

FLINDERS RANGES

PURSUING THE WORLD HERITAGE POTENTIAL





We would like to acknowledge that the land that is subject to the World Heritage nomination process in the Flinders Ranges is the traditional lands for the Adnyamathanha People and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country. We also acknowledge the Adnyamathanha People as the custodians of the region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Adnyamathanha People today.



The Flinders Ranges

The Flinders Ranges in South Australia, approximately 500 kilometres north of Adelaide, are one of Australia's great landscapes. They are a window into deepest, almost unfathomable time. Their ancient geology records evidence of the evolution of the earliest multicellular complex life on Earth.

This ancient landscape has significant natural, cultural, historic and scenic values.

The Flinders Ranges are of profound significance to the Adnyamathanha People, with evidence of occupation for nearly 50,000 years.

The diversity of landscapes in the Flinders Ranges varies from rural scenery; to peaks, ridges and gorges; to outback plains. The region's unique semi-arid vegetation is rich in wildlife, including healthy populations of the threatened Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby.

There are a number of areas set aside for protection and management of the region's natural, cultural and historic values, on public, private and leasehold land. Pastoralism has had a strong historic influence in the region, and continues to be an important industry today.

The region's rich values and breathtaking landscapes make the Flinders Ranges an iconic tourism destination with unparalleled visitor experiences.



Why is South Australia pursuing World Heritage for parts of the Flinders Ranges?

The Flinders Ranges is the only place on Earth where two grand experiments in the evolution of animal life on Earth and their associated fossils are so well preserved and presented in one near-continuous geological succession, spanning approximately 340 million years, from the Precambrian to the Cambrian Period.

This one geological succession – the Adelaide Rift Complex – includes evidence of the world’s greatest known record of the Ediacaran ‘explosion of life’; and a comprehensive record of the Cambrian explosion of life, including the oldest reef-forming animals on Earth; together with evidence of changing climates and atmospheric support for life.

The fossils that were first discovered and identified in the Ediacaran Hills by geologist Reg Sprigg in 1946 represent the earliest evidence of complex animal life on Earth – this world-renowned site is now protected by the Ediacara Conservation Park. Further south of this location is Nilpena, a National Heritage Listed fossil site. Nilpena is the world’s finest preserved and most diverse evidence of the Ediacaran ‘explosion of life’ with more than 80 morphologically different life forms.

The South Australian Museum houses one of the world’s greatest collections of Ediacara fossils, many of which are on display in The First Life: Ediacara Biota Gallery.

In 2004, the first geological time period was created in 120 years. Known as the Ediacaran Period, this time encapsulates the period from 645 to 542 million years ago. The Ediacaran Global Stratotype Section and Point (GSSP) marking this time period is located in the heart of the Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park.

In addition to the record of the emergence of animal life, the Adelaide Rift Complex records many extraordinary physical and chemical geological processes of global significance. One fine example is the ‘hot rocks’ of Arkaroola. This natural radioactive heat phenomenon has generated geological processes and landforms not known anywhere else on Earth, including a unique surface expression of an epithermal plumbing system at Mount Gee.

World Heritage Listing of these outstanding values is being pursued under criterion (viii): “to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth’s history, including the record of life, significant on-going processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features”.



How is a World Heritage nomination being pursued?

The *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* set out the procedure, criteria and conditions for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List.

A successful World Heritage Listing is a multi-year process. The World Heritage process used in Australia is detailed on the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy's World Heritage webpage (see back page for link). This process is summarised below:



Working with the Australian Government, the Government of South Australia is actively progressing the technical work and community engagement in support of developing a nomination for World Heritage Listing for parts of the Flinders Ranges.

The nomination is being developed through a partnership between the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Geological Survey of South Australia, and the South Australian Museum.

Experts from across the country and overseas are contributing to the process, ensuring technical rigour in the refinement of the World Heritage narrative, identification of key elements and development of the nomination documentation.

The process of engaging with community has been running in tandem with the technical work to support a nomination. This has been undertaken on multiple levels using a flexible engagement approach that is responsive to the needs of the community and stakeholders.



Celebrating the progress - *the technical process*

What has been achieved so far?

A milestone workshop was held in August 2016 that brought together geologists and palaeontologists from around the country to discuss a hypothetical statement of Outstanding Universal Value, and to confirm that there is a technical proposition for World Heritage in the Flinders Ranges. The resulting report on the preliminary statement of values has guided the technical work since then, with the experts reconvening for another workshop in February 2018 to review progress.

A comparative analysis of World Heritage inscribed and tentative properties has been undertaken to confirm that the proposed Flinders Ranges World Heritage property would complement, not duplicate, existing and proposed World Heritage properties (including Mistaken Point World Heritage Property in Canada, the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Property in Canada and the Chengjiang Fossil Site World Heritage Property in China).

Research gaps and evidence needed in support of the nomination have been identified, and the *Australian Journal of Earth Sciences* will publish a special edition pertinent to this Flinders Ranges research. Publication of this special edition journal will inform a conference that is planned for October 2018.

Working collaboratively with technical experts, considerable work is underway to identify the key elements that support a core narrative for World Heritage in the Flinders Ranges, and to subsequently identify the proposed component parts that would comprise the proposed serial property. A proposed serial property for World Heritage in the Flinders Ranges would be on a range of tenures: many would be on public protected areas; others may be on pastoral leases or freehold land. This work has been informed by recent field surveys with expert geologists and palaeontologists.

A draft Tentative List submission document has been prepared and will undergo further refinement as the core World Heritage narrative is refined.

The structure of the nomination document has been prepared and work is underway to engage experts to contribute authorship to individual chapters.

What is the focus for the next 12 months?

Work will continue to refine the core World Heritage narrative, including progressing the identification of component parts and their boundaries. This will involve ongoing conversations with individual landholders, as well as assessment of integrity, and protection and management for the proposed serial property.

The Flinders Ranges special edition of the *Australian Journal of Earth Sciences* will be published and the conference held to share the results within this publication.

With endorsement of the Meeting of Environment Ministers, the Tentative List document will be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.





Celebrating the progress - *community engagement*

What has been achieved so far?

Community engagement has been undertaken from the outset and will continue throughout the World Heritage journey in the Flinders Ranges. The focus of this engagement has been to provide stakeholders and the community with opportunities to learn about World Heritage and the Flinders Ranges proposal, explore its possibilities and opportunities, and to identify ways that stakeholders and the community would like to be involved in the process.

There has been engagement with the Adnyamathanha People, who are the Traditional Owners and recognised native title holders for the Flinders Ranges, through their peak body the Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association. Conversations are ongoing about developing a formalised partnership that recognises the primacy of their role in the nomination process.

A diverse range of stakeholder groups throughout the Flinders Ranges have been engaged and conversations are ongoing, including with local government agencies, boards and committees, and regional tourism associations. There is broad support for the opportunity and ongoing engagement in a measured, coordinated way.

A stakeholder forum was held in July 2017 in the regional centre of Hawker where a diverse representation of stakeholders came together. The participants worked collaboratively to start visioning what a World Heritage future in the Flinders Ranges might look like. The participants shared ideas that reflected the plethora of cultural, natural and social values and connections that give the Flinders Ranges its identity, and are important to celebrate as part of the Flinders Ranges story. They also shared ideas about how stakeholders and the community might like to be involved throughout the World Heritage journey.

Individual landowners have been briefed on the proposal and are at varying stages of engagement as the component parts of the proposed World Heritage serial property are being identified. All who have been engaged so far are supportive of being involved in a process to jointly determine whether they would be part of a nomination.

There has been an active presence at conferences, field days and other ad hoc regional events, as well as engagement with local school students.

There is also an active social media presence through Facebook and a website has been established to share information about the World Heritage proposal in the Flinders Ranges (see back page).



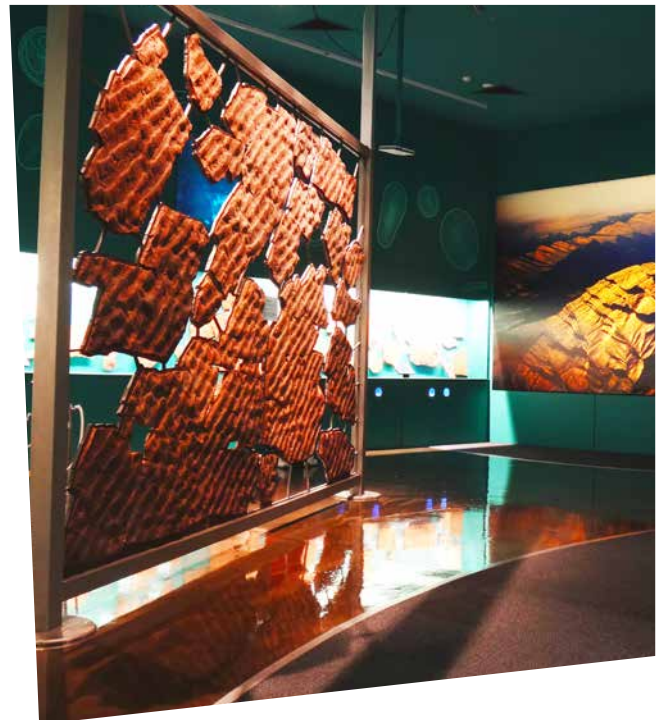
What is the focus for the next 12 months?

Community and stakeholders will continue to be engaged and involved in the World Heritage journey.

There will be a primary focus on establishing and supporting a representative stakeholder group to act as a conduit to community members. Among other things to be determined, the group will oversee the nomination process, may participate in 'trouble shooting' conversations, be involved in discussing ideas about how to mobilise the World Heritage potential in the Flinders Ranges, and guide the scope and style of communications.

Engagement with the Adnyamathanha People will continue with the aim of developing a partnership to guide how we will work together through the nomination process.

Engagement with individual landowners will continue to progress as component parts for the proposed World Heritage serial property are identified.









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South Australian Museum, Palaeontology, pages 3, 6 and 8.
Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Cover page, page 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9.

Disclaimer

This brochure has been prepared to recognise and celebrate the significant progress that has been made to date (February 2018) in developing a World Heritage nomination for parts of the Flinders Ranges. The information presented here represents a progressive stage in this iterative process. It is subject to change and is expected to be further modified and improved as the nomination progresses.

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www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands/parks/world-heritage-nomination-for-the-flinders-ranges

 @FRWHnomination

For information about the World Heritage process used in Australia, visit

www.environment.gov.au/heritage/about/world/management-australias-world-heritage-listed/managing-world-heritage-australia/identifying-world-heritage



Government
of South Australia