



About World Heritage

The Western Australian Government recognises the Traditional Owners and custodians of Murujuga; the past, present and future generations of Ngarda-Ngarli, and their ongoing connection to this sacred country.



What is the World Heritage List?

The World Heritage List is comprised of places throughout the world that have 'Outstanding Universal Value'. This means that the cultural and/or natural heritage values of these places are 'so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries' and are 'of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity'¹.

There are currently 1092 sites on the UNESCO [World Heritage List](#)². These include the Taj Mahal, Great Wall of China, Stonehenge and Grand Canyon National Park.

Australia has 19 World Heritage sites, including the Great Barrier Reef, Sydney Opera House and Kakadu National Park.

There are currently four World Heritage Sites in Western Australia: Purnululu National Park, Shark Bay and the Ningaloo Coast, which are listed for their natural values, and the Fremantle Prison which is listed for its cultural value as part of a serial listing of the Australian Convict Sites.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions is responsible for the day-to-day management of the three natural World Heritage sites in Western Australia. The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is responsible for managing the Fremantle Prison.

How are places added to the World Heritage List?

Places are added to the World Heritage List only after independent assessment demonstrates that they represent the greatest of the world's natural and/or cultural heritage and have an adequate management framework in place to protect and manage it.

- The first step is to have the place added to Australia's World Heritage Tentative List. This is a list of places Australia intends to nominate to the World Heritage List and is registered with the UNESCO [World Heritage Centre](#)³.
- Countries then prepare a comprehensive nomination dossier that demonstrates that the place may have 'Outstanding Universal Value'. The nomination must address certain criteria and demonstrate that the boundary is adequate to capture the values of the area.
- The nomination is submitted to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre by the Australian Government.
- The nomination is then assessed by an independent technical advisory body and relevant experts. For cultural nominations the independent advisory body is the [International Council on Monuments and Sites](#) (ICOMOS). The assessment process takes at least one year.

¹ The definition of 'Outstanding Universal Value' is outlined in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

² UNESCO stands for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, number of sites current as at 24 April 2019.

³ The World Heritage Centre is the focal point and coordinator within UNESCO for all matters related to World Heritage.



- The UNESCO [World Heritage Committee](#)⁴ meets once a year to decide which nominated properties will be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Committee can decide to list, defer, refer or not list the nomination. If the nomination is deferred or referred, the Committee is seeking more information before it makes its decision.

The assessment process is rigorous and demanding, and not every nominated property is inscribed on the World Heritage List, sometimes internationally important places do not demonstrate their 'Outstanding Universal Value'.

What is the difference between the Tentative List Submission and the nomination dossier?

The World Heritage Tentative List is an inventory of properties which each State Party⁵ considers to be of 'Outstanding Universal Value' and may decide to nominate in future years. A submission for the Tentative List does not require the same level of detail as a formal World Heritage nomination, although both are technical documents that must be completed in formats prescribed by UNESCO. The Tentative List Submission is much shorter; essentially an executive summary used to justify why a property is considered to be of 'Outstanding Universal Value'.

The Tentative Listing process is beneficial because it initiates preliminary consultation with stakeholders, and research into the potential 'Outstanding Universal Value' of an area, and the management measures in place, or required, to protect it. While the World Heritage Centre checks each Tentative List Submission for compliance against the prescribed format, it is not assessed like the nomination dossier is.

The nomination dossier is a far more comprehensive document that must justify in detail the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of the area by addressing certain criteria and demonstrating that there is an adequate boundary and management framework in place to protect its values.

Benefits of being placed on the World Heritage List

World Heritage Listing is the highest global recognition of the importance of a place. The status confirms the outstanding and exceptional features of the listed site, which for many communities is important. This recognition provides opportunities to celebrate, through community events, the outstanding and exceptional values of the site.

World Heritage Listing also brings a commitment at local, state and national levels to protect and manage the property for present and future generations.

Inscription of a property on the World Heritage List can produce many benefits for nations and for local communities. World Heritage places are a valuable resource and can generate economic opportunities for the place and surrounding regions. In Australia, World Heritage places are strongly promoted, and many have received increased tourist visitation. This has fostered new business and employment opportunities and economic benefits.

Is funding provided to World Heritage places?

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre does not directly provide funding to individual countries or World Heritage places. The Australian Government provides funding to protect and manage some World and [National Heritage](#)⁶ places. The Western Australian Government provides funding for the management of World Heritage places in Western Australia through its agencies and programs.

How can I be involved in the nomination?

The [Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation](#) and the Western Australian Government welcomes stakeholder involvement in the nomination process. To register for updates, please visit pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/murujuga.

⁴ The World Heritage Committee is responsible for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and has the final say on whether a property is inscribed on the World Heritage List.

⁵ State Parties are countries such as Australia that have ratified the World Heritage Convention.

⁶ The National Heritage List is Australia's list of natural, historic and Indigenous places of outstanding significance to the nation.