

World heritage



Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is UNESCO World Heritage listed for both natural and cultural values. In 1994, the park became the second national park in the world to be listed as a cultural landscape.

UNESCO World Heritage sites are places of outstanding universal value. Australia was one of the first countries in the world to sign the World Heritage Convention, which came into force in 1975. More than 100 countries are now signatories to the Convention, with 252 sites around the world listed as natural World Heritage Areas.

Aims of the World Heritage Convention

- Promote cooperation among nations to protect world-wide heritage which is of such international value that its conservation is a concern for all people.
- Commit signatory nations to help in the identification, protection, conservation and preservation of World Heritage properties.
- Encourage signatory nations, with international assistance where appropriate, to 'adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programs'.
- Oblige signatory nations to refrain from 'any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage' and to 'take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures' necessary for its protection.

Australia has its own World Heritage Conservation Act 1983 and it is the only nation to have enacted specific legislation to protect World Heritage Areas.

World Heritage Listing does not affect property rights. Ownership remains as it was before listing and state and local laws still apply. The areas do not become government property, nor does control pass into the hands of any international body or foreign power.

The Australian Government makes nominations for the World Heritage List in consultation with state and territory governments.

The nominations are considered by the World Heritage Committee, on which Australia has served regularly since 1976.

Natural Landscape

In 1987, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park received World Heritage listing as a natural property representing ongoing geological, biological and ecological processes as well as exhibiting 'natural beauty with an exceptional combination of natural and cultural elements'. This recognised the western scientific value of the park.

A heritage listing ensures Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park remains a world class destination for both its cultural and natural heritage



CREDIT: Minyma tjuta tjitji tjuta mai wiru mantjini – Women and children collecting good bush foods. © Kunmanara Taylor, Lillian Inkamala, Pollyanne Mumu, Theresa Taylor, Dulcie Moneymoon, Edith Richards/Copyright Agency. Unless otherwise indicated copyright in this guide, including photographs, is owned by the Director of National Parks.

Cultural landscape

In 1994 the park was nominated under 'cultural landscape' because of its combined work of nature and of man. This noted an interaction between humankind and its natural environment with powerful religious, artistic, and cultural associations. Also recognised was the park's plan of management toward the centrality of Anangu scientific knowledge and traditional land management practices. The nomination noted land degradation had occurred over the last 50 years and had since been reversed once practices were re-established.

Anangu view of World Heritage

The listing represents years of work by Anangu to assert their role as custodians of their traditional lands. It is a significant internationally recognised victory for traditional owners confirming the validity of Tjukurpa and Anangu culture in support of park management.

The independent International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) assessed Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and recognised that Tjukurpa is a religious philosophy that links Anangu to their environment. Anangu culture is therefore an integral part of the landscape by perspective and interaction. This is one of the reasons Anangu want Australians to refer to the lands of the park by traditional Uluru and Kata Tjuta names, rather than non-Anangu names.

Implications for park management

The World Heritage listings of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park highlights 'living culture' alongside its unique ecosystem. Emphasis is placed on ensuring Tjukurpa is a vital component of all aspects of park management.

A key objective is to use Anangu scientific knowledge and land management practices to expand and develop the park. This is to ensure Anangu knowledge is the primary interpretation of the park. It is important to ensure non-Anangu interpretations complement Anangu interpretation, to support and enforce existing policies and regulations regarding visitor management.

Effects on tourism

The World Heritage listings of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park ensure the park remains a world-class destination for both its cultural and natural heritage.

Visitors will continue to have an authentic cultural experience and leave knowing that management is according to cultural practices dating back tens of thousands of years.

Central Australian tourist numbers are maintained this way with many economic benefits.

Information on World Heritage convention and properties at is found at: en.unesco.org/ or at environment.gov.au/heritage/about/world/management-australias-world-heritage-listed

SHARE YOUR ULURU ADVENTURES!

 @OfficialUluru  @SeeUluru