in conjunction with the Management Committee. Priorities for the allocation of resources will be determined within the context of each management agency’s corporate policies and strategic planning and will be subject to the availability of necessary staff and funds and to any special requirements of the Director-General and the New South Wales and Australian Government Environment Ministers.

Under current arrangements, allocation of funds for management of the seven national parks is largely the responsibility of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (which is now part of NSW DECC) within its allocated State funding. Funding for management of the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve comes primarily from tourism revenue. The Australian Government has provided funding for the GBMWHa through Natural Heritage Trust programs for projects directly related to its obligations under the World Heritage Convention. Future funding for the GBMWHa as a whole will continue to be sought through States Grants and other funding programs, subject to negotiation between the New South Wales and Australian Governments.

Any proposals for additions to the GBMWHa will include management cost analyses with specific consideration of the costs of adequately protecting and conserving the identified World Heritage values and the GBMWHa’s integrity.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The planning cycle for this Strategic Plan provides for review after 10 years. A mid-term review at about five years after the adoption of this plan will make any readjustments that may be necessary and accommodate any relevant government policy or legislative changes. This Plan may only be amended after full consultation with the Advisory Committee. At the discretion of the Management Committee, amendments may be placed on public exhibition to seek the views of the broader community prior to incorporation of the proposed amendments.

Specific measures of the effectiveness of the document in the final review of the Plan should include:

- success in maintaining the integrity of the GBMWHa;
- improvement in the identification, protection, conservation, rehabilitation and presentation of the World Heritage values;
- leadership by agencies responsible for implementing management actions identified in the plan;
- ownership of the plan by the GBMWHa community;
- commitment to consultation and participation; adequate resourcing; and
- perceived usefulness of the Strategic Plan.

The final review of the Plan will evaluate the relevance of identified issues and the extent to which management responses have been implemented and objectives achieved. In addition, the review will identify the reasons for lack of achievement or implementation of the Plan.

SELECTED REFERENCES

Reserve plans of management

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DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

In this Plan

- “PWG” refers to the Parks and Wildlife Group of DECC.
- “DECC” is the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change.
- “the Trust” and “JCRT” refer to the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust.
- “DEWHA” is the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.
- “GBMWSHA” stands for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.
- “the EPBC Act” means the Australian Government Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 as amended from time to time and any Act replacing the same.
- “the NPW Act” means the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 as amended from time to time and any Act replacing the same.
- “the Management Committee” means a committee comprising senior officials from DECC and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to facilitate the cooperative management of the GBMWSHA at strategic policy and operational levels.
- “the Advisory Committee” means a committee established to provide advice on the planning and management of the GBMWSHA, having both community consultation and technical and scientific advice functions.
- “Regional Advisory Committee” means the committee of community representatives approved by the New South Wales Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water and appointed under the NPW Act to advise and assist with the management of the DECC Parks and Wildlife Group Region for which they are appointed.
- “outstanding universal values” means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance

for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole (UNESCO, 2005).

- “ecologically sustainable use” means use of the natural resources within their capacity to sustain natural processes while maintaining the life-support systems of nature and ensuring that the benefit of the use to the present generation does not diminish the potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations (EPBC Act).
- “integrity” is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes. Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore requires assessing the extent to which the property:
 - a) includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value;
 - b) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property’s significance;
 - c) suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.
- (clause 88 Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention).
- “identified wilderness” means an area assessed by the DECC as fulfilling the wilderness criteria specified in Section 6(1) of the Wilderness Act 1987.
- “declared wilderness” means an area gazetted and managed by the New South Wales Government in accordance with the Wilderness Act 1987.
- “voluntary conservation agreement” means a formal agreement in accordance with the NPW Act between the New South Wales Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water and a property owner/ lessee for the conservation of natural or cultural heritage.
- “taxa” refers to any taxonomic class, for example genus, species, sub-species.



Cycling, Buralow Trail, Blue Mountains NP.
 Finchley Trig Lookout, Yengo NP.
 Pagoda country, Gardens of Stone NP.
 Four Wheel Driving, T3 trail, Wollemi NP.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I LAND TENURE OF THE RESERVES OF THE GBMWHA

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is comprised of the total area of the reserves listed

below as they existed at the time of nomination. Since the nomination and subsequent listing of the GBMWHA, most of these reserves have increased in area as a result of the purchase of areas of adjoining freehold land and the addition of other areas of public land. The additional 37,694 hectares are not part of the GBMWHA. The addition of these areas to the GBMWHA will require additional assessment and a decision by both NSW and Australian Governments.

Reserve	Type	Original Nomination (ha)	GBMWHA Property 1st July 2008	Gazetted wilderness (ha) at July 2008
Blue Mountains NP	GBMWHA	247,840	267,985.3	37,901 (Grose)
Gardens of Stone NP	GBMWHA	15,150	15,130.3	N/A
Jenolan KCR	GBMWHA	2,422	2,487.4	N/A
Kanangra-Boyd NP	GBMWHA	65,379	65,546	122,615
Nattai NP	GBMWHA	47,855	49,453.6	29,948
Thirlmere Lakes NP	GBMWHA	641	625.3	N/A
Wollemi NP	GBMWHA	499,879	501,699.8	361,114
Yengo NP	GBMWHA	153,483	167,415.2	119,600 proposed
TOTAL		1,032,649	1,070,343	551,576.9*

Note: Some gazetted wilderness areas extend across more than one reserve

* Not including the proposed Yengo Wilderness (119,600 ha as at 30/09/08)

APPENDIX 2 KEY EXAMPLES OF THE GBMWHA'S WORLD HERITAGE VALUES

The World Heritage values of a property are the natural heritage and cultural heritage contained in the property, which have the same meaning given by the World Heritage Convention. The following indicative World Heritage values table includes examples of the World Heritage values for which the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

was listed for each of the relevant World Heritage List criteria. While these examples are illustrative of the World Heritage values of the GBMWHA, they do not necessarily constitute a comprehensive list. Other sources should be consulted for a more detailed understanding of the values of the GBMWHA, including the selected references listed in this plan (p.33). It should be noted that the criteria against which the GBMWHA was listed are periodically revised and the criteria against which the GBMWHA was listed in 2000 may not necessarily be identical with future criteria.

NATURAL CRITERIA AGAINST WHICH THE GBMWHA WAS INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST IN 2000	EXAMPLES OF THE GBMWHA'S WORLD HERITAGE VALUES FOR WHICH THE PROPERTY WAS INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST.
<p>Criterion (ii) Outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.</p>	<p>The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area provides outstanding examples representing ongoing ecological and biological processes significant in the evolution of Australia's highly diverse ecosystems and communities of plants and animals, particularly eucalypt-dominated ecosystems. The World Heritage values include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primitive species with Gondwanan affinities that are of outstanding significance in terms of the evolution of plant life, including the Wollemi Pine <i>Wollemia nobilis</i> and the primitive gymnosperm <i>Microstrobos fitzgeraldii</i>; • a centre of diversification of the eucalypts which provides an outstanding record of the products of evolutionary processes, associated with the global climatic changes of the late Tertiary and the Quaternary; • the highly unusual juxtaposition of diverse scleromorphic species with Gondwanan taxa; • an exceptional representation of the major eucalypt groups and aspects of their evolution and radiation, including species in the following groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • genera: <i>Eucalyptus</i> (including <i>Corymbia</i>) and <i>Angophora</i>; • subgenera: <i>Eucalyptus</i>, <i>Corymbia</i> and <i>Symphyomyrtus</i>; • examples of species divergence occurring in a relatively small area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differentiation of eucalypt taxa in isolation in response to persistent habitat islands (e.g. those associated with sandstone plateaux isolated by deep valleys); • mutually exclusive distributions of taxa in the series <i>Strictae</i> (the mallee ashes) and <i>Haemostomae</i> (the scribbly ashes) resulting from long-term isolation of breeding populations (allopatric speciation); • eucalypt taxa demonstrating very high levels of hybridisation;

“active community partnerships can assist in achieving a wide range of management objectives”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> representative examples of dynamic processing in eucalypt-dominated ecosystems, including the full range of interactions between eucalypts, understorey, environment and fire, extending from forests with rainforest boundaries to mallee communities with heath boundaries, demonstrating the exceptional ecological amplitude of the eucalypts.
<p>Criterion (iv) 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.</p>	<p>The Greater Blue Mountains Area includes significant habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including the eucalypts and eucalypt-dominated communities, taxa with Gondwanan affinities, and taxa of conservation significance. The World Heritage values include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> outstanding levels of plant diversity expressed at different taxonomic levels (152 families, 484 genera, ca. 1500 species) and for all three measures of species diversity (local species richness or “alpha” diversity, species turnover across environmental gradients or “beta” diversity, and regional species richness or “gamma” diversity); plant taxa with very high levels of species diversity, including the families — Fabaceae (149 species), Myrtaceae (150 species), Orchidaceae (77 species), Poaceae (57 species), Cyperaceae (43 species), and the genera <i>Eucalyptus</i> (>100 species), <i>Acacia</i> (64 species); exceptional diversity of habitats that contribute to the property being one of the three most diverse areas on earth for scleromorphic species and the only one of these areas that is dominated by trees and without a Mediterranean climate, including plateaux tops, ridges, exposed rocks, cliffs, rocky slopes and sheltered gorges and valleys; exceptional diversity of habitats providing outstanding representation of the Australian fauna within a single place, including 400 vertebrate taxa — 52 native mammals, 265 birds or 33% of the Australian total, 63 reptiles, more than 30 frogs and examples of species of global significance such as the platypus (<i>Ornithorhynchus anatinus</i>) and the echidna (<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>), and invertebrate taxa — butterflies (120 species) and moths (estimated 4000 species); very high diversity of scleromorphic taxa represented within 20 plant families including Myrtaceae, Proteaceae, Epacridaceae, Fabaceae (Faboideae and Mimosoideae), Dilleniaceae, Rutaceae, and Euphoreiaceae (Tribe Stenolobeae); ancient relict species with Gondwanan affinities that have survived past changes of climate within refugia, for example in recessed canyons and perpetually moist areas, including: the Wollemi Pine (<i>Wollemia nobilis</i>); and the primitive gymnosperm <i>Microstrobis fitzgeraldii</i>; other primitive species with Gondwanan affinities, including: <i>Lomatia</i>, <i>Dracophyllum</i>, and <i>Podocarpus</i>; taxa in the family Lauraceae; <i>Atkinsonia</i>, the most primitive extant root parasitic genus; and taxa in the family Winteraceae, such as <i>Tasmannia</i>;

- taxa contributing to an exceptional diversity of eucalypts and eucalypt-dominated ecosystems, including: 2 eucalypt genera (*Eucalyptus* including *Corymbia*, *Angophora*); 3 eucalypt subgeneric groups (*Eucalyptus*, *Corymbia*, *Symphomyrtus*); >100 eucalypt species (14% of the global total); and highly diverse understoreys of flora and fauna species;
- structural forms contributing to an exceptional diversity of eucalypts and eucalypt-dominated ecosystems, including: tall open forests (towering, single-stemmed trees); open forest; woodland; low open woodland; and mallee shrubland (small, multi-stemmed shrubs);
- more than 70 plant communities, including 56 open forest and woodland communities contributing to an exceptional diversity of eucalypt-dominated ecosystems associated with: wet environments (including the margins of rainforests); dry environments (rapidly-draining, drought prone sandstone plateaux); low-nutrient environments (including sandstone-derived substrates); fire-prone environments (including the sandstone plateaux); and fertile environments (remnants of formerly widespread Tertiary basalts);
- high levels of diversity of invertebrate fauna, including Lepidoptera (4000 moth species, 125 butterfly species), and cave invertebrates (67 taxa recorded at Jenolan Caves);
- plant taxa of conservation significance and their habitats, including: endemic species (114 plant species); relict species; species with a restricted range; and rare or threatened species (127 species);
- animal taxa of conservation significance and their habitats, including: endemic species; relict species; species with a restricted range; and rare or threatened species (40 vertebrate taxa including 12 mammal species and 15 bird species and 12 invertebrate taxa).



Aboriginal Discovery activity. W. Brennan, 2006

APPENDIX 3

TERMS OF REFERENCE – GBMWA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE GBMWA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Membership

There shall be a total of three members of the Management Committee, comprising:

- Director Central Branch, National Parks and Wildlife Service, who shall act on behalf of the Head of NSW DECC, as the Chairman of the Committee;
- Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust — General Manager until the care and control of the Visitor Use and Services Zone is transferred to NSW DECC;
- Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts – Assistant Secretary of the Heritage Management Branch, or nominee.

Observers

The three National Parks and Wildlife Service Regional Managers of the NSW DECC Regions within which the GBMWA is located; and up to two observers from the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

Terms of Reference

The GBMWA Management Committee will, under the direction of the Ministers, formulate and implement policies for the consistent, cooperative and coordinated management of the property, at strategic and operational levels and in accordance with the goal of 'best practice management' of Australia's World Heritage properties. The major functions of the Management Committee shall be:

- To develop and coordinate strategic policy for the property in relation to Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention;
- To provide advice and recommendations to the Ministers on any matters relevant to the management of the property, in particular strategic management planning, funding arrangements and presentation;

- To set broad priorities for expenditure;
- To oversee the work program of the World Heritage Executive Officer;
- To co-ordinate the activities of, and seek and take advice from, the Advisory Committee, as appropriate; and
- To resolve differences in points of view that may arise from time to time.

Operation

The Management Committee shall operate according to the following procedures:

- The Committee shall meet on an agreed basis, at least twice in a calendar year (which may include meeting by teleconference) or as otherwise directed by Ministers;
- Secretariat support shall be provided by NSW DECC;
- Procedure for the conduct of business shall be by consensus and resolution rather than by voting; and
- Governments shall bear the costs of their own representatives and observers attending meetings of the Committee.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE GBMWA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Membership

There shall be twelve members of the Advisory Committee, comprising:

- The Chairman, being an independent, non-government person with no current direct financial or political vested interest in the way in which the GBMWA is managed;
- Two local Indigenous/traditional owners;
- Two local government (with terms rotating amongst jurisdictions);
- One tourism representative;
- One non-government conservation/heritage organization;
- One outdoor self-reliant nature-based recreation;
- One water quality/aquatic environment;
- One botanical/ecological;
- One zoological/ecological; and
- One archaeological/cultural heritage.



Observers

Up to two from each of the National Parks and Wildlife Service within NSW DECC, Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; one from each of the three Regional National Parks Advisory Committees relevant to the GBMWA. Others by invitation.

Appointment

Members of the Committee will be selected by mutual agreement between DECC and DEWHA before seeking the approval of both Ministers. In the event of agreement not being reached between DECC and DEWHA, a list of candidates and the reasons for supporting and not supporting their membership will be put to the Ministers for their decision.

Members will be appointed for a three-year term. The Ministers may reappoint any member. Members of the Committee shall be appointed in their own right and not as representatives of any particular organisations, institutions, disciplines or interest sectors.

The Committee may, from time to time, invite non-government observers to attend meetings.

Termination

Other than by resignation, a member's membership of the Committee will be terminated if the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts approves a recommendation to so terminate a membership on the recommendation of the NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment.

Terms of Reference

The GBMWA Advisory Committee will provide advice, either at the request of the relevant Ministers, at the request of the GBMWA Management Committee, or of its own volition, on matters relating to the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the GBMWA. The Advisory Committee shall:

- Consider and advise on the views of community interests;
- Consider and advise on technical and scientific

matters including scientific research priorities, relevant new information or developments in science, the scientific basis of management principles and practices, the appropriateness of current and proposed research, and the maintenance of the values and integrity of the GBMWA;

- Provide advice on and monitor the implementation and review of the Strategic Plan; and
- Provide advice to the Management Committee or the relevant Ministers on issues referred to it for consideration or of its own volition.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

BOTANISTS WAY Bells Line of Road

The Botanists Way touring route links Windsor/ Richmond and Lithgow along the Bells Line of Road and is a great way to discover the botanical attractions of the area.

Forming part of the Blue Mountains Circular Drive, the route from Richmond follows the journey of some of Australia's earliest botanists, and includes the footprints of Aboriginal people since the beginning of time.

George Caley walked into this rugged landscape, in 1804, with no map and no idea what lay ahead. His route encompassed places he named "Devils Wilderness" and "Dismal Dingle".

Caley was an adventurer and made it Mount Banks, and returned safely. His botanical collection grew as a result, with many special and rare plants added to Australia's flora lists.

In 1823 an Aboriginal guide helped Archibald Bell along a ridge line through the maze of gorges and canyons. Bells Line of Road joins the lower mountains to Lithgow in the West. The shale soil along this ridge is richer than the surrounding sandstone derived soil, and many orchards and specialist growers farm the land.

At the crest of Mount Tomah, on basalt derived soil, (the remains of a volcanic lava flow) are the Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens. Here can be seen part of the huge array of local plants, including the Wollemi pine. A collection of exotic plants are also displayed, that makes spring and autumn visits especially invigorating.

Cross the wilderness from east to west, visit historic Bilpin, Mount Wilson, Mount Victoria and Lithgow -with spectacular views all the way!

Take a short drive from Mount Victoria to Blackheath and visit the Blue Mountains Heritage Centre, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service information centre and national parks shop, with information on:

- drives, maps and information
- bushwalking, walking guidebooks, maps
- camping information
- bookings for Discovery Ranger guided walks and tours
- Interactive educational exhibits
- Gallery and theatre

Open everyday except Christmas Day (9.00am to 4.30pm). 24 hour information outside. Telephone (02) 4787 8877. Located: end of Govetts Leap Road, Blackheath 2785. (10 kilometres west of Katoomba). www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

Aboriginal Nations represented in the World Heritage Area:

- Djabugay - north-west
- Dhuring - north-east
- Dhang - central east
- Gundungahay - central-west
- Wiradjuri - central-west
- Wiradjuri - far north

WORLD HERITAGE

Interpretive sign, Central Kedumba Sector. BMR Interpretations.

Operation

The Advisory Committee shall operate according to the following procedures:

- A quorum shall be a simple majority of members;
- The Committee shall meet as necessary, or at the request of the Ministers or the Management Committee, or if the majority of members request a meeting, provided that at least two meetings are held each calendar year;
- The secretariat support for the Committee shall be provided by the NSW DECC;
- If the Chairman is absent the Committee shall elect a temporary Chairman;
- Procedure for the conduct of business shall be by agreement. Where consensus is not attainable the report of the Committee shall record the number of members supporting a particular view and note the differing views of members not supporting a recommendation;
- There is no provision for proxies;
- A report of each meeting shall be forwarded to the Management Committee within one month of each meeting; and
- Indigenous members will be paid sitting fees at the prevailing Commonwealth rate. State and Commonwealth Governments shall bear the costs of their agency members and observers attending meetings. Any remuneration of observers from Regional National Parks Advisory Committees will be left up to their respective committees. It is not proposed to pay allowances or sitting fees to non-Indigenous members or observers as DECC and DEWHA will fund accommodation and other related expenses directly.

APPENDIX 4 NEW SOUTH WALES STATUTORY PROTECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change is responsible for administering the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and the Wilderness Act 1987. These Acts cover the protection and management of areas such as national parks, nature reserves and wilderness.



The following general purposes relate to the management of the national parks and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve in NSW:

- the protection and preservation of the scenic, natural and cultural features;
- the conservation of wildlife;
- the maintenance of natural processes as far as possible;
- the provision of appropriate recreational opportunities; and
- the encouragement of scientific and educational inquiry into environmental features and processes, prehistoric and historic features, and park use patterns.

Parts of some reserves in the GBMWA have been declared as wilderness under the Wilderness Act. Management principles of wilderness areas, as provided in this Act, are:

- to restore and protect the unmodified state of the areas;
- to preserve its capacity to evolve in the absence of significant human interference; and
- to permit opportunities for solitude and appropriate self-reliant recreation.

The Kowmung River was declared under the National Parks and Wildlife Act on 2 December 2005. Other wild rivers within the GBMWA have been identified for further investigation and declaration under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. Under that Act wild rivers are to be managed in accordance with the following principles:

- the restoration wherever possible and maintenance of the natural biological, hydrological and geomorphological processes associated with wild rivers and their catchments, including natural low variability; and
- the identification, conservation and appropriate management of Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places.

APPENDIX 5 STATUS OF PLANS OF MANAGEMENT FOR PARKS AND RESERVES IN THE GBMWA (AS AT JULY, 2007)

Thirlmere Lakes National Park: Plan of Management adopted November, 1997.

Wollemi National Park: Plan of Management adopted April, 2001.

Nattai National Park: Plan of Management adopted April, 2001.

Blue Mountains National Park: Plan of Management adopted May, 2001.

Kanangra-Boyd National Park: Plan of Management adopted April 2001.

Gardens of Stone National Park: Draft Plan of Management exhibited and finalized.

Yengo National Park: Draft Plan of Management exhibited and finalized.

Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve: Plan of Management adopted. Revised draft plan exhibited and being finalized.

APPENDIX 6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS, STATE & FEDERAL ELECTORATES & INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE GROUPS OF THE GBMWA

LGAs:

Blue Mountains City

Cessnock City

Goulburn Mulwaree

Greater Lithgow City

Hawkesbury City

Mid-Western Regional Council

Muswellbrook Shire

Oberon

Penrith City

Singleton Shire

Wingecarribee Shire

Wollondilly Shire

ABORIGINAL NATIONS:

Darkinjung

Darug

Dharawal

Gundungurra

Wanaruah

Wiradjuri

STATE ELECTORATES:

Bathurst

Blue Mountains

Goulburn Mulwaree

Hawkesbury

Londonderry

Mulgoa

Penrith

Upper Hunter

FEDERAL ELECTORATES:

Calare

Greenway

Hume

Hunter

Macarthur

Macquarie

Mulgoa

Parkes

NOTES

NOTES



GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE AREA AND ADJACENT RESERVES.