

Geoheritage conservation in NSW: Lessons from the Past and Prospects for the Future

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The only record of the history of our planet lies in the rocks beneath our feet: rocks and the landscape are the memory of the Earth. Here, and only here, is it possible to trace the processes, changes and upheavals which have formed our planet over thousands of millions of years: the more recent part of this record, of course, includes the evolution of life, including Man. The record preserved in the rocks and landscape is unique, and much of it is surprisingly fragile. Today it is threatened more than ever. What is lost can never be recovered, and therefore there is an urgent need to understand and protect what remains of this our common heritage.



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Affiliated organisation of the IUIGS



ProGEO objectives are:

- To promote the conservation of Europe's rich heritage of landscape, rock, fossil and mineral sites
- To inform a wider public of the importance of this patrimony, and of its relevance to modern society
- To advise, in our countries and in Europe as a whole, those responsible for protecting our Earth heritage
- To organise and participate in research into all aspects of planning, science, management and interpretation that are relevant to geoconservation
- To involve all countries in Europe, exchanging ideas and information in an open forum, and taking a full part in conservation in a global setting, including the formulation of conventions and legislation
- To work towards an integrated European listing of outstanding geoscience sites, thus enabling full support to be given to the work of other international bodies, as well as to national initiatives towards site protection
- To achieve an integrated approach to nature conservation, promoting a holistic approach to the conservation of biological and physical phenomena

If you share these aims join us and work with [ProGEO](#)

"Geoheritage" – a new scientific journal, OUT NOW!

Please read all the necessary information on:

<http://www.springer.com/earth+sciences/geology/journal/12371>

Reduced subscription rates for ProGEO members! See Message board above.

[Webmaster](#)



Lessons from Polska



Gora Zborow



Gleboka

1. We need a local NGO to lobby and build a constituency
2. We must educate, educate, educate
3. We need legislative support
4. We need the right basic and applied science
5. We need money, training, jobs and people



We Need a local NGO to lobby and build a constituency

- › 1 The GSA is too conflicted to carry out this role
- › 2 The strength of Progeo is that it has highly-respected professors of geology and geography as members. Geoconservation has not received this sort of support in Australia in the past, we need to find a way to build this.
- › 3 The Australia version must learn from both Progeo and from peak Australian bioconservation bodies

**SIGN UP
NOW?**

We must educate, educate, educate

- 1 The public is not disinterested in our cause, they are just deprived of information, we lack the TV shows, guidebooks etc that are available for Fauna and Flora.
 - 2 Basic earth science should be part of the initial training of DECCW staff
 - 3 We need high profile champions who are supported
 - 4 We need to revitalize Earth sciences in NSW Schools, as both geology (EES) and geography are dying.
 - 5 We need to strongly support the role Earth Science at the Australian Museum
 - 6 We need to capitalise on Earth Week etc
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We need legislative support

- › We are here today because of changes in the NPWS Act
- › If geoconservation is to occur beyond the Service estate and to be considered in the environmental assessment process then a geodiversity head of power is needed in the EPA Act.

This is a radical proposal

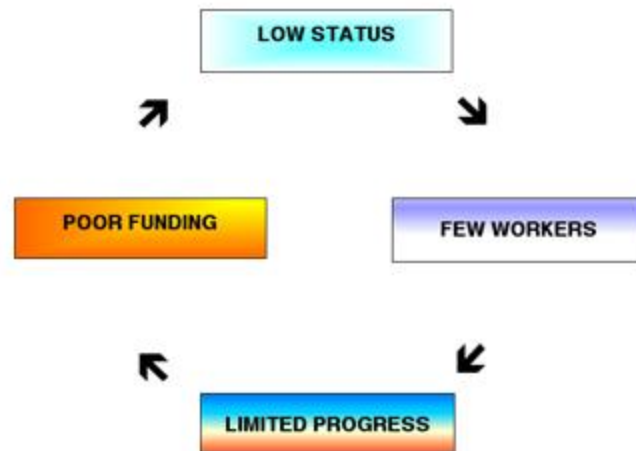


We need the right basic and applied science

- › People working in geoconservation and geotourism need:-
 - A good basic knowledge of earth science and of local geology & geomorphology
 - A working knowledge of the geoconservation process:-
 - identification, documentation, conservation, management & interpretation
 - A working knowledge of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Process

 - › We also need specific basic research to inform identification, documentation, conservation, management & interpretation. Just as there is a discipline of Conservation Biology there is also a discipline of Conservation Earth Science. The needs of interpretation will also require specific basic research so that questions from the general public and professional interpreters can be answered.
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We need money, training, jobs and people



- › Universities won't run courses unless there are students
- › Students won't take courses unless there are perceived job prospects
- › Jobs require funding

Many fields relevant to geoconservation have few, no, or reducing numbers of practitioners

Not only are experts aging there is little or no replacement

The KGU and the Survey Initiatives are a good start



So lets go!

LOSSES SINCE EARLY 1990s



- X Several sites destroyed or degraded
- X GSA Sites & Monuments Sub Committee
- X National Estate NSW Advisory Panel
- X Register of the National Estate

No One Watching, No Moral Force = No Protection

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

- *No One Watching, No Moral Force = No Protection*
- *Preservation without management is death*
- *No legal basis, no protection*
- *No legal basis, no jobs*
- *Fine Words Without Power are useless*
- *Conservation requires a constituency*

Preservation without management is death



- › ONE OF OUR FIRST FOSSIL RESERVES
- › NO TRUSTEES, REGULATIONS OR MANAGEMENT
- › LITTLE KNOWN UNPRESERVED SITE IN BETTER CONDITION
- › SPECIMEN SEEN IN ROCK SHOP IN POLAND, JULY 2010
- › Crown Lands Reserves in general have not been a great success as their PURPOSE is not enforceable!



Class Question!

Here is a well known view. Identify the features protected by World Heritage and the Federal EPBC Act.

Environmental & Planning laws in most Australian States require proponents and consent authorities to consider: -

- ❖ Biodiversity
- ❖ Cultural Heritage
- ❖ Aboriginal Heritage

UNLESS THERE IS SOME OTHER LEGAL BASIS,
e.g. Inclusion as objective in plans by council,
GEOHERITAGE DOES NOT GET CONSIDERATION.

EPA LEGISLATION IN AUSTRALIA HAS THUS PRODUCED

- ❖ JOBS FOR BIOLOGISTS
 - ❖ JOBS FOR HERITAGE ARCHITECTS ETC
 - ❖ JOBS FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS
 - ❖ almost **NO JOBS FOR GEOLOGISTS**
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A great deal of effort went into including geodiversity in: -

- › *Australian Natural Heritage Charter* (1996)
- › *Protecting Local Heritage Places* (1998)
- › Spectacle Island Declaration (2000)
- › *Australian Natural Heritage Charter* Second Edition (2002)
- › *Protecting Natural Heritage* (2003)

but with little effect, why would councils etc. follow a VOLUNTARY standard when they were REQUIRED to follow Environment, Planning and Heritage Legislation

Conservation requires a constituency

Biological and Cultural Heritage conservation work because they have they powerful constituencies and NGOs

From the 1940s nature conservationists and academic biologists in Australia worked hard to establish and maintain their influence AND IT HAS WORKED

Two areas of geoconservation in Australia do have established constituencies: -

Sandy Beaches

The Surfrider Foundation

Caves

The Australian Speleological Foundation

and it has worked for them!
