



Flinders Ranges

Pursuing World Heritage

Flinders Ranges World Heritage FAQs

These frequently asked questions explain how the World Heritage listing process works, what's happening with the Flinders Ranges World Heritage nomination and what it means for Traditional Owners, landholders and the community.

1. What is a World Heritage site?

World Heritage sites are unique and exceptional places around the world that are considered to have either natural and/or cultural values that are internationally important. Sites are declared World Heritage when a State Party to the World Heritage Convention (Australia) proposes an area to be placed in the World Heritage List. [Australia currently has 20 World Heritage sites](#) which include Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, The Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu National Park and Fraser Island.

2. What types of locations can World Heritage apply to?

World Heritage areas can include all sorts of land tenures, including pastoral leases, national parks, conservation parks, freehold, Aboriginal land, unallocated crown land and council reserves.

3. Who decides if a site should be 'World Heritage listed'?

World Heritage listing is coordinated by UNESCO through the World Heritage Centre who assess all nominations and decide if a proposed site has Outstanding Universal Value. If it does, then the World Heritage Committee inscribes the nominated property and/or its extensions, onto the World Heritage List.

4. How does a site get World Heritage listing?

Achieving World Heritage listing involves a number of steps over a number of years. The first step is support from Traditional Owners and the community – if this exists then a short submission is provided to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for inclusion on Australia's World Heritage Tentative List. A nomination is then developed by the relevant party – in this case the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) – after a community consultation period.

This nomination is then submitted to the Australian Government who then submit a nomination to the World Heritage Centre for assessment, and hopefully, inscribing on the World Heritage List.

5. Does SA have other World Heritage properties?

We only have one and it's Naracoorte Caves (listed together with Riversleigh in Queensland) as "Australia's Fossil Mammal Sites".

6. How are World Heritage sites protected and managed in Australia?

The Australian Government's primary piece of environmental legislation that protects World Heritage sites is the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

Through the EPBC Act the government can regulate actions occurring within a declared World Heritage site. For instance any action that is likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values is subject to an environmental assessment and approval under the EPBC Act (e.g. construction; mineral and petroleum resource exploration and extraction; storage or transport of hazardous materials; waste disposal and earthworks etc).

7. What would a World Heritage site look like in the Flinders Ranges?

A World Heritage site in the Flinders Ranges would not be an all-encompassing 'blanket' across the region. It would be a series of discrete sites ('serial sites') that best represent the region's outstanding geology and fossil values being pursued for nomination

8. How many serial sites are being considered?

The proposed Flinders Ranges World Heritage property is comprised of up to seven serial sites over a large area with mixed land uses including co-managed national parks, private pastoral land, conservation parks and protected areas.

9. Where are the sites that are being considered?

They are located on [Arkaroola Protection Area](#), [Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park](#), [Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park](#), [Nilpena Ediacara National Park](#), Angorichina Station, Maynards Well Station and Puttapa Station.

Discussions are currently underway with the pastoral landholders about what their inclusion in the nomination means.

10. Where will visitors be able to see the World Heritage values?

The three main visitor destinations will be:

- [Nilpena Ediacara National Park](#) \$3 million through the South Australian Government's [Parks 2025](#) initiative has been invested in developing a world-class Ediacara fossil experience at Nilpena, setting up Nilpena Ediacara National Park to become an iconic visitor destination. [The site will be ready to welcome visitors early in 2022.](#)
- Brachina Gorge at [Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park](#). The Brachina Gorge Geological Trail already offers visitors an insight into 130 million years of earth's history. Planning for the redevelopment of the 20km self-guided trail is currently underway, aiming to enhance the visitor experience and refresh trail infrastructure.
- [Arkaroola](#). Arkaroola has been managed for conservation and research for over 50 years and already welcomes many visitors from all over the world.

11. Can I visit the sites now?

Planning is currently underway to determine how the World Heritage sites will be presented, and many sites, particularly those on private land, are not accessible. Public access to pastoral properties is not permitted without explicit permission from the landowner. Geological tours are currently available at [Arkaroola](#) and the Brachina Gorge Geological Trail at [Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park](#) is open to self-guided visitors. [Nilpena Ediacara National Park will be ready to welcome visitors for a unique fossil experience and guided fossil field tour early in 2022.](#)

12. Does World Heritage change land ownership or control?

World Heritage listing does not affect ownership rights. Ownership remains as it was prior to nomination, and State and local laws still apply. World Heritage properties in Australia do not become Commonwealth property, nor do they become the property of any international body or foreign power.

13. Does World Heritage listing change what can be done on a property?

A World Heritage property in the Flinders Ranges would be managed to complement existing land uses such as pastoralism and tourism

For the most part, activities occurring on the land can continue when it is listed as World Heritage. Any existing activities that are considered a risk to the World Heritage values will be discussed before a nomination goes ahead.

14. Do I get a say if a listed site is on my property?

World Heritage will only apply to the sites on the property the landowner wishes to nominate. Participation is voluntary so a serial site would only be included in the World Heritage nomination if the landowner wanted. How World Heritage is managed on a property (e.g. any visitor access) would be developed on a case by case basis and only with the owner's agreement.

It is entirely up to the landholder to decide what type of access they will permit, whether it be no access, scientific research only, guided tours, or free visitor access. There are no requirements saying visitors will have access to the sites.

15. Who is driving the nomination?

DEW is leading the nomination, together with the Department of Energy and Mining. They are partnering with landholders, Co-management Boards, Adnyamathanha, Federal Department for Agriculture, Water and the Environment, other SA Government agencies including the South Australian Tourism Commission and the local community.

16. Who are the key experts contributing to the nomination?

Four scientific experts are taking leading roles in preparing the FRWH Nomination Dossier. They are: Glenn Brock, Associate Professor of Palaeobiology at Macquarie University in Sydney; Mary Droser, Professor of Palaeontology at University of California, Riverside; Palaeontologist Jim Gehling; and Geologist Stephen Hore.

17. What does World Heritage mean for mining in the region?

The World Heritage Committee has a clear position that mineral, oil and gas exploration or exploitation is incompatible with World Heritage status, and that such activities should not be undertaken within World Heritage properties.

There are no existing mines within the component parts (except the legacy Dunbar Mine in Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park), and none that impact upon the elements that demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value within the component parts

More information

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