

CHAPTER 9: AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE AND ANTARCTICA

KEY POINTS

- Heard and McDonald Islands and Macquarie Island were inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 1997.
- A cooperative National Heritage Places Strategy is being developed to rationalise existing Commonwealth/State arrangements for the identification, protection and management of places of heritage significance.
- The Government will continue its work, begun in 1997–98, to improve the management of World Heritage properties by the establishment of strategic plans and/or management structures for all properties.
- Assessments of World Heritage values are being prepared for the Blue Mountains and convict sites.
- The Government has allocated \$70.4 million from the Federation Fund for a cultural and heritage projects programme.
- The Government will continue, through the \$63.1 million funding of the Australian Antarctic Programme in 1998–99, to place a major emphasis on understanding global climate change and protecting the Antarctic environment.

Under its Australian and World Heritage programmes, the Commonwealth seeks to protect those elements of Australia's natural and cultural heritage which are of value for this and future generations, on national and global scales respectively.

Funding for these programmes is set out in Table 9.1.

NATIONAL HERITAGE

The Register of the National Estate

The Commonwealth is working with State, Territory and local governments and the community to identify and protect Australia's National Estate. Australia's National Estate comprises all those natural, historic and indigenous places that should be kept for the future and that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special values for this and future generations.

The Register of the National Estate, maintained by the Australian Heritage Commission, is a list of such places. Access to the Register has been improved through establishing a comprehensive Internet site. In 1997–98 work began to link the various heritage lists and registers through an Australian Heritage Places Inventory on the Internet to provide a public 'one-stop-shop' for information on heritage places.

Table 9.1: Australian Heritage and Antarctica — New Measures and Programme and Tax Expenditure Estimates

Description	1997–98 \$m	1998–99 \$m	1999–00 \$m	2000–01 \$m	2001–02 \$m
NEW MEASURES					
Grant to Mawson's Huts Foundation	–	0.3	–	–	–
Management of World Heritage Properties	–	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3
PROGRAMME AND TAX EXPENDITURE ESTIMATES					
National Heritage					
National Heritage Funding (a)	8.3	6.5	6.3	6.2	6.2
National Estate Grants Programme	1.6	1.7	0.8	0.8	0.8
Tax rebate for heritage conservation (b)	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	–
Heritage Properties Restoration Programme	2.0	1.0	–	–	–
Heritage Protection and Environment Programme	0.2	na	na	na	na
Grants in Aid to National Trust	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Historic Shipwrecks Programme	0.4	0.4	0.4	–	–
Norfolk Island penal settlement	0.4	0.4	0.4	–	–
Wilderness and Wild Rivers					
Wilderness and Wild Rivers	1.1	0.8	–	–	–
World Heritage					
World Heritage Area management and upkeep (c)	23.2	15.5	15.5	15.5	5.0
Antarctica					
Australian Antarctic Programme (d)	61.9	63.1	61.9	61.4	60.9
CRC for Antarctica and Southern Ocean	3.0	3.2	3.0	2.0	2.0

New measures are expressed in outturn prices and other expenditure and revenue figures are expressed in 1998–99 prices. Programme and tax expenditure estimates include the effect of new measures.

– denotes nil; na denotes not available.

- (a) The decrease in 1998–99 and outyears reflects transfer of corporate services responsibility from the Australian Heritage Commission to the Department of Environment. These services are estimated to cost approximately \$2 million each year.
- (b) Outyear estimates from 1998–99 will depend on limits that have yet to be approved.
- (c) These figures include monies allocated by the Natural Heritage Trust. For the funding for Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Kakadu National Parks see Comprehensive Protected Areas in Table 3.1, and for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage property see Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in Table 8.1.
- (d) Covers the total cost of operating the Antarctic Programme which has a major, but not exclusive, focus on environmental programmes.

The National Heritage Places Strategy

In November 1997 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) gave in-principle endorsement to a Heads of Agreement on Commonwealth/States Roles and Responsibilities for the Environment. It was agreed that Commonwealth action should focus on matters of national significance, that reforms must reduce Commonwealth/State duplication and that the Commonwealth should introduce a streamlined development approval process (see Chapter 2).

There was also agreement to rationalise the existing Commonwealth/State arrangements for the identification, protection and management of places of heritage significance through the development of a cooperative national heritage places strategy. Work has commenced on the development of such a strategy.

The aim is to:

- set out the roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and the States;

- identify criteria, standards and guidelines, as appropriate, for the protection of heritage by each level of government;
- provide for the establishment of a list of places of national heritage significance; and
- increase Commonwealth compliance with State heritage and planning laws.

National Heritage Coordination

The National Heritage Coordination programme, as one element of funding for National Heritage, represents a major commitment by Commonwealth and State/Territory Heritage Ministers aiming for a more efficient and effective system of national heritage administration.

The programme focuses on the historic environment, is long-term, and encompasses several projects. The 'National Heritage Coordination Three-Year Strategic Plan 1996-98', was reviewed by Heritage Ministers in October 1997. Accreditation agreements with several States have been completed and the plan provides a firm basis for the development of national standards in the historic environment.

Heritage Funding

In 1998-99 the Commonwealth will provide \$9 million for the identification and conservation of the National Estate, which includes \$1.7 million for the National Estate Grants Programme. This programme focuses on projects of national importance, with priority in the short-term being given to cultural heritage. The key funding priorities are identification, conservation and promotion of nationally important heritage places, and facilitation of community involvement in heritage activities.

Tax Incentive for Heritage Conservation Scheme

This programme provides a 20 per cent tax rebate for expenditure in excess of \$5,000 on approved heritage conservation work to privately-owned heritage-listed buildings and structures.

Heritage Properties Restoration Programme

The Commonwealth is contributing \$1 million St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, and \$1 million St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney to assist with conservation work. A further grant of \$1 million is planned for St Mary's Cathedral in 1998-99.

Federation Fund

The Government's cultural and heritage projects programme of \$70.4 million will include funding the best-practice conservation of significant heritage buildings across Australia in 1998-99.

Heritage Protection and Environment Programme

This programme seeks:

- to preserve and protect places, areas and objects of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- to return to indigenous ownership and management, culturally significant property from overseas and Australian collections; and
- to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' views on environmental issues within Australia and internationally and to facilitate their participation in management of the environment.

In 1997–98 a grant of nearly \$200,000 was provided to the Orana Barellan Aboriginal Corporation to support its Murray/Darling Basin Conservation project.

Grants in Aid to National Trusts

Grants are provided to support activities which increase public awareness, understanding and appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage, and enhance and promote its conservation and assist the Trusts to advocate and work for the preservation and enhancement of the National Estate.

In 1997–98, over \$200,000 was granted to the Australian Council of National Trusts and nearly \$100,000 to each State/Territory National Trust of Australia.

Historic Shipwrecks Programme

The Commonwealth will provide \$400,000 in 1998–99 for the Historic Shipwrecks Programme. Through this, the Commonwealth, in cooperation with the States, the Northern Territory and Norfolk Island, aims to conserve and protect historic shipwreck sites and associated material as a cultural resource for the nation.

Norfolk Island Penal Settlement

The Commonwealth will contribute \$400,000 in 1998–99 for the conservation and management of the penal settlement in the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area on Norfolk Island. The Norfolk Island Government jointly funds this programme.

Commonwealth-owned Heritage

The Government is preparing its response to the recommendations of a Committee of Review into the management of Commonwealth-owned heritage properties.

WILDERNESS AND WILD RIVERS

The Commonwealth will provide a total of \$800,000 in 1998–99 for programmes for the identification and conservation of wilderness. The National Wilderness Inventory (NWI) database, which uses a wide range of Commonwealth, State and Territory Government data to determine wilderness values, will continue to be maintained and updated. It provides the technical basis for government decisions on wilderness, including those made under the Regional Forest Agreements (see Chapter 3). The database also supports

the identification of wilderness values for national estate assessment outside forests. An evaluation of the NWI programme will be completed in mid-1998.

The Commonwealth Wilderness Programme maintains a dialogue with indigenous groups on the applications of wilderness concepts and management. During 1997–98 consultants completed a report on the role of wilderness in nature conservation.

A four-year Wild Rivers project has been conducted jointly with States and Territories and has been overseen by a committee with broad stakeholder representation. It will be finalised by mid-1998. Major products of the project are the national identification of wild rivers, a continental database of disturbance to river systems and their catchments, and a code of voluntary conservation management guidelines to assist managers to conserve wild rivers.

WORLD HERITAGE

Under the World Heritage Convention, the Commonwealth has agreed to identify, protect, conserve and present World Heritage properties in Australia (see Box 9.1).

BOX 9.1: WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES

World Heritage properties are areas of outstanding universal cultural or natural significance which are included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Australia is a member of the World Heritage Committee which inscribes properties on the World Heritage List.

At present, there are 13 Australian properties on the World Heritage list. Two of the properties, Heard and McDonald Islands and Macquarie Island were inscribed on the List in December 1997. The Commonwealth is directly responsible for management of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Kakadu National Parks (see Chapter 3) and Heard and McDonald Islands. The Commonwealth works jointly with Queensland on the management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage property (see Chapter 8), and works with the States to ensure sound management of the other nine properties which are Lord Howe Island Group, Tasmanian Wilderness, Willandra Lakes Region, Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves (Australia), Wet Tropics of Queensland, Shark Bay, Fraser Island, Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Naracoorte/Riversleigh), and Macquarie Island.

Management and Monitoring of Properties

The Government places considerable importance on participation by all stakeholders affected by the listing of World Heritage sites. It is working to ensure that management arrangements for all properties will include community consultative bodies to channel community input into ongoing management appropriate to the specific needs of each property.

Cooperative management arrangements for Australia's World Heritage properties have been substantially improved. The number of Boards of Management and Standing Committees of officials have increased from eight to ten. Scientific Advisory

Committees have increased from seven to ten. Consultative Committees have increased from seven to nine. Management plans have either been completed or are being finalised for all properties.

The Commonwealth will provide a total of more than \$15 million in 1998–99 for the management of Australia's World Heritage properties. This does not include ongoing funding for management of Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Kakadu National Parks, nor the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Property, funding for which is reported in Chapters 3 and 8 respectively.

The 1997–98 financial year saw the successful completion of funding for the Daintree Rescue Programme (\$1.5 million) and the Willandra package (\$2 million from the budget) and funding for one-off activities such as the protection of dugongs in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (see Chapter 8).

In all, the Natural Heritage Trust will provide \$28.5 million over three years for management of World Heritage properties to the year 2000–01.

Nomination of New Properties

The Commonwealth is cooperating with relevant States and Territories to assess the World Heritage values of the Blue Mountains and a series of convict sites.

In relation to possible new nominations, the Government will continue to assess places having possible World Heritage significance, including the Bungle Bungles (Purnululu) in Western Australia and Australian eucalyptus forests. This is being done with the cooperation of the relevant State or Territory governments.

ANTARCTICA

Australian Antarctic research efforts have clearly demonstrated the degree to which the region influences the world's major environmental systems. Improved knowledge will lead to improved predictions of events such as future climate and sea-level change. Much research is directed to enhancing environment protection measures and in particular, preserving biodiversity.

The Australian Antarctic Programme administers the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Territory of Heard and McDonald Islands — developing and implementing environmental legislation which includes environmental impact assessment, measures for the conservation of flora and fauna, comprehensive waste management procedures, the prevention of marine pollution, and management of specially protected areas.

In 1997–98 the Government provided funding support to the AAP Mawson's Huts Foundation to enable conservation work to be undertaken at the Mawson's Huts historic site in the Australian Antarctic Territory. The success of this project and the importance of the structures as the main symbol of Australia's long and rich history of operations in Antarctica have led the Government to commit nearly a further \$300,000 in 1998–99 for continuation of the conservation effort.

Building on the successful apprehension in 1997–98 of three fishing vessels allegedly fishing illegally in the Australian Fishing Zone adjacent to Heard Island, the Government will continue to support efforts in the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources and elsewhere aimed at sustainably managing Southern Ocean fisheries.

As part of its commitment to fulfilling obligations under the Environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty effort will be put to a further cleanup of the abandoned Wilkes Station.

The Government will continue to support relevant research such as:

- a marine research programme to be conducted during the winter in the sea ice zone close to the Antarctic coast. This study will determine the role of high ice production areas in modifying ocean structure and influencing global ocean circulation, affecting high latitude weather and controlling total sea ice production;
- a continuing study into exotic toxins and pathogens in Antarctic penguins and sea birds, to provide baseline data for strategies for their conservation; and
- a major contribution to a circumpolar international survey into the distribution and abundance of seals on the Antarctic pack ice which are a major player in the Antarctic food chain.

The Commonwealth will provide funding of \$63.1 million in 1998–99.

Cooperative Research Centre for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

The CRC for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean undertakes research designed to characterise the oceanic and atmospheric circulations of the region, their interaction with sea ice and the continental ice sheet, their relation to global environmental change and their relation to biological productivity. The Commonwealth will provide funding of \$3.2 million in 1998–99.