

**NATIONAL HERITAGE RESEARCH PROJECT  
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF NATIONAL TRUSTS**

# **IDENTIFICATION OF NATIONAL HERITAGE ISSUES**

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## **Introduction and background**

The ACNT has initiated a National Heritage Research Project, which will be coordinated through the office in Canberra. Dr Peter Dowling, Heritage Officer for the ACT National Trust, has been engaged to set up the project and act as its Coordination Officer. The aims of the project are:

- To work with and assist State/Territory Trusts with research into current major heritage issues identified by each Trust and/or the Research Project.
- With close coordination between State/Territory Trusts and the Research Project, present these issues at a national representative level to the relevant Commonwealth Government Ministers, their respective opposition shadow ministers and Government bodies.
- To present well researched and sound professional advice and comment to relevant Government Ministers and their departments on issues and actions which would impact on the heritage values of places with State/Territory, Commonwealth, National and World Heritage values.
- With coordination between State/Territory Trusts and the ACNT present agreed heritage issues on a national level during State/Territory or Federal election campaigns.

Primarily these aims are to give the National Trust body throughout Australia more clout when advocating for the protection and conservation of our heritage in the broadest sense.

As such, the first step in implementing the National Heritage Research project is to compile an audit of places, which the National Trust bodies consider to be at risk.

### **Aim of this study**

To identify current national heritage issues which are concerning state/territory National Trusts.

### **Method**

To identify current issues two main methods were used:

- The websites of all state/territory National Trusts were examined for current heritage threat issues.
- Current 2010 *Heritage at Risk* final nomination lists were examined to identify heritage threat issues.
- The issues were then tabulated for each state and territory and then assigned broad categories, which were identified as being common among the Trusts.
- These broad categories were then determined as being of national concern

It is realised that this method, while picking up many of the places involved in threats to their heritage values, will not result in a complete listing of places or indeed a full identification of National Issues. For example, heritage threat issues for NT & WA are not promulgated on their respective websites (apart from one continuing threat for WA).

The method will, however, identify a broad sample of places, which have been identified by state and territory Trusts and so result in a realistic, if not complete range of National Issues.

As such a second stage method of can be employed in which individual states and territories add places and or issues as they develop. While this will mean some refining and redefining of the method it will enable a more thorough result as the process continues.

## National Issues

The following list of National Issues was defined:

### *Specific*

- Built historic landscapes demolition/ destruction
- Natural landscapes & environments demolition/ destruction
- Urban development impact on endangered species/ populations
- Deficient legislation and administration in planning projects
- Movable heritage inappropriate conservation
- Inappropriate use of/ impact on heritage listed structures
- Loss of social values
- Abandonment & neglect causing degradation of fabric
- Conservation of cemeteries & graves of historical figures
- Reuse of former military sites in Australia
- {Pressures on significant trees

### *Thematic*

- Indigenous sites
- Australia wide Issues (affecting multiple states/ territories)
- Places of Australian historical significance overseas

## Data

### *Specific Threats and Categories by State/Territory*

State/Territory	Place	Threat	National Issue
NSW	Ku-ring-gai town centres	Multi-level development destroying Garden City suburbs	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Ku-ring-gai town centres	Urban development impacting on endangered Blue Gum High Forest & Turpentine-Iron Bark forests	Urban Development impacting on endangered species and populations
	NSW Heritage Act	Recent changes to the Heritage Act have diminished the legislative protection of heritage listed places. Reduction of the effectiveness to administer the legislation	Deficient Legislation & administration
	Catherine Hill Bay	Demolition of former coal mining workers' housing & streetscapes	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Callan Park	The Callan Park Land Use Plan is inconsistent with the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002.	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Killara Post Office	Subject to integration into	Built/historic landscape

		proposed residential development	degradation/ destruction
	Wireless house, Glebe	Demolition	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	3801 Engine	The historic 3801 locomotive has been removed from the home it has had at Eveleigh (Redfern) since it was built in 1943 and where its operating base has been for the last twenty years, the Large Erecting Shop.	Movable heritage – inappropriate conservation
	Coastal landscapes	Sand mining causing damage	Natural Landscape degradation/ destruction
	Redfern-Waterloo	Future development will destroy original urban environments	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	North Head Quarantine Station	Tourist development run by private enterprise on a fragile and important site.	Inappropriate use of /impact on heritage listed structures
	Junee Theatre	Building being considered for a new medical centre	Inappropriate use of /impact on heritage listed structures
	Kenmore Hospital Site, Goulburn	With impending purchase continued community access and use of site will cease	Loss of social values
	Palace Academy Twin Cinemas, Paddington	Closure and abandonment may cause neglect of potential heritage fabric	Abandonment & neglect causing degradation of fabric

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Threat</b>	<b>National Issue</b>
QLD	Regent Theatre Brisbane	Closed for redevelopment	Inappropriate use of/ impact on heritage listed structures
	North Bank Development	The Government is giving away part of the Brisbane River in the middle of the CBD for a very large and very tall private development	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Yungabah Immigration Depot	Selling to private developers for apartments	Inappropriate use of /impact on heritage listed structures
	Former Herries Hospital, Cairns	Closed	Inappropriate use of /impact on heritage listed structures
	Kissing Point Fort & Jezzme Barracks, Townsville	Surplus to Defence requirements, to be sold.	Reuse of former military establishments
	Rockhampton	Needs appropriate measures to make sure the areas are developed in a way that their heritage qualities are not lost.	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Significant Trees	Urban densification is placing additional pressure on trees identified for their heritage values	Pressures on significant trees
	William Cairncross Building, Brisbane	Destruction	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Cemetery headstones and monuments	Inadequate legislation failed to prosecute for willful damage to graves	Deficient legislation and administration in planning projects  Conservation of cemeteries & graves of historical figures
	Townsville General Hospital	Stalled redevelopment work has resulted in deterioration and subject to vandalism	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Inner urban character in Queensland cities and towns	Heritage places are at risk of being over shadowed or even replaced by with residential towers – urban densification	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Threat</b>	<b>National Issue</b>
<b>SA</b>	Port Adelaide Boatyards	Threat of demolition	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Union Hall, University of Adelaide	Threat of demolition	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Eastwood Lodge (former Glenside Nurses Home)	Threat of demolition	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	River Murray Lower Lakes and Coorong	Continuing degradation, short-sighted engineering solutions	Natural landscape degradation/ destruction
	73 city properties in Adelaide square mile	Local Council & State Legislative conflicts put some houses at risk	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Burra Monster Mine Reserve	Demolition of historic buildings & destruction of native grassland species	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction  Natural landscape degradation/ destruction
	Sand dunes at Tennyson & Minda	Degradation by inappropriate construction	Natural landscape degradation/ destruction
	Two attached houses, Wakefield	Threat of demolition	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Adelaide Oval Scoreboard	Impact of surrounding redevelopment	Inappropriate use of / impact on heritage listed structures
	Murray Bridge Waterfront & Railway yards	Impact of redevelopment. A CMP is required	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Torrens Island Quarantine Station precinct	Subdivision and industrial impact on mangrove & samphire vegetation & Dolphin habitat	Natural landscape degradation/ destruction
	Monster Mine, Burra Burra	SA Government is deciding to overturn or 'lift' the heritage listing of the mine to allow further research	Deficient legislation and administration in planning projects

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Threat</b>	<b>National Issue</b>
<b>Vic</b>	Windsor Hotel	Part demolition, alteration, extension	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Bacchus marsh Avenue of Honour	Highway alignment will result in loss of trees one of which commemorates a VC recipient	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction  Loss of social values
	Melbourne CBD	Several proposals have demolished heritage places or exceeded height limits in heritage areas	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Flinders Street Station	One-third of building abandoned and neglected.	Abandonment & neglect causing degradation
	W Trams	Trams to be removed from suburban routes – potential loss of 30 trams	Movable heritage – inappropriate conservation

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Threat</b>	<b>National Issue</b>
<b>ACT</b>	ACT Heritage Act 1999	Changes in legislation may have negative impact on heritage places. Lack of resources have lead to poor administration of the Act	Deficient legislation and administration in planning projects
	Jerrabomberra Wetlands	Proposed 1.2 Km trench to be dug across ancient river channels which are identified as intrinsic heritage features	Natural landscape degradation/ destruction
	Lake Burley Griffin & foreshores	Proposed multi-story development, neglect, and inappropriate usage	Built/historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Register of the National Estate	Changes to the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act will leave many heritage places in the ACT without adequate legislative protection	Deficient legislation and administration in planning projects
	Yarralumla Brick Works	Lack of regular maintenance and willful neglect causing loss and degradation of fabric	Abandonment and neglect causing degradation
	'The Valley' ruin	Lack of maintenance and willful neglect causing loss and degradation of fabric	Abandonment and neglect causing degradation
	Brian Lewis Crescent houses	Threat of demolition	Built historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Northbourne Avenue housing precinct	No clear plans for future use, danger of demolition	Built historic landscape degradation/ destruction
	Historic sites in Kowen Area	Historic ruins neglected causing steady deterioration	Abandonment and neglect causing degradation
	Reid Housing Heritage Precinct	Absence of a CMP has contributed to decline in Garden City design heritage values.	Deficient legislation and administration in planning projects
	Molonglo Valley Historic Sites	Identified and unidentified places threatened by future urban development	Deficient legislation and administration in planning projects
	Belconnen Naval Transmitting Station	Uncertain future use of site and retention of historical fabric and elements	Reuse of former military sites in Australia

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Threat</b>	<b>National Issue</b>
<b>Tas</b>	Queenstown State School	The 1937 Deco style building has remained vacant since its closure in 1999. Vandalism and the lack of maintenance has resulted in the sites continued deterioration of original features	Abandonment and neglect causing degradation
	Old Nile Inn	Building has remained vacant for over twenty years with the consequential deterioration from lack of regular maintenance as well as vandalism.	Abandonment and neglect causing degradation
	Paperlinx, Burnie Paper Mill	Staged abandonment has caused great risk that the sites cultural, social and physical heritage attributes could be overlooked and destroyed making way for new development	Abandonment and neglect causing degradation
	Willow Court (Former Military Hospital) Royal Derwent Hospital	The site at present continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate due to neglect and vandalism	Abandonment and neglect causing degradation
	Headstone & Grave of John Helder Wedge	Continued deterioration of the grave and possible irreparable loss of its original elements.	Conservation of cemeteries & graves of historical figures

<b>WA</b>	Dampier Archipelago	Long-term industrial development is incompatible with the cultural heritage values.	Indigenous Sites
<b>NT</b>	No data available		

## Thematic threats/concerns and categories

### Indigenous Places

Place	State/ Territory	Concern/Threat	Possible National Action
Jordan River Levee site, Brighton	Tas	<p>An open occupational site with a human occupation sequence ranging from 26,000 to 37,000 years before present indicates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the earliest date for human occupation in Tasmania</li> <li>• This site represents the earliest most southerly extent of early human world migration.</li> </ul> <p>On average 100 artefacts per square metre indicates that the extended site would contain almost 3 million artefacts.</p> <p><b>A site of national and potential world heritage significance.</b></p> <p>Site located during survey of a major highway corridor and is located on the main route.</p> <p>Bridging of the site would cause partial destruction.</p> <p>Aboriginal groups wish to have the site preserved with no impact from highway corridor.</p>	<p>Liaise with Tas NT to advocate for a comprehensive investigation of the site and artefacts with a view to a nomination to the National Register and then a World Heritage nomination</p>
Dampier Archipelago	WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial development has seriously impacted the cultural heritage values.</li> <li>• The original decisions to site infrastructure and industrial facilities in the Dampier area did not consider cultural heritage values.</li> <li>• Past practices of record keeping, site recording standards and survey methodology have failed to develop a reliable and comprehensive database.</li> <li>• The present system of approval to disturb individual registered sites under Section 18 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act (1972-1980) is disastrous</li> </ul>	<p>Liaise with WA NT to advocate for a method of management, which will provide for long-term protection, investigation, conservation and interpretation of these sites.</p>

		<p>for heritage conservation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the long term, industrial development is incompatible with the cultural heritage values of Dampier Archipelago.</li> </ul>	
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*Australia-wide*

<b>Place</b>	<b>State/ Territory</b>	<b>Concern/Threat</b>	<b>National Action</b>
Murray Darling Basin	QLD, NSW, ACT, Vic SA	River flow has been drastically reduced in both systems, ceasing altogether in some places. 95% of the Murray is degraded due to historically over allocation of water, and only 10% of pre-European fish populations remain.	With liaison from concerned states / territory advocate for a Commonwealth Government national approach programme which addresses remedial policy and actions and future conservation including preventative actions to ensure sustainability
Climate Change	All		ACNT engage partnership associations with other national bodies e.g Australian Conservation Foundation & Australian Institute of Architects, to present a combined front at the highest level of each organization to advise and assist government

*Places of Australian historical significance overseas*

Place	State/ Territory	Concern/Threat	National Action
Anzac area, Gallipoli battlefields, Turkey	All	<p>Human remains in areas of high visitation are continually being exposed and damaged by vehicles and collected by individuals. ACNT together with ACT NT has previously lobbied political and government heads including PM to adopt a survey strategy aimed at location, recording and collection of human remains in specified areas and housing them in a dedicated ossuary building.</p> <p>While the problem is readily recognized and admitted there has been little or no action by Australian government to instigate a serious dialogue with Turkish counterparts to remedy the situation.</p>	With the approaching centenary of the Gallipoli campaigns in 2015 the ACNT renews its advocacy

## Results

### *Breakdown (%) of threats to heritage places identified by State/Territory Trusts*

<b>National Issues</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Specific</i>		
• Built historic landscapes demolition/ destruction	24	43
• Natural landscapes & environments demolition/ destruction	6	11
• Urban development impact on endangered species/ populations	1	2
• Deficient legislation and administration in planning projects	2	4
• Movable heritage inappropriate conservation	2	4
• Inappropriate use of/ impact on heritage listed structures	6	11
• Loss of social values	2	4
• Abandonment & neglect causing degradation of fabric	9	16
• Conservation of cemeteries & graves of historical figures	1	2
• Reuse of former military sites in Australia	2	4
• Pressures on significant trees	1	2
<i>Thematic</i>		
• Indigenous sites	2	NA
• Australia wide Issues (affecting multiple states/ territories)	2	NA
• Places of Australian historical significance overseas	2	NA

## Discussion

### *Specific National Issues*

The standout National Issue across all State/Territory National Trusts is the variety of threats to the built heritage. Built historic landscapes threatened with demolition or destruction of heritage values (43%), abandonment/neglect (16%) and inappropriate use impacting on heritage values (11%) are the chief concerns facing the National Trust on a national level. The reasons for this are most likely multifarious, but prominent among them, would be the trend throughout Australia, particularly in the capital cities, of the ever-increasing government building philosophy of urban densification.

The threat to natural landscapes and environments (11%) can also be seen as a major issue of national concern. This is more so when the threats and subsequent long-term consequences on the Murray Darling system are taken into account.

The remaining National Issues, while rating at 2% and 4% respectively are nonetheless important on a state/territory and national level. Of particular concern at a national level, while only rating at 4%, are the deficiencies in some state/territory heritage acts and the administration of, and compliance with the acts. It could be suggested, however, that the identified threats to the built heritage having such a high prevalence have as their basis a level of government and public non-compliance and lack of adequate resources available for administering the acts.

### *Thematic National Issues*

#### *Indigenous sites*

The Indigenous Dampier Archipelago site, WA was included in the National Heritage Register in July 2007, but as indicated on the WA NT website there is still a conflict between best practice heritage management and economic/industrial development. As stated on the WA website the key elements for a solution are:

- Open and transparent communication with all stakeholders;

- Comprehensive inventory of the rock art and archaeological sites of the area;
- The development of a single holistic management plan and a means to monitor the management of the place to the satisfaction of all stakeholders that will meet the requirements of National heritage listing and World heritage listing;
- Dedicated fund to support the management process;
- Independent committee to oversee the implementation and evaluation of the management plan.

The WA NT believes that solutions are possible that will reconcile the competing interests of heritage management and industrial development, which could then lead to World Heritage listing.

The Jordan River Levee site, Tas, has recently been discovered (2008) during an archaeological survey for the Brighton Northern Bypass. A human occupational sequence dating to 37,000 years before present has been identified and sediments in the levee date further back to 40,000 years. Similarly with the Dampier Archipelago site, the Jordan River Levee site is subject to development, which would result in some destruction from the planned highway corridor and resolutions must be reached between the Tasmanian Government and the Aboriginal community. The site and the cultural items have yet to be fully examined but there are strong indications that this site may represent the oldest most southern area of early human migration in the world. If this is supported by future assessments then this site will have strong potential for World Heritage listing.

#### *Australia-wide*

Identified in the Australia-wide theme were the threats to and consequences of the continuing degradation of the Murray Darling Basin and Climate Change. While much has been written and discussed on their intrinsic issues, and the Commonwealth and State governments are now instituting remedial and adaptive measures, both pose national problems, which will require a long-term national approach by all State/Territory National Trusts.

#### *Places of Australian historical significance overseas*

This issue is outlined on the ACT NT website. The problem of exposure and damage to human remains in areas of high tourist visitation within the Anzac area of the Gallipoli battlefields in Turkey has been presented to and discussed with relevant Australian Government departments (eg Department of Veterans' Affairs), to relevant government and opposition ministers and by the representatives of the ACNT in 2007-2008. Following these discussions a letter expressing the concerns was written by the President of the ACNT to the then Prime Minister, Mr John Howard. As part of the discussion process a methodology to identify and manage exposed human bone was presented.

As would be expected, resolution of such an issue would have to come through discussions and agreements at high diplomatic levels between the Australian and Turkish governments. While the issue has been discussed between representatives of the two governments nothing has been resolved and the problem remains.

## **Conclusion**

This study set out to identify national heritage issues on a national level. By examining National Trust websites and the 2010 Heritage at Risk nominations wide-ranging site types and threats have been identified. From these, a set of National Issues (specific and thematic) has been constructed.

The most prominent issue is the range and variety of threats to the built heritage. Of these threats demolition and destruction of heritage vales were the prominent threats. This was followed by abandonment and neglect and inappropriate use. Often underlying these threats were deficiencies in legislation and compliance.

The threats to natural landscapes and environments are also a major issue of national concern. This is more so when the threats and subsequent long-term consequences on the Murray Darling system and climate change are considered.

Two Indigenous places were identified one of which is on the National Heritage Register and both of which have potential World Heritage significance. One place overseas of historical and cultural importance to Australia was also identified having continuing and unresolved threats.

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