Could do better:

An Indigenous Heritage Report Card

Prof Richard Mackay, AM

GML Heritage Pty Ltd

Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

ANU Centre for Archaeological Research

Aboriginal Archaeologists Australia

14 May 2014

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Could do better:

I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people - the traditional custodians of this land on which we are meeting and pay respect to their Elders both past and present. I extend this respect to all indigenous people in attendance today.

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Could do better:

Uluru – natural or cultural?

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Could do better:

Values and perceptions . . .

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Could do better:

‘State of the Environment’ reporting

A report must be tabled in Parliament every five years

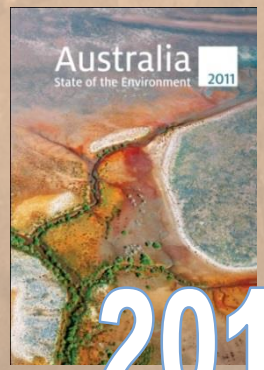
Definition of ‘environment’ is broad – includes heritage

SOE 2011 – Indigenous heritage: state pressures & outlook

1996

2001

2006



2011

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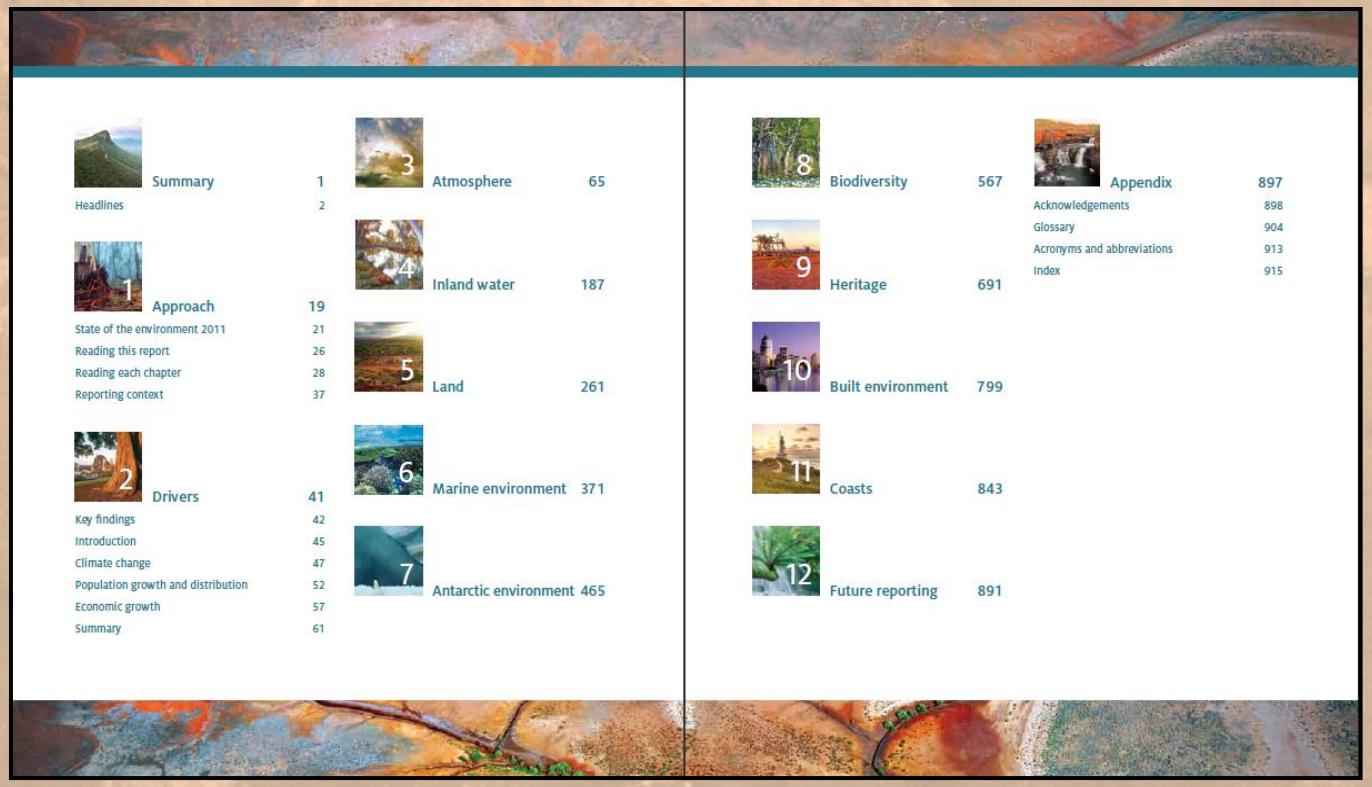

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Scope and Contents SOE 2011

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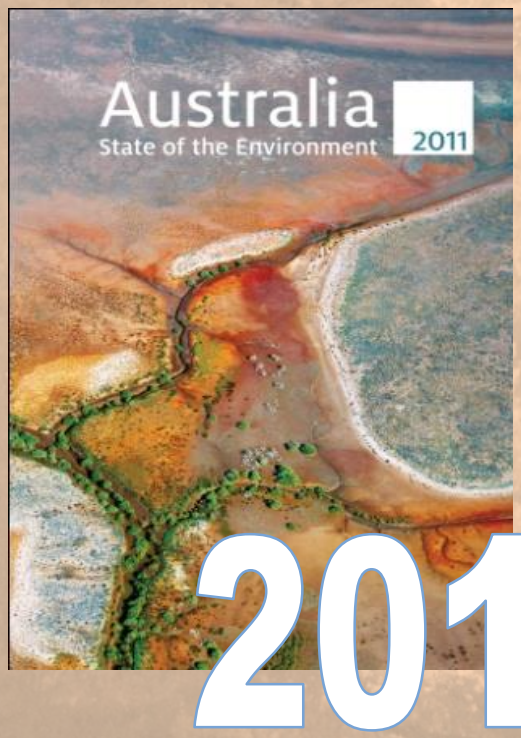
Could do better:

Some key findings



- Indigenous heritage is inadequately documented and protected.
- Loss of language, knowledge and traditional practice continues to erode Indigenous cultural traditions and connections to Country.
- Incremental destruction of sites continues

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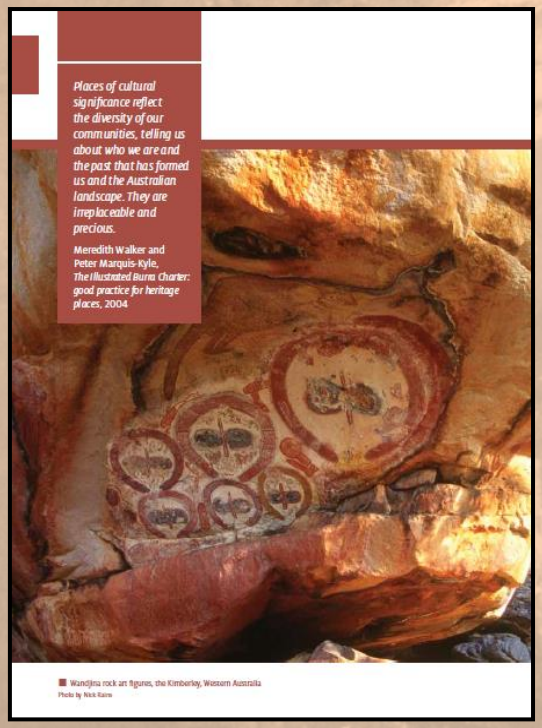
SOE 2011 commentary



Australia is a complex, layered natural and cultural landscape in which unique geodiversity and biodiversity provide the backdrop to an ancient, but continuing Indigenous culture . . .

Places of cultural significance . . .

are irreplaceable and precious

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Assessment Summaries SOE 2011

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Could do better:

Indigenous heritage

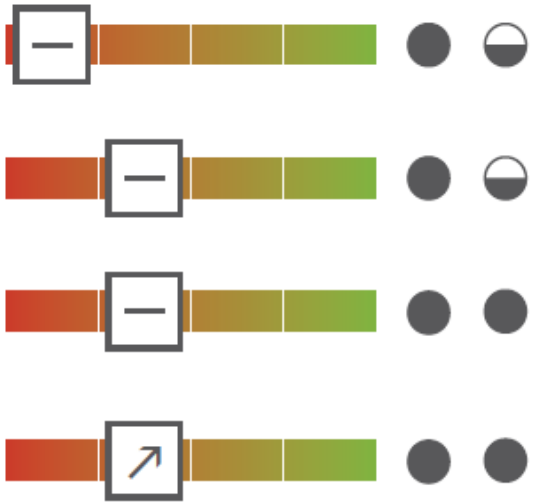
Identification

Context: Understanding of the nature and extent of Australia's Indigenous heritage, both tangible and intangible, is inadequate. Indigenous places are also typically seen as individual physical sites rather than part of the rich cultural landscape that is country

Planning: There is a clear need for nationally coordinated policies and programs that proactively document and assess Indigenous heritage, rather than reactively responding to threats

Inputs: Funding for survey and assessment of Indigenous heritage values is usually directly proportional to the threat posed by a particular development. Resources available for documenting intangible heritage and country are inadequate

Processes: The Australian Government provides little leadership or coordination in Indigenous heritage assessment. Most assessments occur at the state level in response to threats. Some state jurisdictions are significantly improving assessment processes



Effectiveness of heritage management

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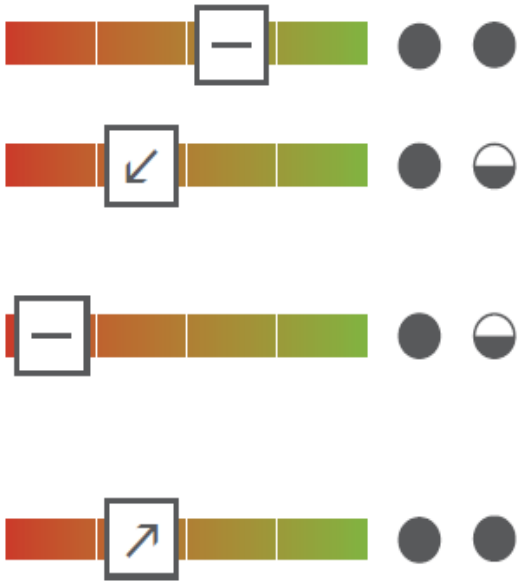
Protection

Context: Statutory controls for Indigenous heritage places are generally understood, despite jurisdictional inconsistencies

Planning: Indigenous heritage is under-represented on statutory heritage lists and registers and is not effectively supported by statutes that claim to provide blanket protection, but also allow progressive site destruction

Inputs: Resources allocated for listing and protection of Indigenous heritage places are inadequate and often a post-event reaction to adverse impacts. Insufficient attention is paid to intangible values and places, and to effective means of providing protection in ways other than listing or reservation

Processes: Management systems for Indigenous heritage places within reserved lands identify conservation needs, involve traditional owners and make generally well-informed decisions about impact assessment and resource allocation. However, outside the reserved lands system, Indigenous heritage decisions are less consultative and often reactive to threats



Protection

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Loss of knowledge	Indigenous heritage has not been comprehensively surveyed and assessed, so knowledge of the resource is incomplete. The intangible values of Indigenous heritage places are directly degraded when the knowledge relating to associated belief and traditional practices is lost. Loss of traditional knowledge poses a major and continuing threat to Australia's Indigenous cultural heritage
Loss of traditional cultural practice and social connections	Indigenous communities in Australia continue to suffer disconnection from country or face significant challenges in pursuing traditional land and sea management or other cultural practices; however, some significant improvements have been made that both recognise and improve management arrangements for Indigenous heritage
Incremental destruction	A major pressure on Indigenous heritage is the continuing incremental destruction of sites through an accumulation of one-off decisions associated with particular developments. The pressure is created by a combination of inadequate inventory and consent processes that identify impacts, but seldom give primacy to Indigenous site conservation

Pressures on Indigenous heritage

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Could do better:

SOE 2011 Outlook for heritage:

Depends on government leadership in two key areas:

- Undertaking thorough assessments that lead to comprehensive natural and cultural inventories and truly representative areas of protected land; and
- Changing management paradigms and resource allocation in response to emerging threats – responding strategically, based on integrated use of traditional and scientific knowledge.

Improvement will require change.

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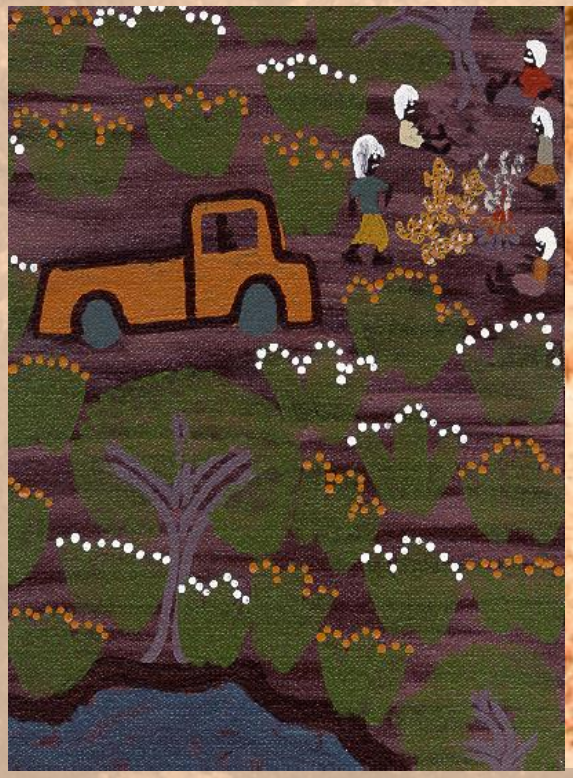
Could do better:



Identification requires knowledge

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Could do better:

. . . and resources too

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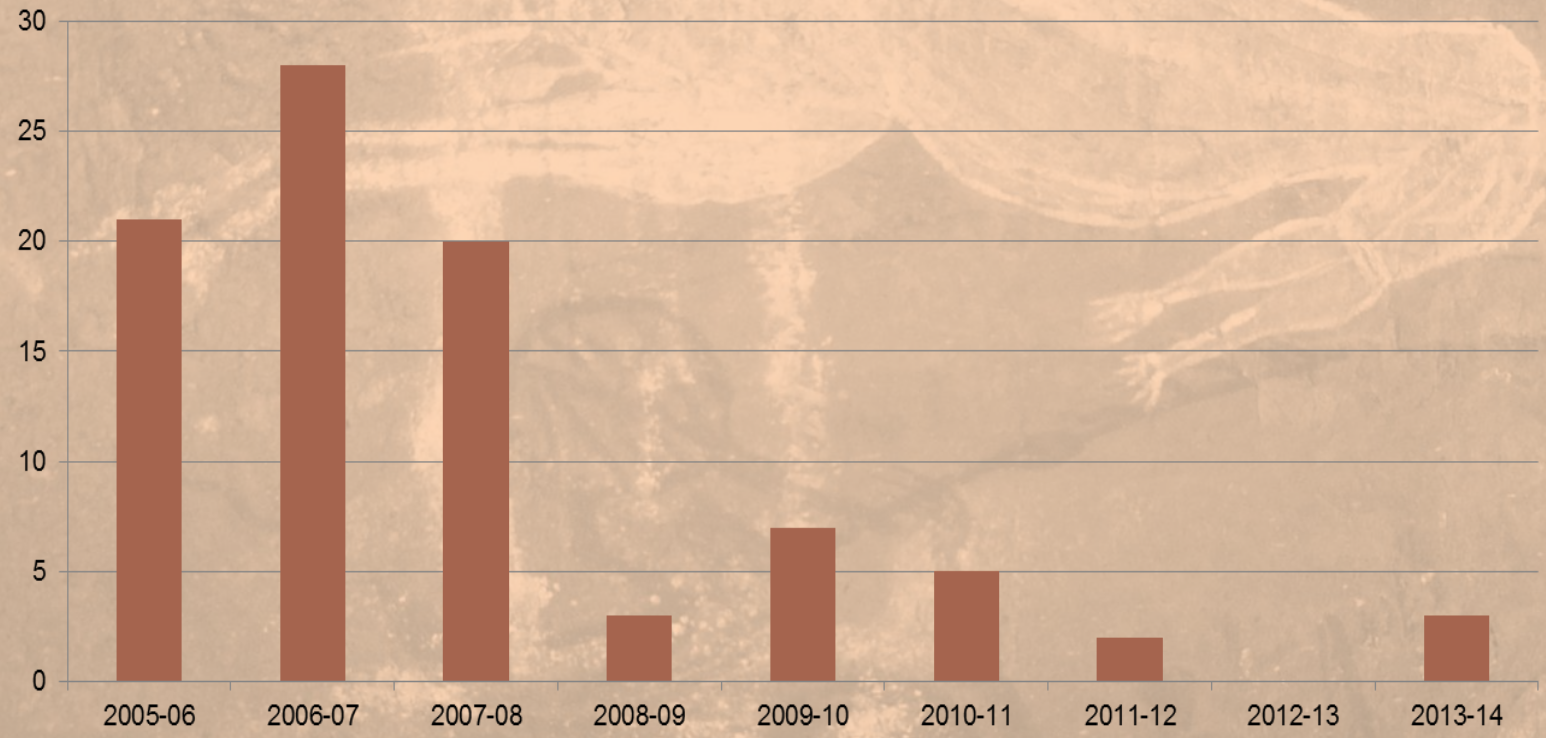
Could do better:

National Heritage List 2005 - 2014



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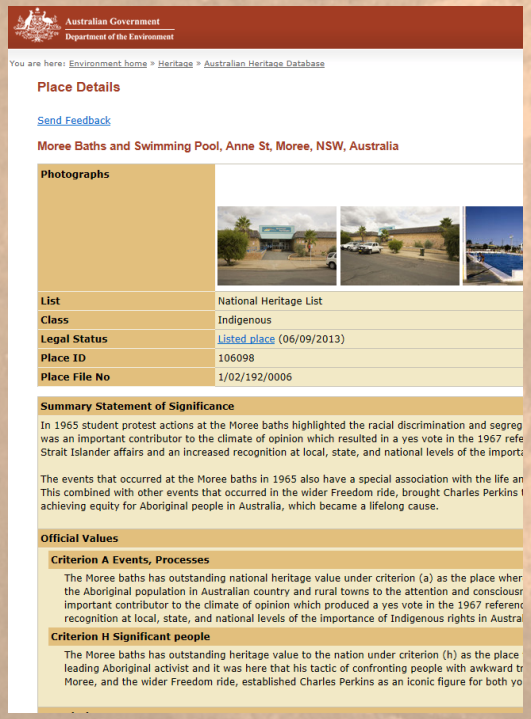
Could do better:

3 Indigenous places listed in 2013



Australian Government
Department of the Environment

You are here: Environment home » Heritage » Australian Heritage Database

Place Details

Send Feedback

Moree Baths and Swimming Pool, Anne St, Moree, NSW, Australia

Photographs	
List	National Heritage List
Class	Indigenous
Legal Status	Listed place (06/09/2013)
Place ID	106098
Place File No	1/02/192/0006

Summary Statement of Significance

In 1965 student protest actions at the Moree baths highlighted the racial discrimination and segreg
was an important contributor to the climate of opinion which resulted in a yes vote in the 1967 refe
Strait Islander affairs and an increased recognition at local, state, and national levels of the importa

The events that occurred at the Moree baths in 1965 also have a special association with the life an
This combined with other events that occurred in the wider Freedom ride, brought Charles Perkins
achieving equity for Aboriginal people in Australia, which became a lifelong cause.

Official Values

Criterion A Events, Processes

The Moree baths has outstanding national heritage value under criterion (a) as the place wher
the Aboriginal population in Australian country and rural towns to the attention and consciousr
important contributor to the climate of opinion which produced a yes vote in the 1967 referenc
recognition at local, state, and national levels of the importance of Indigenous rights in Austra

Criterion H Significant people

The Moree baths has outstanding heritage value to the nation under criterion (h) as the place
leading Aboriginal activist and it was here that his tactic of confronting people with awkward t
Moree, and the wider Freedom ride, established Charles Perkins as an iconic figure for both yo

- Moree Baths and Swimming Pool
- Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape
- Wurrwurrwuy Stone Arrangements

(There are 19 places with Indigenous values on the NHL)

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Could do better:

Moree Baths and Swimming Pool?

- 1965 Freedom Ride
- 1967 Referendum
- Highlighted in SOE 2011

(Photo supplied by Ann Curthoys)

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Could do better:

Contemporary Values: Greater Blue Mountains

As Aboriginal people our identity is inseparable from our Country. We are the people of that Country. It holds our stories, provides food and medicine to our bodies and spirit and it has been home to our people for all recorded history, as it has been home to our ancestors for tens of thousands of years.

Chris Tobin, Darug, 2013

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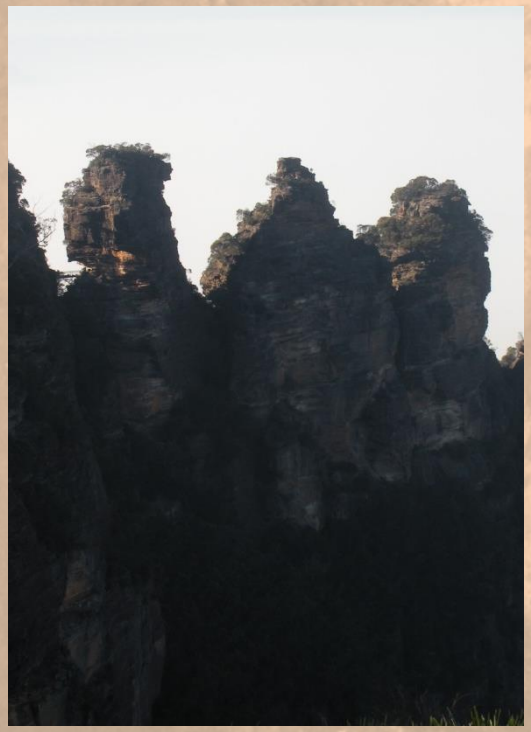
Could do better:

Greater Blue Mountains



- World Heritage List 2000
- Evolution and *Eucalyptus sp*
- Habitats and biodiversity
- Nominated by Australia for natural AND cultural values
- National Heritage List 2007 – ONLY natural heritage values
- Re-assessment 2014
- Contemporary Indigenous values

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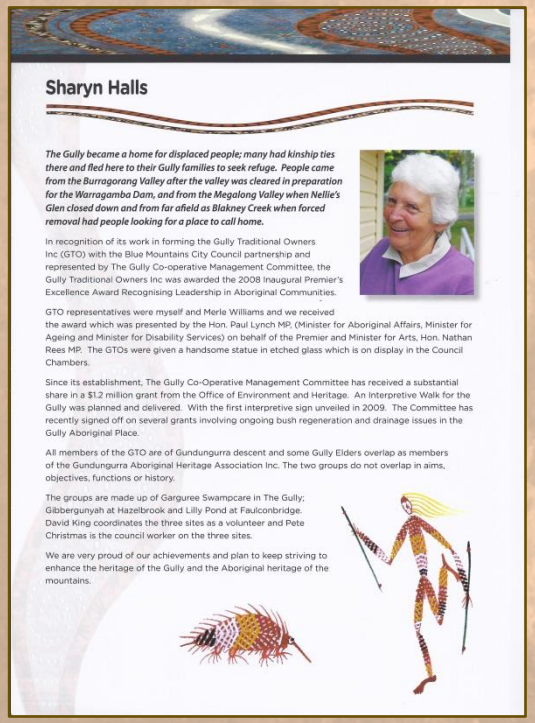
Could do better:

Re-establishing connection – The Gully



Sharyn Halls

The Gully became a home for displaced people; many had kinship ties there and fled here to their Gully families to seek refuge. People came from the Burragorang Valley after the valley was cleared in preparation for the Warragamba Dam, and from the Megalong Valley when Nellie's Glen closed down and from far afield as Blakney Creek when forced removal had people looking for a place to call home.

In recognition of its work in forming the Gully Traditional Owners Inc (GTO) with the Blue Mountains City Council partnership and represented by The Gully Co-operative Management Committee, the Gully Traditional Owners Inc was awarded the 2008 Inaugural Premier's Excellence Award Recognising Leadership in Aboriginal Communities.

GTO representatives were myself and Merle Williams and we received the award which was presented by the Hon. Paul Lynch MP, (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Ageing and Minister for Disability Services) on behalf of the Premier and Minister for Arts, Hon. Nathan Rees MP. The GTOs were given a handsome statue in etched glass which is on display in the Council Chambers.

Since its establishment, The Gully Co-Operative Management Committee has received a substantial share in a $1.2 million grant from the Office of Environment and Heritage. An Interpretive Walk for the Gully was planned and delivered. With the first interpretive sign unveiled in 2009. The Committee has recently signed off on several grants involving ongoing bush regeneration and drainage issues in the Gully Aboriginal Place.

All members of the GTO are of Gundungurra descent and some Gully Elders overlap as members of the Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association Inc. The two groups do not overlap in aims, objectives, functions or history.

The groups are made up of Garguree Swampcare in The Gully; Gibbergunyah at Hazelbrook and Lilly Pond at Faulconbridge. David King coordinates the three sites as a volunteer and Pete Christmas is the council worker on the three sites.

We are very proud of our achievements and plan to keep striving to enhance the heritage of the Gully and the Aboriginal heritage of the mountains.

- The Gully 1957 and 2002
- Focal point for celebration
- Living Country Culture Camp 2011

To my family, it's all about not losing any more of our past history and to look after what is still out there in our Traditional Lands

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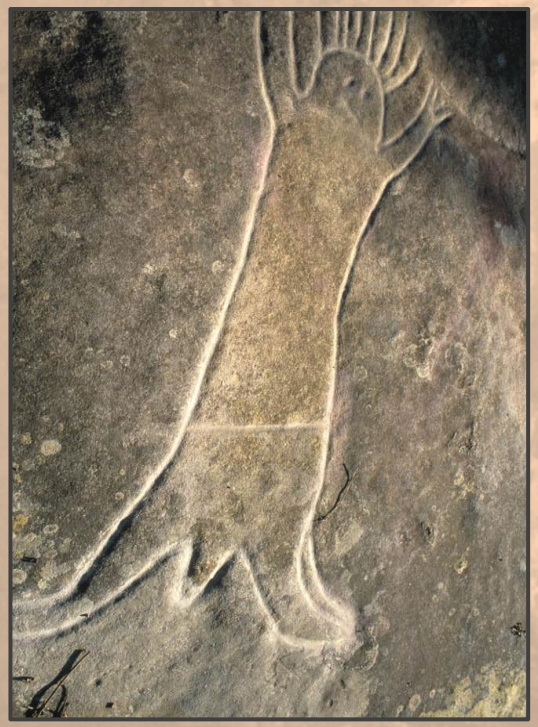
Could do better:

Continuing connection - Baiame



- Milbrodale, Hunter Valley
- Father Sky deity: then and now

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Could do better:

Continuing connection – Living Country

- 6 language groups
- Aboriginal Reference Group
- Adapted enduring culture
- Interaction between ‘Country’ and ‘People’

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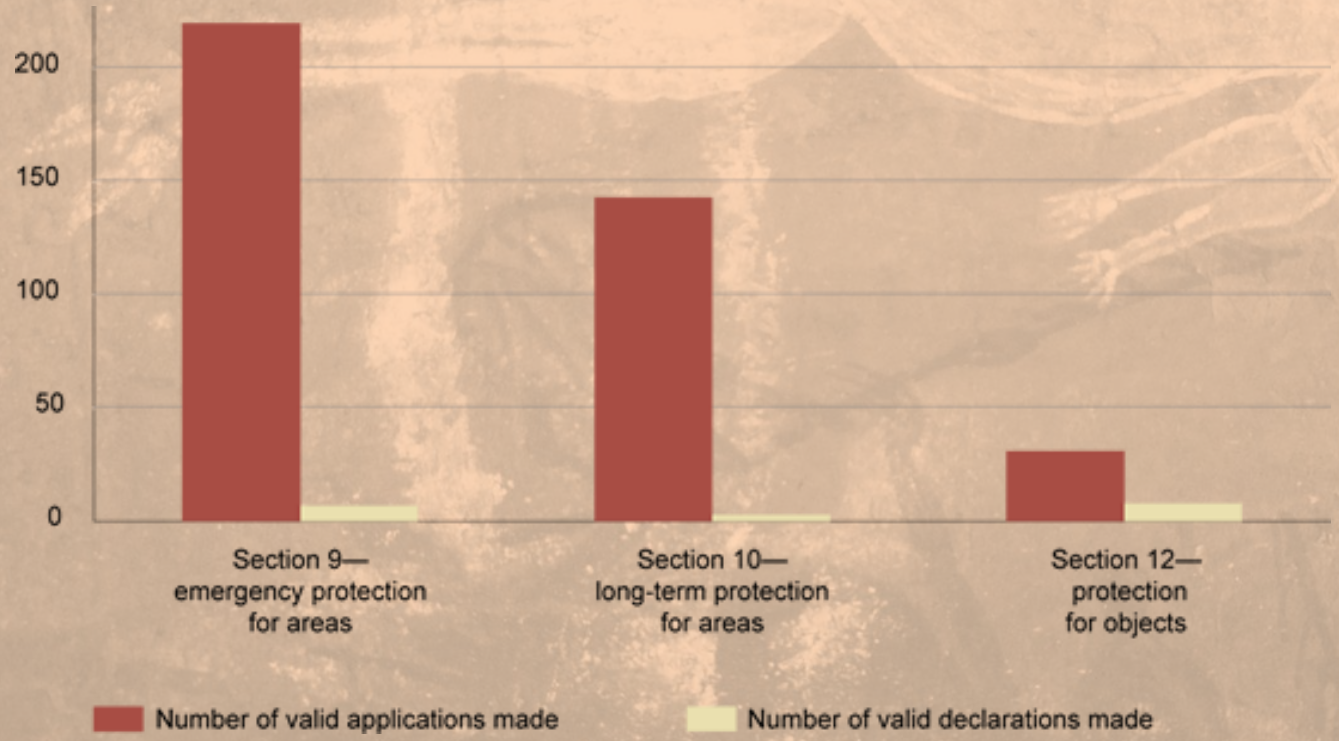
Could do better:

Applications and ministerial declarations under each section of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (as at 9 August 2011)



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Could do better:

Aboriginal Heritage Committees

- Heritage Councils
- Registered Aboriginal Parties
- Aboriginal cultural heritage plans
- Permits and processes
- Destruction v conservation
- Recipes for destruction

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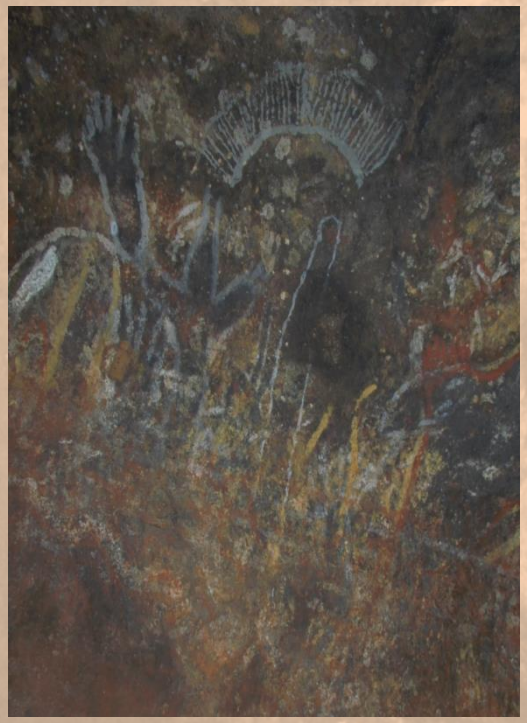
Could do better:

Incremental Destruction



… heritage, once destroyed or sullied, can rarely be recovered. As well, it is important for avoiding the tyranny of little decisions, whereby incremental developments—perhaps done under the aegis of improving access—end up destroying the attractions for which the place was set up in the first place.
Australian Senate Committee 2007

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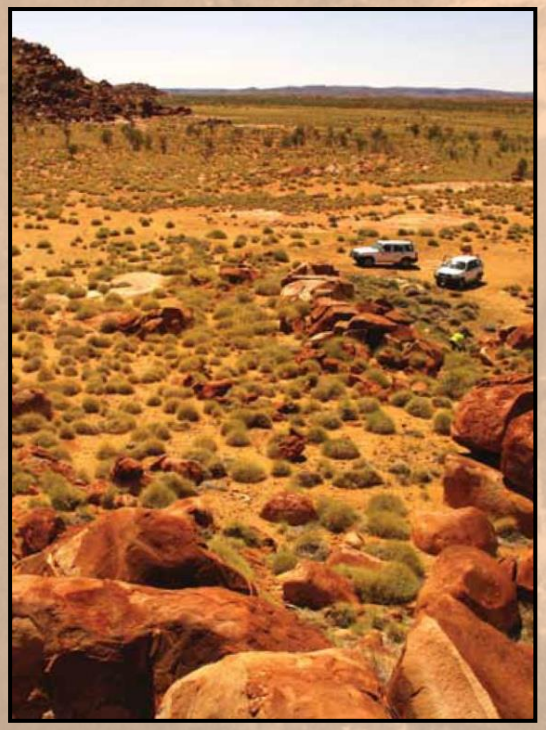
Could do better:

A Pilbara case study: Woodstock Abydos



(Photo by Liam Brady University of WA)

- Protected under *WA Heritage Act 1972*
- Only 57% surveyed, but 500+ sites
- Art, occupation sites, quarries . . .
- Protected area, listed on RNE
- WA Museum custodian
- 3 Railways
  - BHP 1960s
  - Fortescue 2006
  - Handcock 2006

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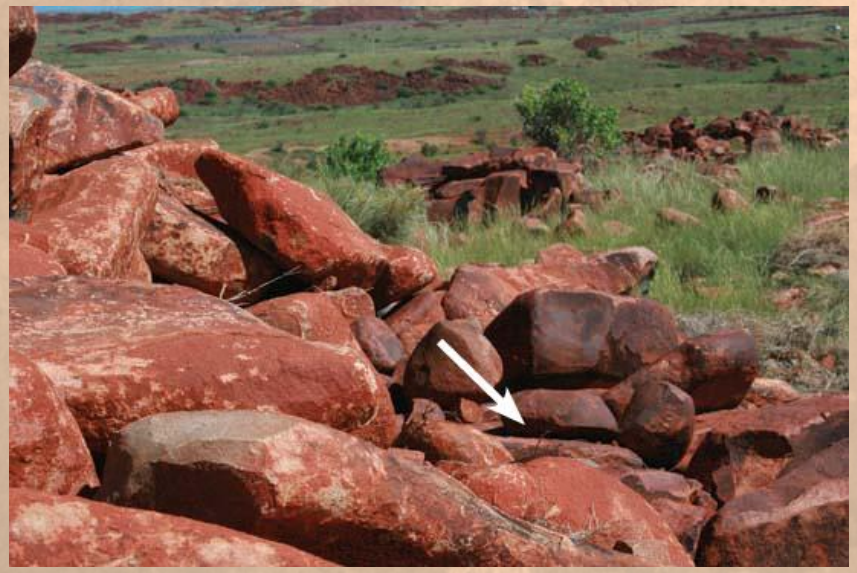
Could do better:

EPBC Act Enforcement: Burrup Peninsula



A petroglyph in the immediate vicinity of the area affected by clearing, blasting and quarrying works, Dampier Archipelago National Heritage Place, showing a small, complex, engraved panel (arrowed) among disturbed boulders, and an engraved lizard visible on the right-hand side (see photo at right)

Photos by Jo McDonald, Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management

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Cultural Heritage: Snakes & Ladders!

Development Proposal

$$

Feasibility Study

Announcement

Jobs and Prosperity

Survey

Benefit

Impact

Site Survey

EIS

Cultural Resource

Heritage is "the problem"

Economic

Culture

Govt Decision

Cultural Heritage

Archival Record

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Could do better:

Authorised destruction: Peppertree Quarry

- Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan
- Testing and salvage
  - Pejar
  - Buru
  - Ngunawal

(Photos supplied by Dr Tim Owen)

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Could do better:

Scientific and social value . . .

(Photos supplied by Dr Tim Owen)

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Could do better:

A linear process and inexorable outcome:

- Going . . .
- Going . . .
- Gone!

(Photos supplied by Dr Tim Owen)

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Could do better:

Pro-active conservation: East Leppington

- Stockland land release
- Landscape approach
- Testing
- Sites and artefacts
- Places

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Could do better:

Involvement of Aboriginal people: East Leppington

- Dharawal
- Gundungurra

- Participation
- Work
- Archaeology
- Science

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Could do better:

Involvement of Aboriginal people: East Leppington

- Dharawal
- Gundungurra

- Information
- Re-connection
- Involvement
- Determination

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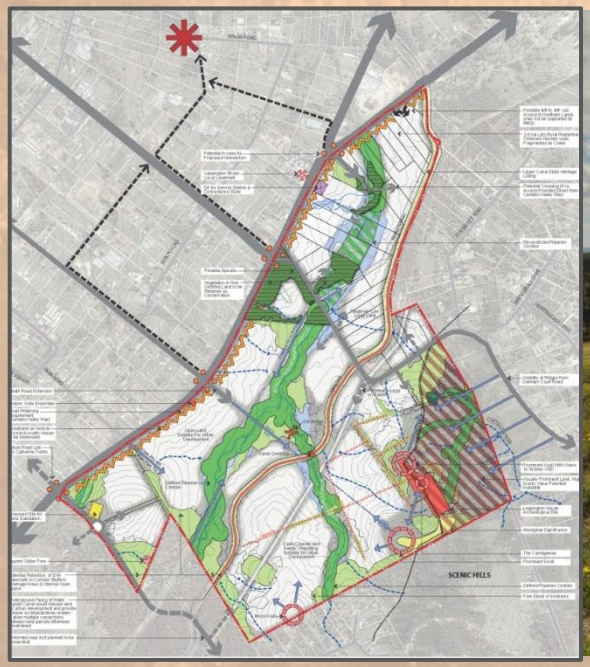
Could do better:

Conservation as an objective: sites and places



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Could do better:

Traditional land and sea management

Traditional land and sea management practices are crucial to the wellbeing of Indigenous people and maintaining the values of their country. Traditional ecological knowledge is also increasingly recognised for its potential contribution to contemporary natural resource management. Where people are disconnected from country or prevented from pursuing traditional practice, or where the knowledge of place, spirit or traditional practice is not passed on, the Indigenous values of the place diminish. SOE 2011

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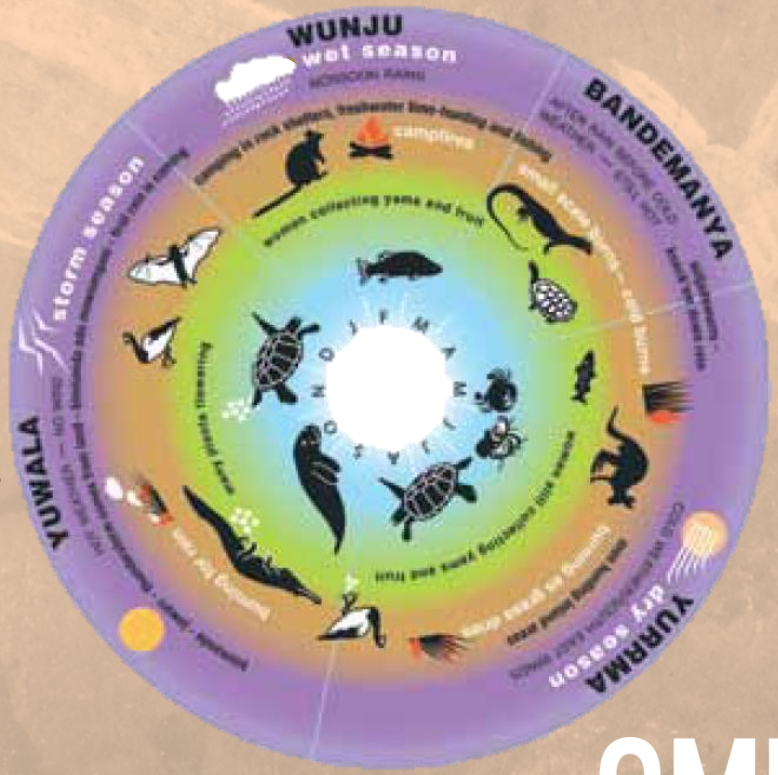
Could do better:

Wunambal Gaambera Healthy Country Plan

- Natural – cultural ‘divide’
- Nurturing and managing
- Traditional cultural practices
- Collaborative, iterative process
- Instigated by Traditional Owners
- Honours ancestors and shares the story of the land
- Traditional knowledge AND western science



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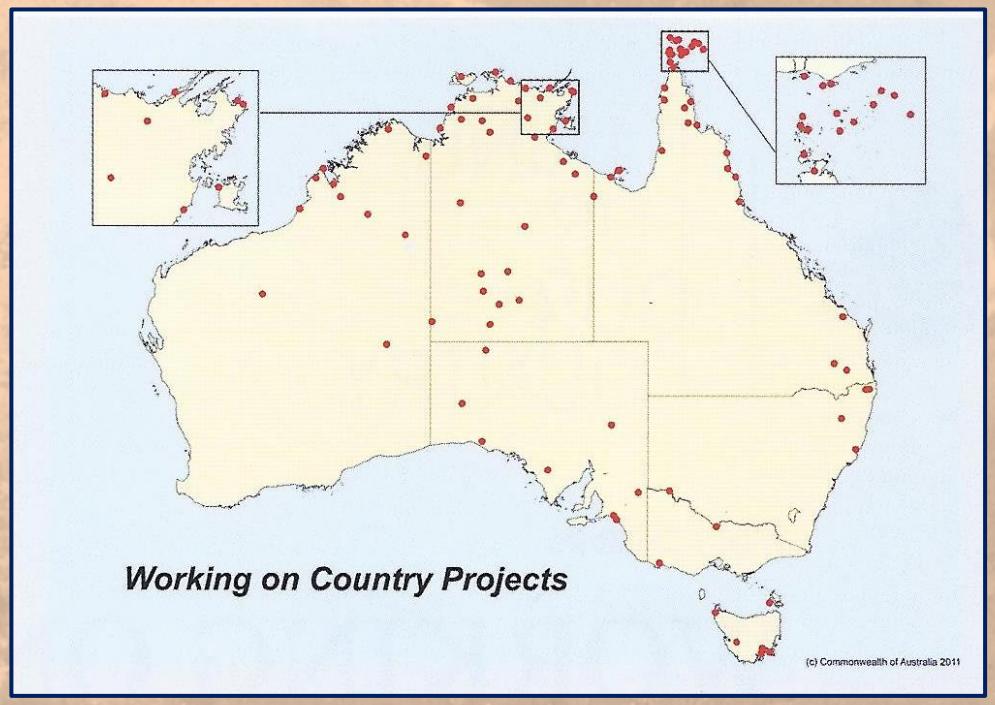
Could do better:

Working on Country 2007 - ?

- c700 Indigenous rangers
- Relationship & obligations
- Opportunities to protect and manage
- Training and career development
- Partnerships
- WIN 2013



Source: DSEWPAC 2012

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Could do better:

Fighting carbon with fire!

- Dean Yibarbuk
  (Warddeken Land Management)
- Carbon credits
- WIN 2013

We are tackling climate change by bringing back and strengthening our traditional burning, the tools that we have used for thousands of years

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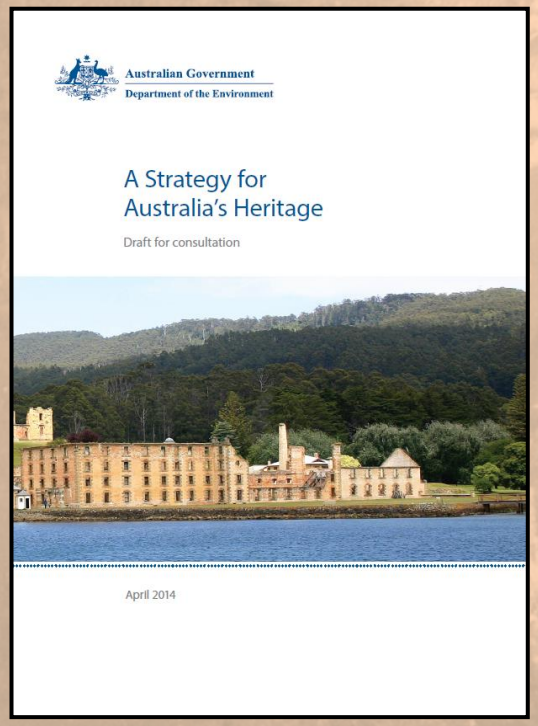
Could do better:

Australian Heritage Strategy



- National Framework
- Commonwealth leadership
- Focus on 'icons'
- Emphasis on partnerships and communities
- Limited Indigenous content
- Reinforces some existing Indigenous programs

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Could do better:

Australian Heritage Strategy

- Word ‘Aboriginal’ occurs once
- Some themes not pursued:

  There are also individuals with special skills and knowledge—the speakers of Indigenous languages, the holders of cultural knowledge and traditions, and the craftsmen who pass on the skills . . .

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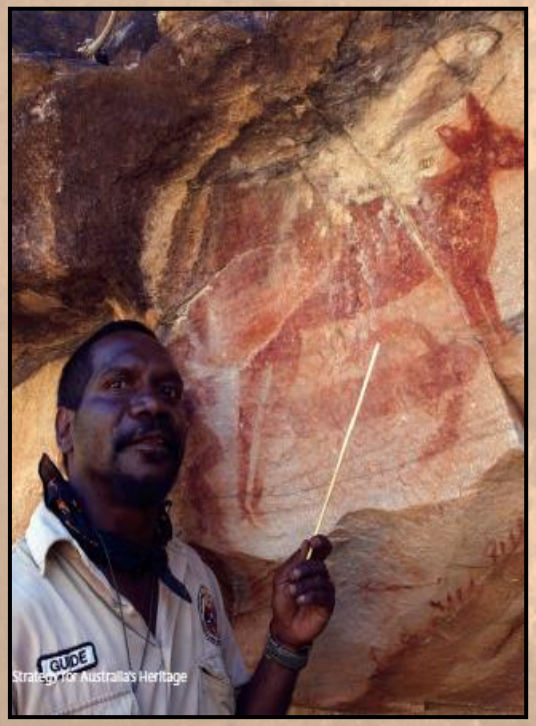
Could do better:

Australian Heritage Strategy



- Closing the GAP
- Promote ‘Ask First’
- Improve recognition and protection
- Cape York – WHL
- Central role in decision making
- Training and career paths
- Green Army

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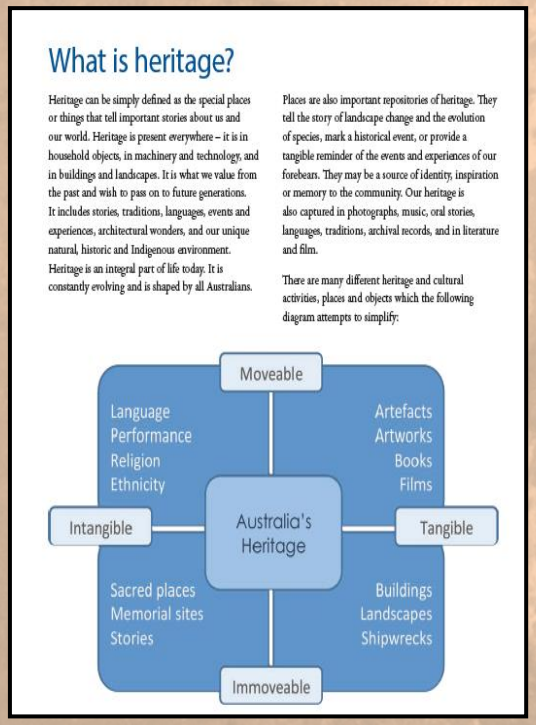
Could do better:

Australian Heritage Strategy



- Recognises intangible values
- 3 over-arching strategy areas
  - National Leadership
  - Innovative Partnerships
  - Community Engagement
- Intent – not detail
- Strong submissions are needed!

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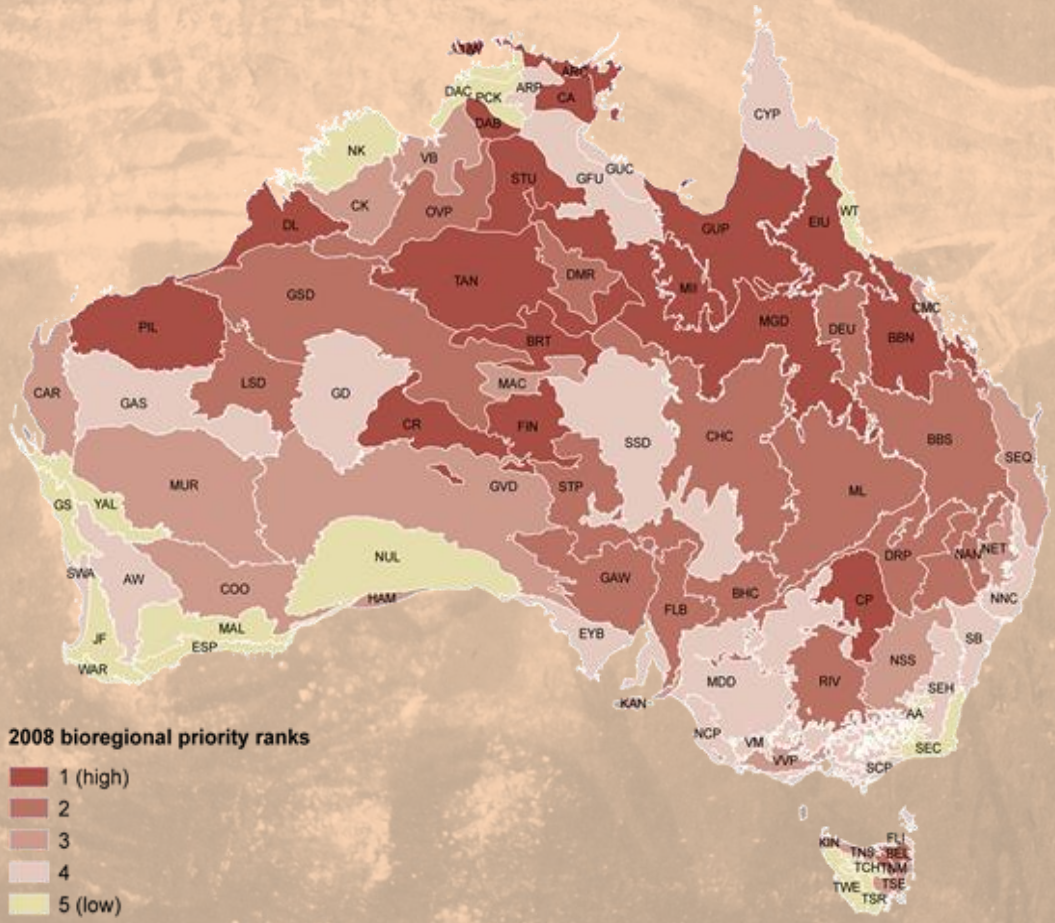
Could do better:

Priorities for bioregions, based on EPBC-listed species,



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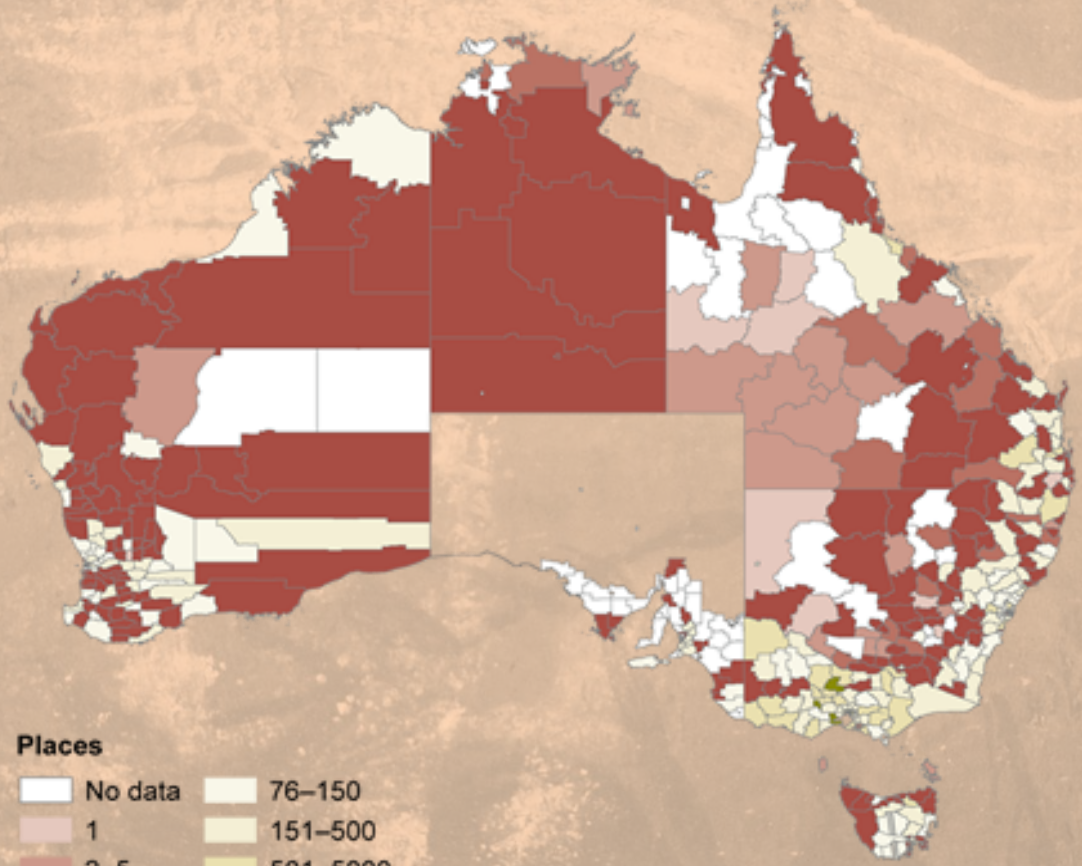
Could do better:

Number of heritage places listed by local government area



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Could do better:

Nationally aggregated data related to Indigenous heritage

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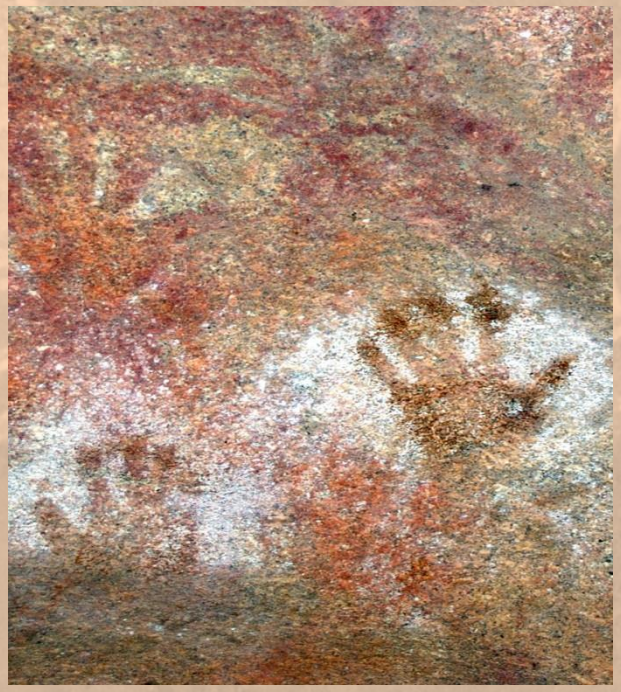
Could do better:

Summary ‘grades’:

- ⇔ Pro-active identification
- ⇩ National approach & leadership
- ⇧ Training and capacity building
- ⇧ Meaning and association
- ⇔ Involvement in decision making
- ⇩ Landscape approach



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An Indigenous Heritage Report Card

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