**Who will be the partners in the Geopark?**

Strong partnerships between stakeholders are essential to the success of UNESCO Global Geoparks. At a minimum, this should include the local governments around the Warrumbungle National Park (Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shires), Regional Development Australia (RDA) Orana, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Siding Spring Observatory, and local indigenous communities. As we progress our application, we expect that other partners will choose to join us, including local and regional tourism organisations.

**How does a Geopark happen?**

UNESCO accepts applications for Global Geopark status in November each year. The Steering Committee aims to submit an Expression of Interest to UNESCO by July 2017 for the 2017 intake, and then the final application will be submitted for assessment in November. But there is a lot of work to be done before this can happen.

Extensive consultation with stakeholders and the wider community is an important part of this process, along with gathering information about the landscape, its natural and built history, biodiversity and culture. From this information and discussions with the community, prospects can be identified to expand on current offerings and develop new economic opportunities.

**Warrumbungle Pre-Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark**

A shared project of the Coonamble, Gilgandra and Warrumbungle Shires

**For information** contact Aileen Bell at Warrumbungle Shire Council on 6849 2000 or to learn more about other geoparks visit www: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth or www: globalgeoparks.org sciences/unesco-global-geoparks/
Why the Warrumbungles?
Quite often we undervalue the things that identify us as different; if fact we are good at undervaluing the things we have on our doorstep. The rugged peaks and spires of the Warrumbungles are visible from the neighbouring shires of Coonamble, Gilgandra and Warrumbungle and are an internationally acclaimed tourist attraction steeped in geological history. UNESCO has invited the Warrumbungle communities to consider applying for GLOBAL GEOPARK status. If successful, the area would become one of Australia’s first UNESCO Global Geoparks and one of the world’s largest.

What is a UNESCO Global Geopark?
A UNESCO Global Geopark is a unified geographical area featuring one or more sites of international geological significance; think Warrumbungles, think Macquarie Marshes, think the Pilliga and Coolah Tops National Parks. An important aspect of a geopark is that the site is managed as part of the surrounding landscape rather than separate from it. This holistic approach incorporates protection of these key sites, education and sustainable development. While a geopark must demonstrate geological heritage of international significance, the purpose of a geopark is to explore, develop and celebrate the links between that geological heritage and all other aspects of the areas natural, cultural and intangible heritages. It is about reconnecting human society at all levels to the planet we all call home and to celebrate how our planet and it’s 4,600 million year long history has shaped every aspect of our lives and our societies. The UNESCO Global Geopark brand opens doors in tourism and economic growth. Geotourism stimulates new sources of revenue through new and innovative local enterprises, creating jobs, educational opportunities and other flow-on effects, all while the geological resources of the area are protected. Becoming a UNESCO Global Geopark takes a “bottom up” approach. It gives communities the opportunity to develop partnerships and promote their area’s geological processes, features, periods of time, historical themes linked to geology or outstanding beauty. In a nutshell, it is about people and place; landscape and culture. A UNESCO Global Geopark enables and celebrates all forms of economic development including exploration, mining and agriculture.

Where are these geoparks?
In 2015 UNESCO approved a new label to identify UNESCO Global Geoparks. Currently there are 120 UNESCO Global Geoparks across the world, and another 19 Aspiring UNESCO Global Geoparks that are in the process of applying for designation. Most of the designated geoparks are in Europe/United Kingdom and Asia – China alone has more than 30, but despite Australia’s rich geological heritage, currently there are none in Australia.

Network of international Geoparks in 2015

What is Geotourism?
Geotourism is about much more than just people looking at rocks. It aims to foster sustainable tourism based on landscapes, including protecting, communicating and promoting geological heritage, building communities and working with a wide range of people. Activities that achieve this can include visits to geological features, use of geotrails and lookouts, guided tours, geotours, geotrails and other geotours and other geotours and geotours and other geotours and other geotours and other geotours. It is about tapping into a large and rapidly growing overseas market seeking high value and branded nature-based tourism experiences. Geotourism offers the opportunity to reinvigorate the domestic traveller market so that the whole community benefits from packaging and branding the current tourism product and experience using the landscape and geological factors to enhance economic growth.