

Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Strategic Plan Addendum 2016



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Introduction

This addendum to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Strategic Plan contains the results of a mid-term review. The review made required adjustments and updates to relevant government policy or legislation.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) Strategic Plan provides an over-arching framework for the integrated management, protection, interpretation and monitoring of the GBMWA. The major management challenges identified in the strategic plan fall into six categories:

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

Key management objectives in the strategic plan provide a philosophical basis for management of the area and guidance for operational strategies, in accordance with requirements of the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines outlined in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV).

The following information has been updated since the launch of the strategic plan in 2009 and includes relevant links to the outstanding universal value of the GBMWA.

Aboriginal joint management

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) acknowledges that the Indigenous peoples of Australia are the original custodians of the lands and waters, animals and plants of NSW and its many and varied landscapes.

Under an Aboriginal joint management arrangement, the NSW Government and local Aboriginal people share responsibility for a park's management. This is to ensure that Aboriginal people can participate in planning and decision-making for the park, reserve or area while maintaining access to parks for everyone.

Aboriginal joint management options include memoranda of understanding, Indigenous land use agreements (ILUA), lease-back agreements or more informal arrangements with the NPWS.

Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement

Indigenous land use agreements (ILUAs) are agreements under the *Native Title Act 1993* between the Australian Government and native title claimants or holders. These agreements may be used to resolve native title claims and establish access and management arrangements between native title claimants and other landowners within a claim area.

The Gundungurra ILUA (PDF 3MB) was signed in 2014 by the Gundungurra people and relevant government agencies and ministers and registered with the Native Title Tribunal in

February 2015. The ILUA acknowledges the Gundungurra people's custodianship, use and management of their traditional land and waters across an area of about 6942 square kilometres (about eight kilometres south of Lithgow and 18 kilometres north of Goulburn).

The Gundungurra people's traditional land and waters include 20 national parks and reserves and some of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The ILUA is a 'non-native title' ILUA and does not recognise native title over these lands. The Gundungurra people agreed to withdraw their native title claim on registration of the agreement.

Aboriginal places

The Greater Blue Mountains region contains, or is closely associated with, a number of areas that have received statutory recognition as 'Aboriginal places' under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 since World Heritage Listing in 2000. These include:

- the Three Sisters and The Gully at Katoomba
- Blackfellows Hand or Maiyingu Marragu near Lithgow
- Kings Tableland near Wentworth Falls
- Red Hands Cave and Euroka near Glenbrook
- Shaws Creek at Yellow Rock Mount Yengo near Wollombi.

Of these, The Three Sisters, Kings Tableland, Red Hands Cave, Euroka and Mt Yengo are within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Aboriginal sites

In 1998 the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage nomination noted 'the dissected sandstone plateau country of the Greater Blue Mountains is of outstanding universal value for the scientific significance of its suite of some 700 known Aboriginal occupational and rock art sites across extensive undisturbed areas' (page 65).

In 2016, 1376 Aboriginal sites were recorded across the reserves that make up the Greater Blue Mountains property. The Office of Environment and Heritage maintains the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System, which includes:

- information about Aboriginal objects that have been reported to the Director General, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- information about Aboriginal Places which have been declared by the Minister for the Environment to have special significance with respect to Aboriginal culture
- archaeological reports.

Australian Government

The Australian Government is the State Party to the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention). The World Heritage Convention recognises that it is the duty of States Parties to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage.

The Australian Government has an over-arching management framework to guide best practice management for World Heritage properties that include:

- the Australian World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement, which outlines roles and responsibilities of the Australian, state and territory governments
- the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, key legislation to protect the outstanding universal value of World Heritage properties
- the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from each Australian World Heritage property who share information on best practice management with terms of reference in the Australian World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement
- the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network, which provides an Indigenous perspective on managing Australia's World Heritage properties with terms of reference in the Australian World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement.

Department of the Environment and Energy

For references in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Strategic Plan to the Australian Government agency the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, refer to the Department of the Environment and Energy.

Australian Heritage Strategy

The Australian Government's Australian Heritage Strategy (2015) is one of Australia's key heritage priorities. The strategy provides a nationally driven strategic direction for heritage management across all levels of government and the community. A key objective of the strategy is to continue to support Australia's iconic World Heritage properties.

Bilateral agreements

Bilateral agreements reduce duplication of environmental assessment and approval processes between the Commonwealth of Australia (Commonwealth) and the State of New South Wales (NSW). They allow the Commonwealth to 'accredit' NSW for assessment processes under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The Assessment Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and NSW relating to environmental assessment (the Assessment Bilateral Agreement), allows the Australian Minister for the Environment to rely on specified environmental impact assessment processes of NSW in assessing actions under the EPBC Act.

Eucalypt species

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) was listed for its outstanding natural value, a major component of which is the high number of eucalypt species and eucalypt-dominated communities present. At the time of nomination and World Heritage Listing in 2000, 91 species of eucalypts were identified.

The GBMWA Strategic Plan reports on over 100 different species of eucalypts. Researchers have provided a definitive list of the 96 eucalypts (species of the genera *Eucalyptus*, *Angophora* and *Corymbia* in the family *Myrtaceae*) that includes newly described species but not unconfirmed species. This definitive list also includes eucalypt

species that have been recorded in the eight individual reserves of the GBMWA over the past 20 years.

Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory Committee

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) Advisory Committee (the Committee) advises on the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the GBMWA – this includes strategic policies on Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention. The Committee plays a crucial role in the conservation of this World Heritage property by providing scientific advice and facilitating constructive relationships between the National Parks and Wildlife Service (part of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage), the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, the Department of the Environment and Energy, and the community.

Integrity

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural heritage of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) Strategic Plan states '... to maintain, and wherever possible improve, the current and future integrity of the GBMWA ...' including, seeking 'to ensure that adjoining land uses are sympathetic to the conservation and presentation of World Heritage values'.

In 2014–15, the GBMWA Advisory Committee and the NSW Government recommended that the National Heritage List assessment include additional lands which are contiguous with or close to the GBMWA and act as buffers to the GBMWA. These included:

- Bargo River State Conservation Area
- Bargo State Conservation Area
- Burrangong State Conservation Area
- Capertee National Park
- Coricudgy State Forest
- Finchley Aboriginal Area
- Gaspers Mountain inholding
- Goulburn River National Park
- Hassans Walls
- Jellore State Forest
- Joadja Nature Reserve
- Mares Forest National Park
- Muggi Murum-ban State Conservation Area
- Nattai State Conservation Area
- Newnes State Forest
- Wolgan State Forest
- Ben Bullen State Forest
- Nullo Mountain State Forest and Flora Reserve

- Parr State Conservation Area
- Putty freehold lands
- Putty State Forest
- Wollondilly River Nature Reserve
- Wombeyan Karst Conservation Reserve
- Yerranderie Regional Park
- Yerranderie State Conservation Area.

The GBMWA Advisory Committee has advised that to maintain the current and future integrity of the World Heritage area, it is essential to consider potential adverse direct and indirect impacts on World Heritage and other values from developments that occur adjacent to the GBMWA.

Maintaining animal diversity

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 because its natural values, including the diversity of its animals, were considered outstanding at the international level.

At least 423 native terrestrial vertebrate species (66 mammals, 251 birds, 71 reptiles and 35 frog species) have been reliably recorded in the eight reserves of the GBMWA since the time of European settlement. One-sixth of these species (28 mammals, 30 birds, three reptiles and seven frog species) are currently considered threatened at a national and/or state level.

There are still many gaps in our knowledge of the native animals of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The updating of checklists is on-going.

Current checklists are available for:

- birds
- frogs
- mammals
- reptiles.

Additional records or other information are welcome, please email: gbm.worldheritage@environment.nsw.gov.au

Management of the Greater Blue Mountains parks and reserves

The Blue Mountains, Kanangra-Boyd, Wollemi, Gardens of Stone, Nattai, Yengo and Thirlmere Lakes National Parks and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve are managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, which is part of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

National Heritage List

The National Heritage List includes natural, historic and Indigenous places that are of outstanding national heritage significance to Australia.

Under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#), all World Heritage properties in Australia were automatically included on the National Heritage List (NHL) for their World Heritage outstanding universal values in 2007.

The 1998 Nomination of the Greater Blue Mountains Area for inscription on the World Heritage List document, prepared by the NPWS in cooperation with Environment Australia, included cultural values; but the World Heritage Committee did not consider that they met the threshold of outstanding universal value.

The eight reserves that make up the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) were placed on the World Heritage List for their natural outstanding universal value in 2000. The natural beauty, cultural significance and geology and landforms of the GBMWA and some adjacent lands are currently being assessed for the NHL.

In 2014–15 the GBMWA Advisory Committee and the NSW Government recommended that the NHL assessment include:

- cultural associations, scenic and geodiversity values
- additions to the eight reserves (about 36,600 hectares) since listing, and
- additional lands contiguous with or close to the GBMWA that act as buffers to the GBMWA.

NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

All references to the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change refer to the [NSW Office of Environment and Heritage](#), within the Planning and Environment Cluster.

Park management documents

Plans of management

- [Blue Mountains National Park plan of management](#)
- [Gardens of Stone National Park plan of management](#)
- [Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve: draft plan of management](#)
- [Kanangra-Boyd National Park plan of management](#)
- [Nattai Reserves plan of management](#)
- [Thirlmere Lakes National Park: draft plan of management](#)
- [Wollemi National Park plan of management](#)
- [Yengo National Park, Finchley Aboriginal Area and Parr State Conservation Area plan of management](#)

Regional pest management strategies

- [Blue Mountains \(PDF 1.72MB\)](#)
- [Central Coast Hunter \(PDF 1.26MB\)](#)
- [Metropolitan South West \(PDF 1.07MB\)](#)

Fire Management Strategies

- [Blue Mountains National Park fire management strategy](#)
- [Kanangra-Boyd National Park fire management strategy](#)
- [Thirlmere Lakes National Park and Nattai Reserves System fire management strategy](#)
- [Wollemi National Park fire management strategy](#)
- [Yengo National Park, Dharug National Park and Parr State Conservation Area fire management strategy.](#)

Periodic report

Every six years, the [states parties](#) are invited to submit to the World Heritage Committee a periodic report on the application of the World Heritage Convention, including the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties located on its territories.

[Periodic reporting](#) provides four main purposes:

1. To provide an assessment of the application of the World Heritage Convention by the State Party.
2. To provide an assessment of whether the outstanding universal value of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List is being maintained over time.
3. To provide updated information about the World Heritage properties and to record the changing circumstances and state of conservation of the properties.
4. To provide a mechanism for establishing and enhancing regional cooperation and exchange of information and experiences between States Parties concerning and implementation of the World Heritage Convention and conservation.

Australia submitted periodic reports for 18 properties in 2012. These periodic reports were incorporated into the final report on the results of the second cycle of [Periodic Reporting for Asia and the Pacific \(PDF 3MB\)](#).

Protected and special areas

[WaterNSW](#) protects the health of water catchments to ensure reliable, quality drinking water and jointly manages the [special areas](#) within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

WaterNSW has primary responsibility for [managing public access](#) around the water storages in the special areas.

State Heritage Register items

The [State Heritage Register](#) is a list of places and objects of importance to the people of NSW.

There are three State Heritage Register complexes across the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, with multiple elements:

- [Blue Mountains Walking tracks](#) (Blue Mountains National Park) has 107 elements
- [Part of the Old Great North Road](#) (Yengo National Park) has 41 elements
- [Jenolan Cave Reserve](#) (Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve) has 88 elements.

State of the Parks assessments

Around the world, managers of protected areas monitor and evaluate the condition of and pressures on protected areas to ascertain how effectively these areas are being managed.

The primary purpose of the State of the Parks assessments is to improve operational planning and decision-making within NPWS. It has also contributed to World Heritage reporting including the periodic report.

In 2017 park managers will again provide an assessment management effectiveness of the parks and reserves across NSW. More information is available at [State of the Parks](#).

Statement of outstanding universal value

A statement of outstanding universal value formalises the reasons why a World Heritage property has outstanding universal value. The concept of a statement of outstanding universal value being an essential requirement for the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List was introduced in [the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention](#) in 2005. Documentation for all properties inscribed since 2007 includes a statement of outstanding universal value.

In 2007, the World Heritage Committee requested that statements of outstanding universal value be drafted and approved retrospectively for all World Heritage properties inscribed between 1978 and 2006. The [Greater Blue Mountains Area Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value](#) was adopted by the World Heritage Committee in June 2013.

Values for a new generation

Published in 2015, [Values for a Generation](#) is an e-book comprised of theme-based papers produced by members and former members of the [Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area \(GBMWH\) Advisory Committee](#). The e-book presents data and perspectives on geodiversity, biodiversity, cultural and historic values, and scenic splendour, as well as an explanation of boundary changes needed to provide long-term protection to the GBMWH.

Wilderness and wild rivers

The [wilderness quality](#) of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWH) makes a significant contribution to its outstanding universal value and has historically ensured the integrity of the property. The GBMWH Strategic Plan identifies the management response to 'maintain and enhance the wilderness and wild river quality and values of the GBMWH through formal declaration and appropriate management programs'.

At the time of World Heritage listing in 2000, the reserves protected 494,822 hectares of wilderness declared under the *Wilderness Act 1987*. The Grose Wilderness Area (37,900 hectares) was declared in 2001, followed by the Yengo Wilderness Area (119,000 hectares) in 2009. Additions have also been made to the Nattai and Wollemi wilderness areas so the GBMWH now contains over 65% declared wilderness of 683,642 hectares.

The Kowmung River was declared a [wild river](#) in 2005 under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, followed by the 7600 kilometres of waterways and tributaries of the Grose and Colo Rivers in 2008.