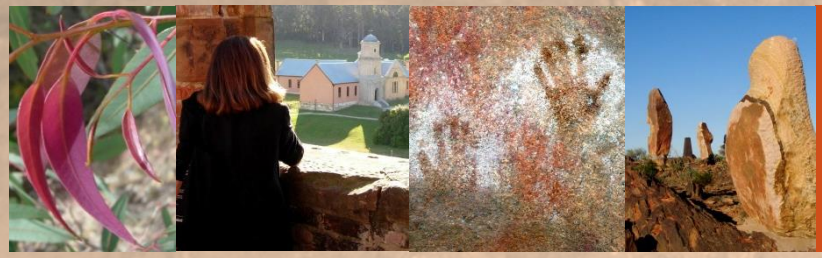


Strategy or S-tragedy?

Safeguarding the places which are our cultural inheritance: towards a national heritage strategy

Prof Richard Mackay, AM

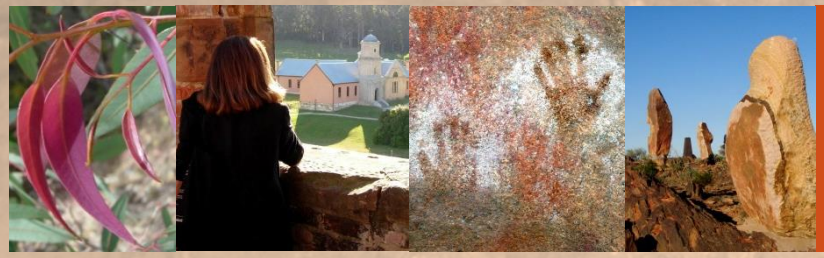
GML Heritage Pty Ltd

ACT and Region Annual Australian Heritage Partnership Symposium

'The Future of Heritage'

19 July 2014

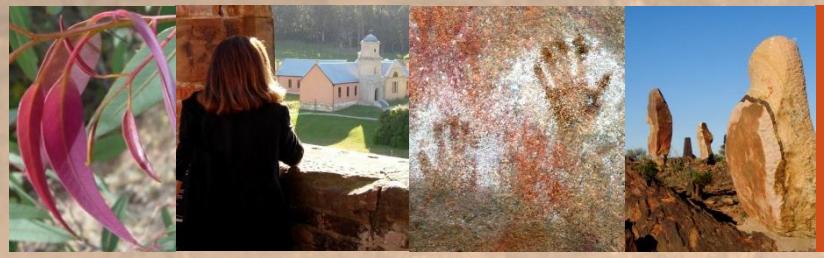
GML HERITAGE



Strategy or S-tragedy?

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.

GML HERITAGE



Strategy or S-tragedy?

Hope and wonder . . .

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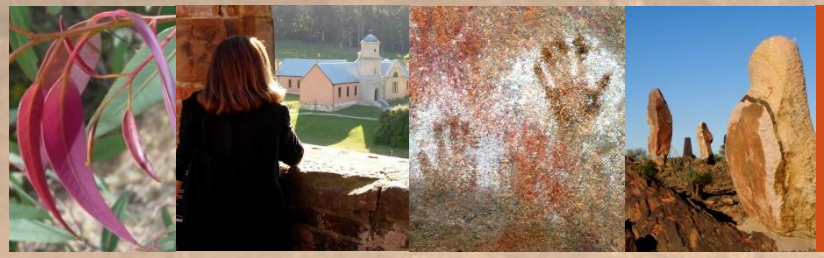


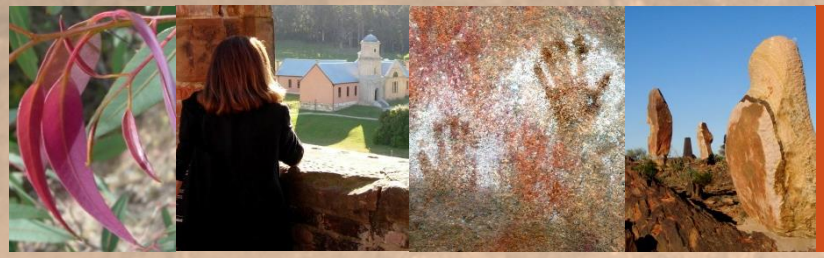
Strategy or S-tragedy?

The National Estate: relationship

We must expand the concept of conservation to meet the imperious problems of the new age. We must develop new instruments of foresight and protection and nurture in order to recover the **relationship** between man (sic) and nature and make sure that the national estate we pass on to our multiplying descendants is green and flourishing.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 1963, quoted by Justice Robert Hope in the Report on the National Estate, 1974

GML HERITAGE



Strategy or S-tragedy?

Values and perceptions . . .

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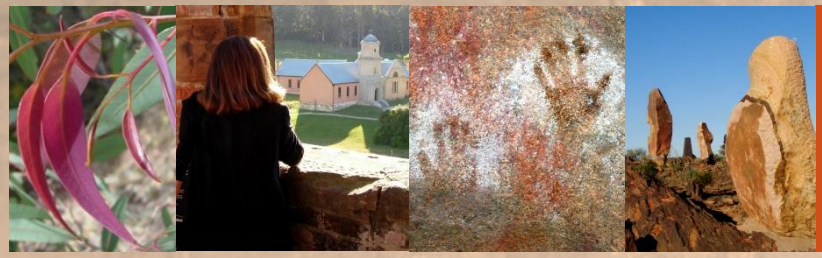
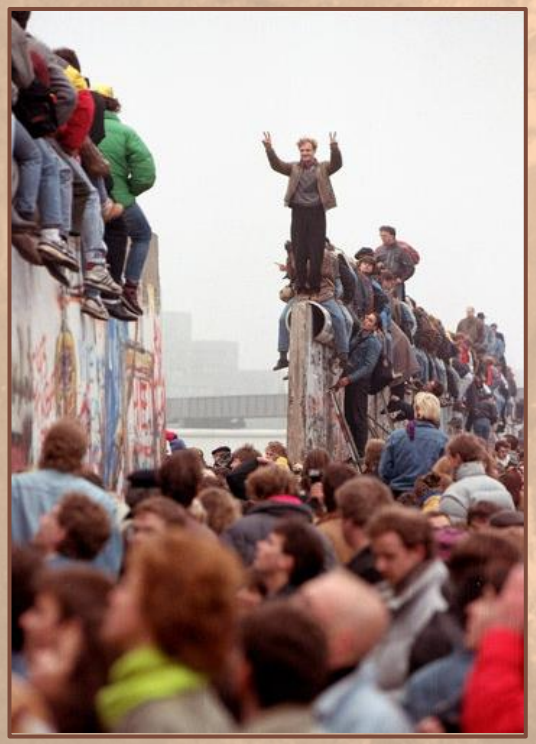


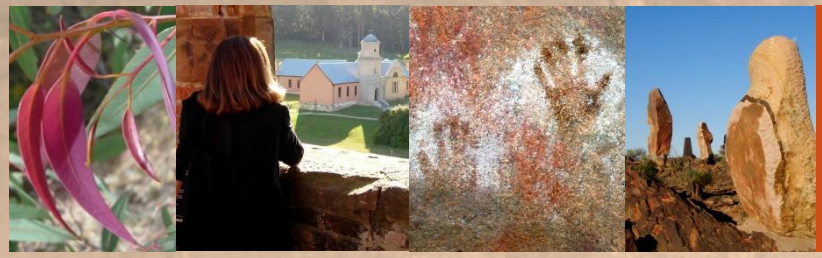
Strategy or S-tragedy?

A concrete example . . .



- A piece of concrete
- European
- Mid 20th Century
- German
- From Berlin
- But . . .
- A piece of kerb!

GML HERITAGE



Strategy or S-tragedy?

A concrete example . . .

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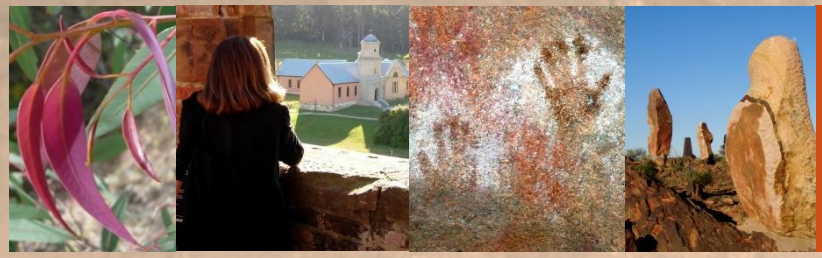
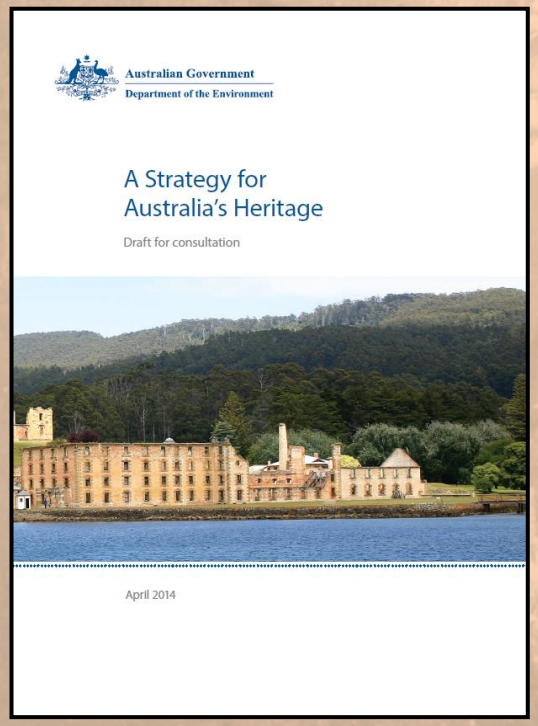


Strategy or S-tragedy?

Australian Heritage Strategy



- National Framework
- Commonwealth leadership
- Focus on 'icons'
- Emphasis on partnerships and community engagement
- Limited natural heritage content or vision
- Reinforces some existing Indigenous programs

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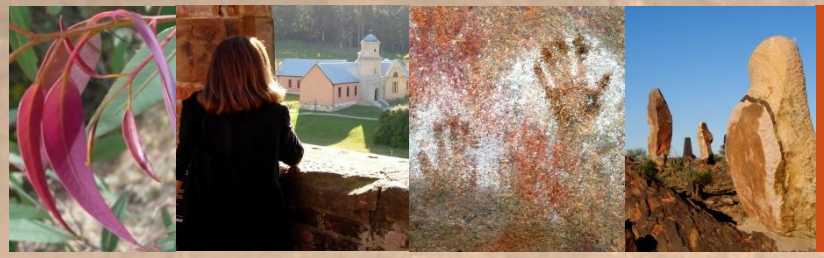


Strategy or S-tragedy?

‘State of the Environment’ reporting

A report must be tabled in Parliament every five years

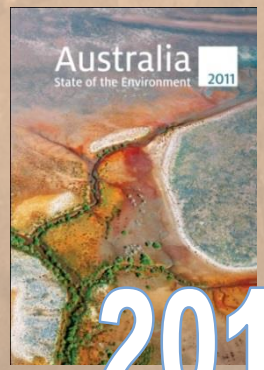
Definition of ‘environment’ is broad – includes heritage

SOE 2011 – Heritage is in good condition but threatened

1996

2001

2006



2011

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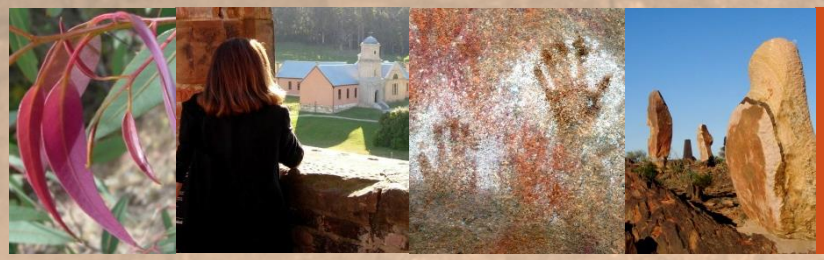
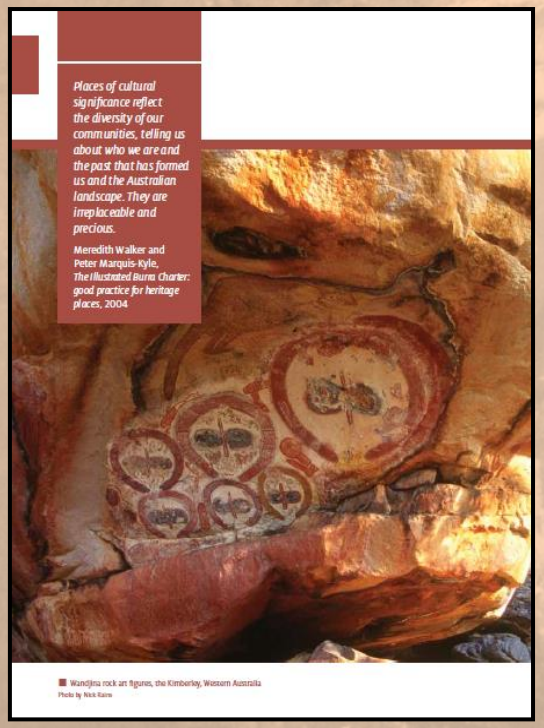


Strategy or S-tragedy?

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 and two centuries of post-colonial settlement history. . .

our heritage is irreplaceable and precious . . .

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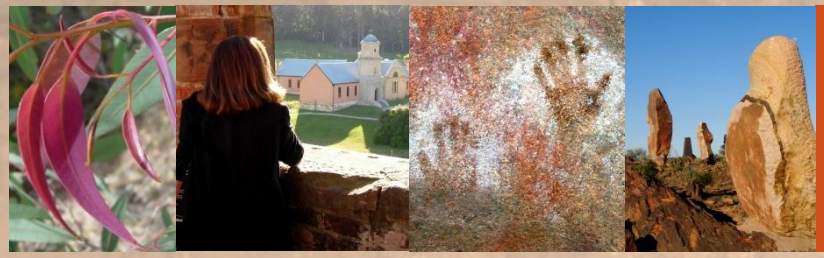
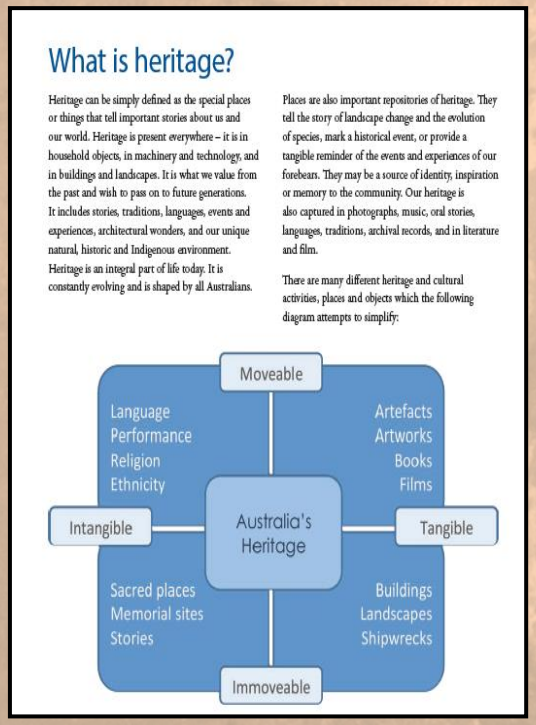


Strategy or S-tragedy?

Australian Heritage Strategy



- Focus on ‘places’
- Recognises intangible values
- 3 over-arching strategy areas
  - National Leadership
  - Innovative Partnerships
  - Community Engagement
- Intent – not detail
- Election commitments!

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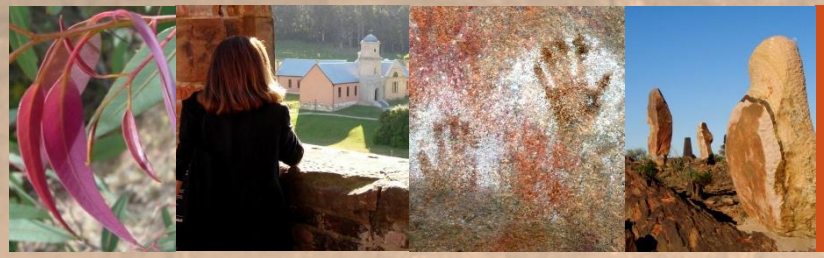

Strategy or S-tragedy?

National leadership . . .

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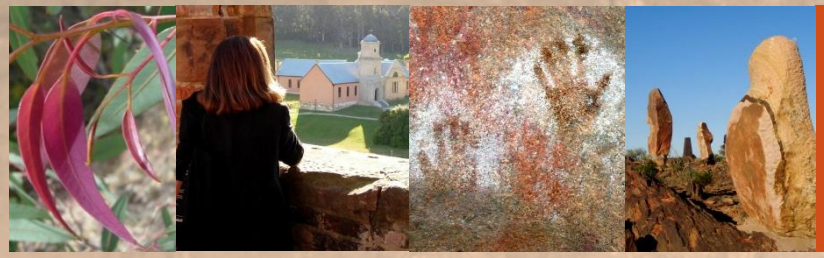

Strategy or S-tragedy?

The ‘one-stop-shop’ paradox . . .

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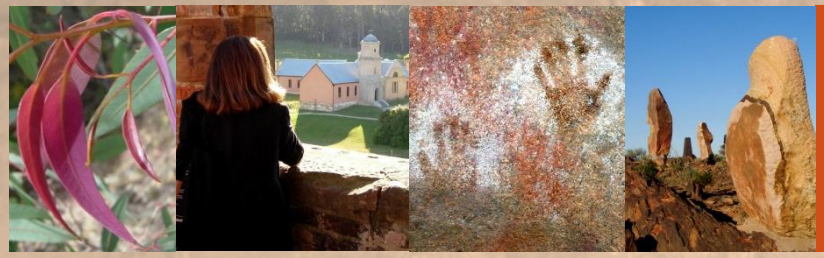
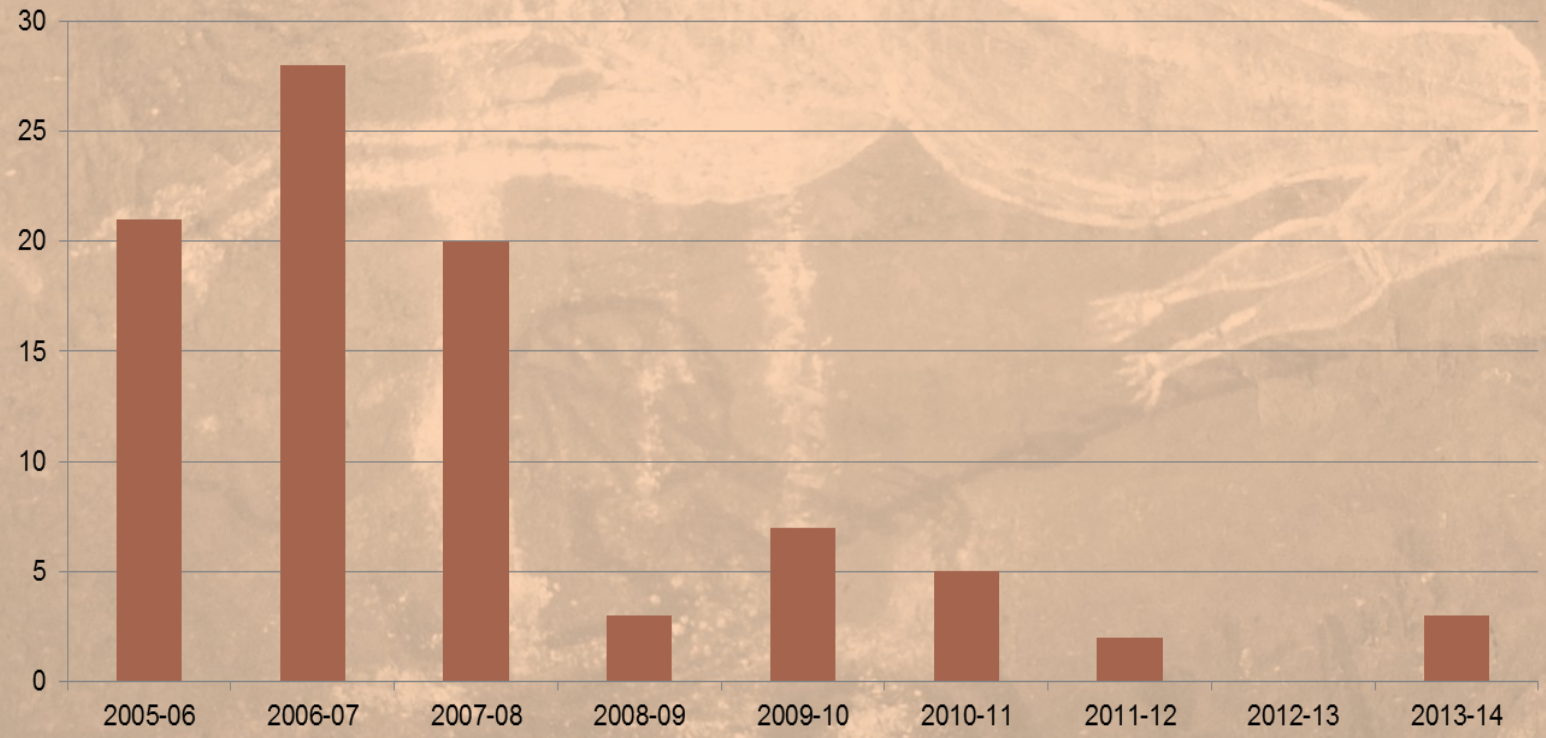


Strategy or S-tragedy?

National Heritage List 2005 - 2014



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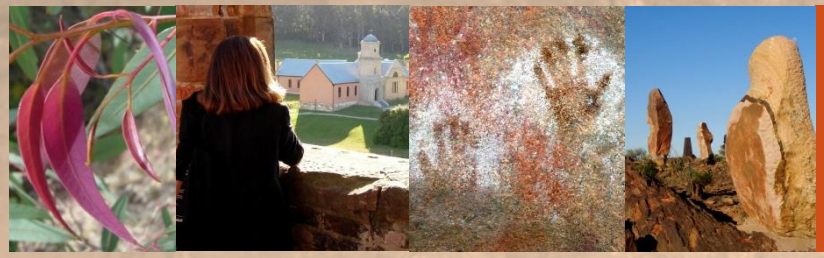


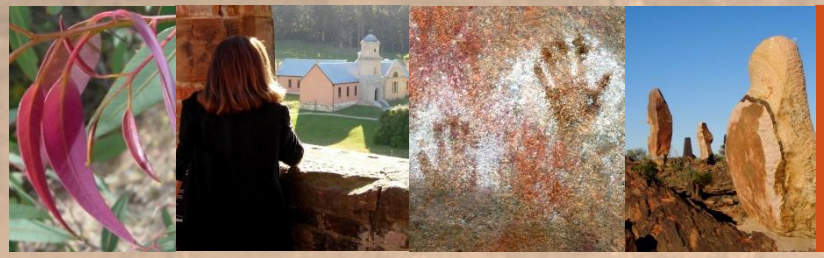
Strategy or S-tragedy?

Moree Baths and Swimming Pool?

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

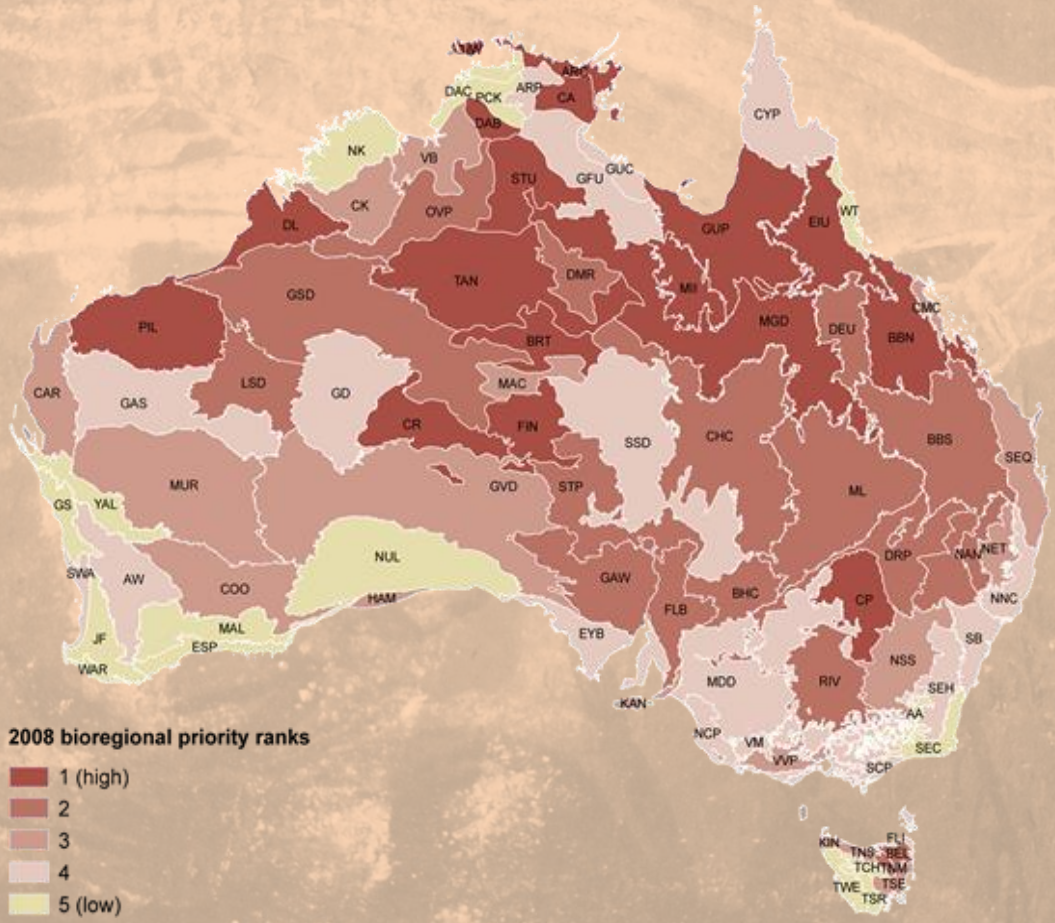
(Photo supplied by Ann Curthoys)

GML HERITAGE



Strategy or S-tragedy?

Priorities for bioregions, based on EPBC-listed species,



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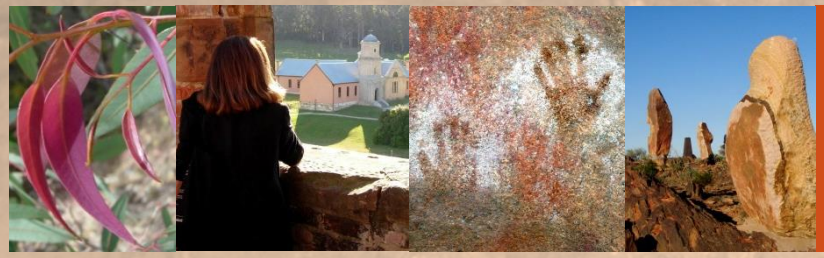
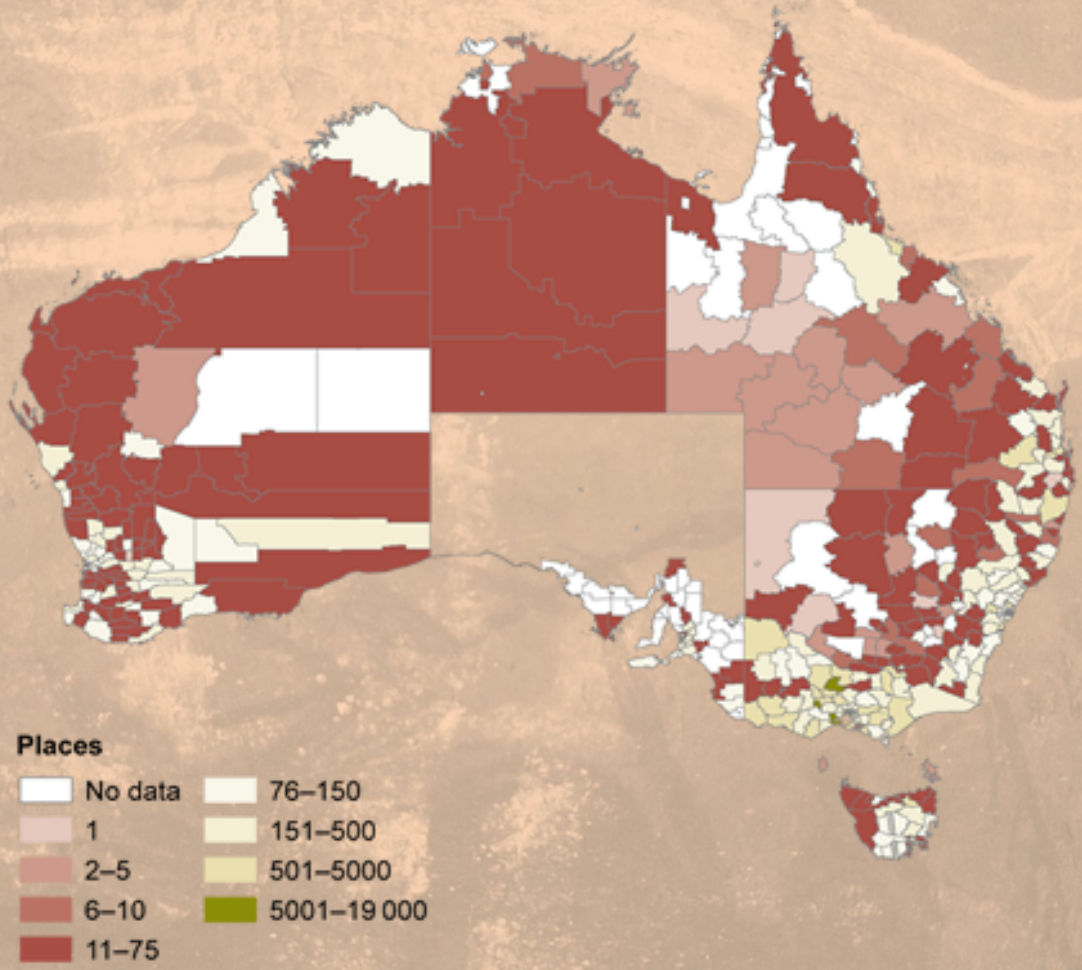


Strategy or S-tragedy?

Number of heritage places listed by local government area



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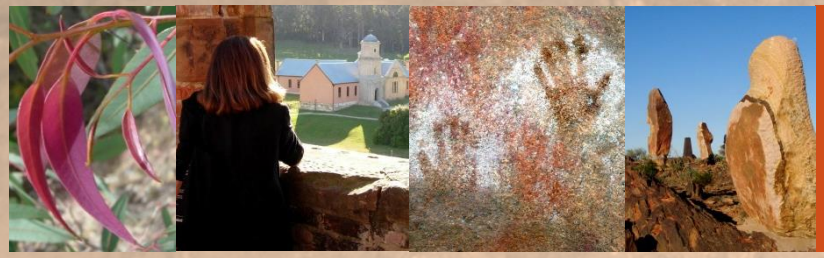

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Nationally aggregated data related to Indigenous heritage

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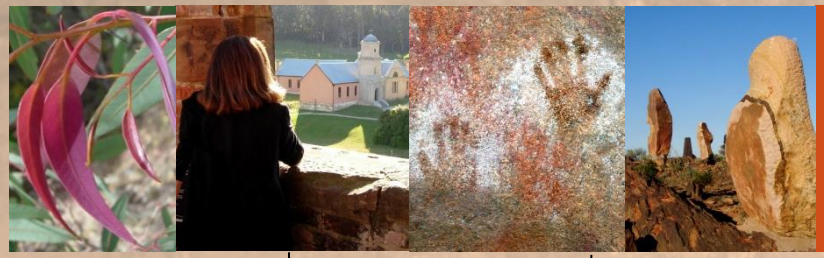

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Development Proposal

Feasibility Study

Announcement

Jobs and Prosperity

Benefit

Impact

EIS

Survey

Site Survey

Heritage Resource

Economic

Culture

Govt Decision

Heritage is "the problem"

Cultural Heritage

Archival Record

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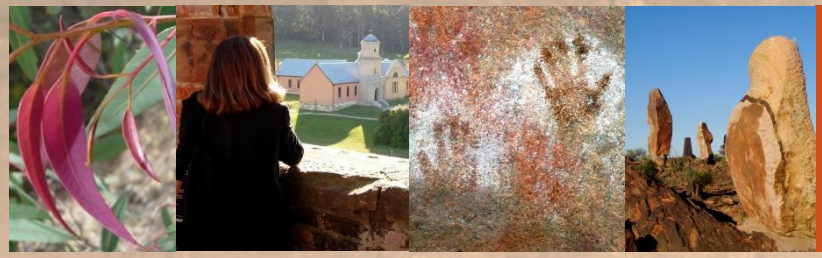
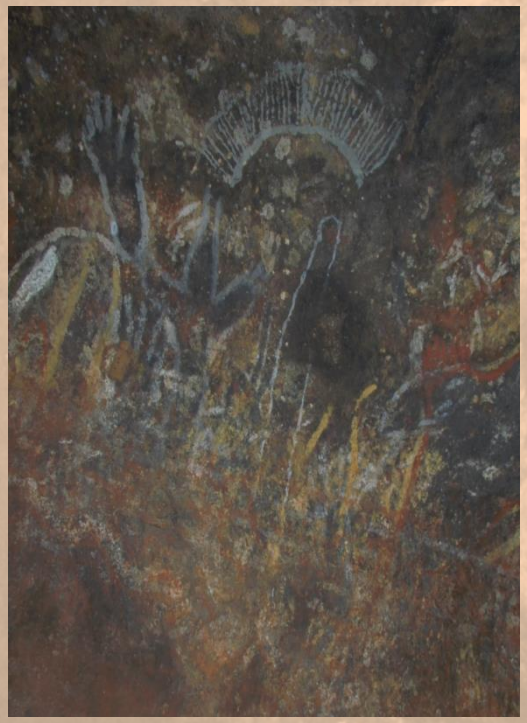


Strategy or S-tragedy?

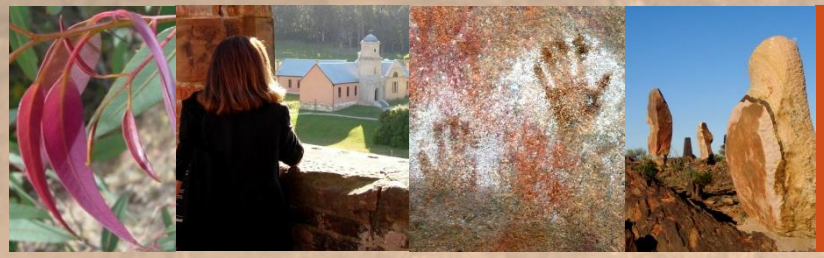
Incremental Destruction



… 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.

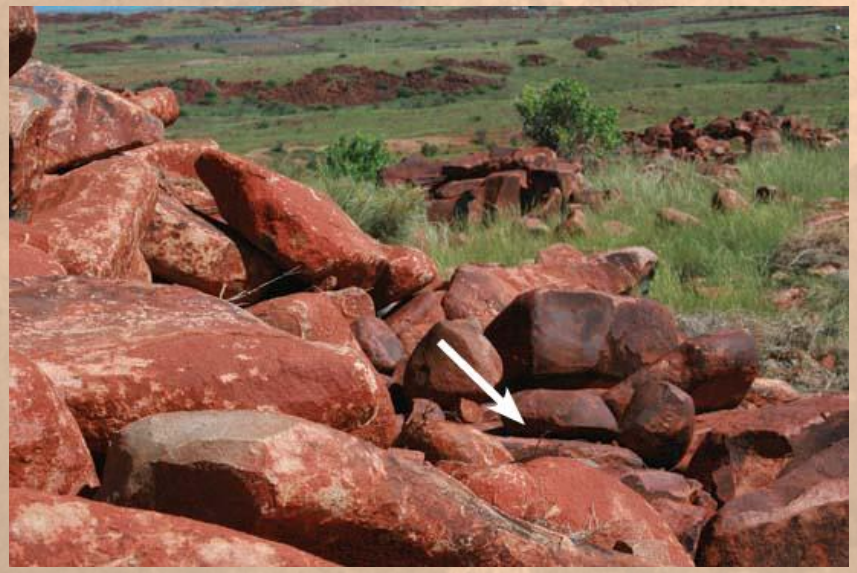
Source: Australian Senate Committee 2007

GML HERITAGE



Strategy or S-tragedy?

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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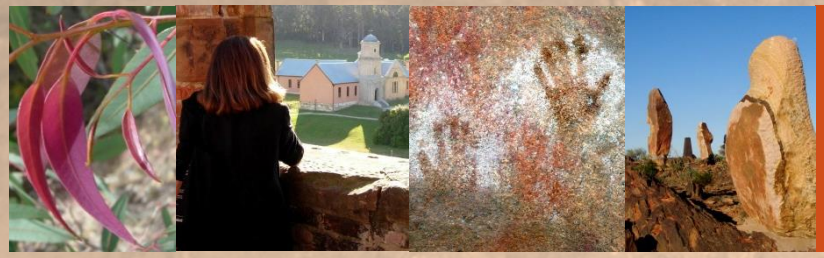

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Innovative partnerships . . .

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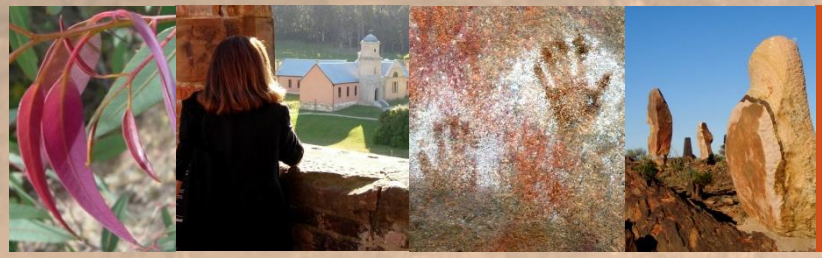

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Sustainability – another concrete example

Green star and NABERS - no points for heritage

A refurbished building will not have new concrete poured and therefore cannot achieve the credit for use of recycled content in structural concrete

- focus on operational energy performance
- embodied energy largely ignored
- heritage values completely ignored

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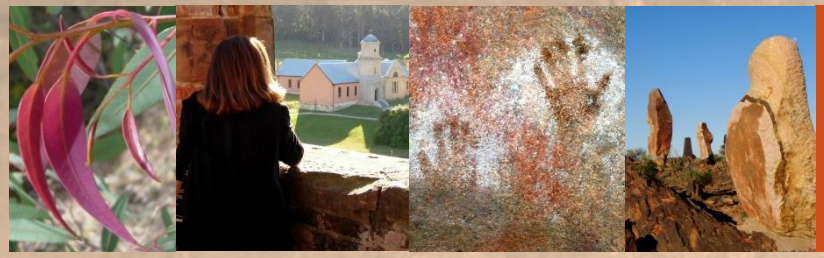

Strategy or S-tragedy?

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.

Source: SOE 2011

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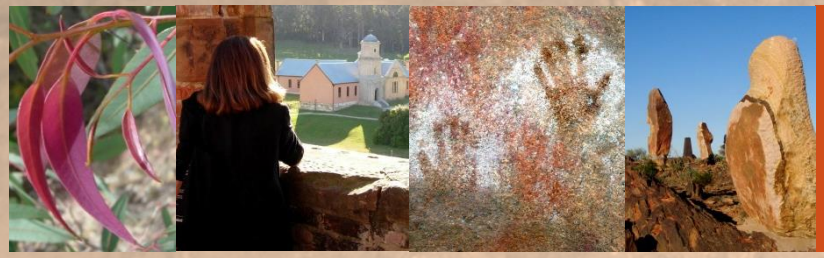

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Working on Country 2007 - ?

- c700 Indigenous rangers
- Relationship & obligations
- Opportunities to protect and manage
- Training and career development
- Really innovative partnerships
- Fighting carbon with fire

Sources: DSEWPAC 2012, Dean Yibarbuk

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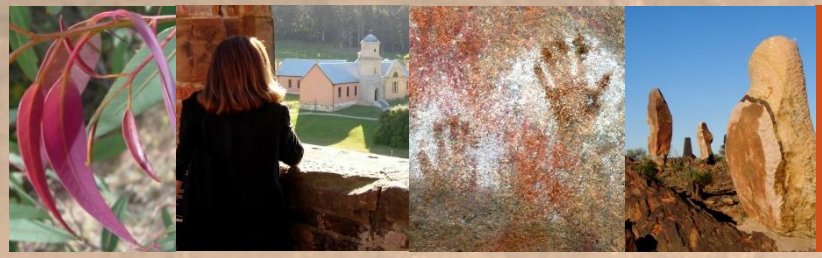

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Heritage trades training

- Conservation relies on heritage tradespeople with specialist skills
- Formal plus ‘on the job’ training
- Recent skills decline and ageing practitioners
- Looming crisis in cultural heritage conservation

- Source: Heritage Trades and Professional Training Project. Report to Heritage Chairs of Australia and New Zealand.

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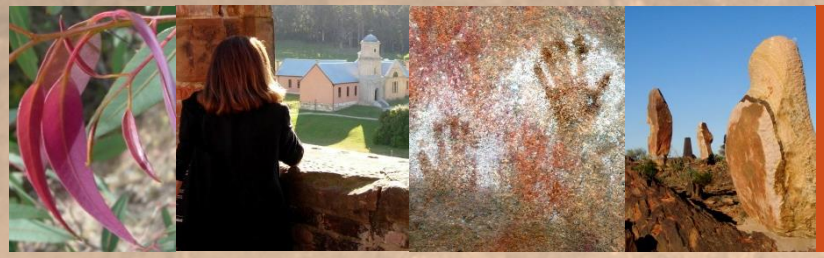

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Community engagement . . .

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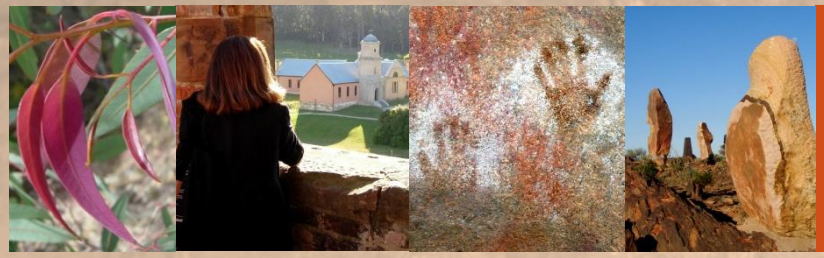

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Heritage as a public good

Private owners of heritage places provide public “goods” but this contribution is not reflected in available incentives.

For many private owners, the current use and enjoyment of their property are consistent with, indeed require, maintaining its heritage attributes

…..the wider cultural benefits of the place are provided to their community with little added costs, apart from the extra administrative cost involved with government identification, assessment and listing

Source: Conservation of Historic Heritage Places Productivity Commission Report July 2006

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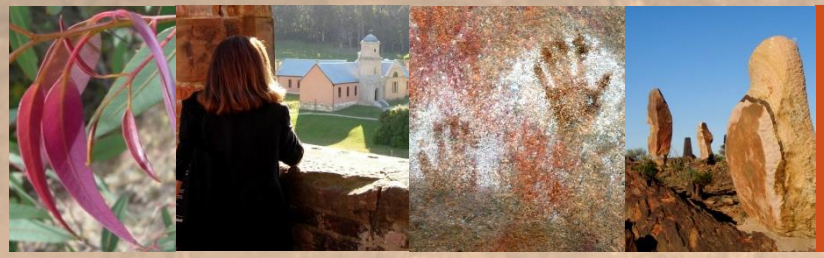

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Creative Community Focus

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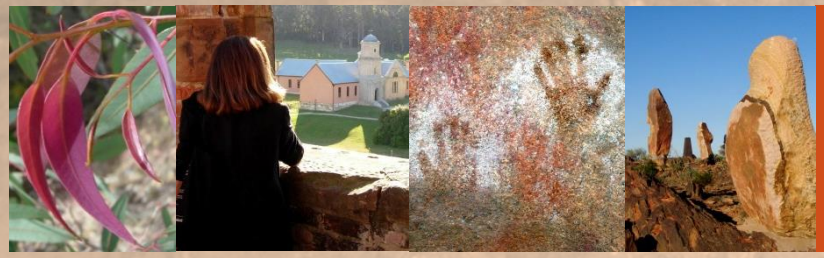

Strategy or S-tragedy?

Relationship and culture

- Activity, meaning and engagement
- Art, evolution and events
- Doing not being
- More than regulation
- A sense of place
- Enduring value

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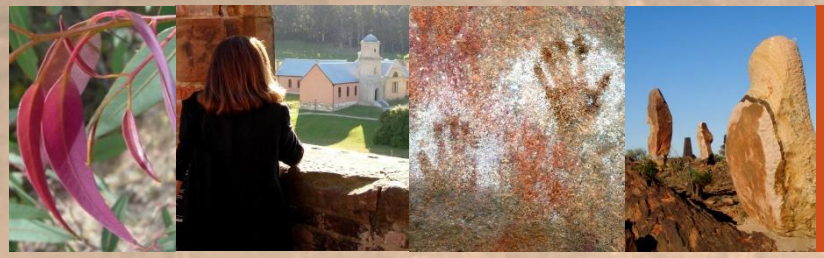

Strategy or S-tragedy?

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