Geotourism, Geotrails and Geoparks
A Regional Development Opportunity for Australia

Current Status

The Australian Geoscience Council Inc (AGC) is the Peak Council of geoscientists in Australia. It represents eight major Australian geoscientific societies with a total membership of over 8,000 individuals comprising industry, government and academic professionals in the fields of geology, geophysics, geochemistry, mineral and petroleum exploration, environmental geoscience, hydrogeology and geological hazards.

Under its current 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, as a geoscience advocacy opportunity, the AGC has decided to promote, and in association with the Geoscience Working Group (GWG), to facilitate a draft National Geotourism strategy to accommodate the orderly development of major geotourism projects and activities in line with overseas trends and domestic regional development imperatives. The GWG is a body representing all the state and territory geological surveys as well as the national Geoscience Australia agency. The AGC sees the development of a staged and incremental approach of this draft strategy as being essential to gain government endorsement at all levels. The development of a National Ecotourism Strategy in 1994 and subsequent state/territory based initiatives is considered as a particularly useful precedent and guide. Of significance internationally is the development of geotourism in Australia that lags behind many countries' approach, notwithstanding the fact Australia has taken the initiatives in a number of areas in development of the concepts underpinning geotourism.

AGC recognizes that geotourism is a significant emerging and growing global phenomenon. Geotourism has been defined by a key AGC member, the Geological Society of Australia (GSA) as 'tourism which focuses on an area's geology and landscape as the basis for providing visitor engagement, learning and enjoyment'. It has links with adventure tourism, cultural tourism and ecotourism, but is not synonymous with any of these forms of tourism, although in broad terms it actually embraces them all (Appendix A).

Geotourism can be delivered through the development of both 'geotrails' and 'geoparks'. Whilst 'geotrail' development has gained favour from governments in Australia, the same cannot be claimed to date for the establishment of 'geoparks'.

Geotrails

A geotrail can deliver geotourism experiences through a journey underpinned by an area's geology and landscape. Geotrails are therefore best constructed around routes currently used by tourists i.e. geotrails should form logical journeys linking accommodation destinations.

Geotrails can comprise roads, walking and biking trails, and disused railway easements.

Geotrails should meld the geological heritage features of a region with a cohesive story and should incorporate and package in the biodiversity and cultural components (including mining heritage) of the region through which the geotrail traverses.

Geotrails do offer the advantages of having universal appeal, and do not compete with or impact on land management/access issues. They are relatively easy to establish and represent a very cost-effective means of enhancing regional development;

For example, Western Australia's Mid West Development Commission (MWDC) is working with seven shire councils to establish WA's first major geotourism development to be built on a geotrail model, focused on

the Murchison sub-region of WA. The MWDC believes that the ancient Murchison geology provides the ideal platform for unique, nature based tourism experiences of global significance, particularly to the 'experience seeker / dedicated discoverer' market. The Mid West Tourism Development Strategy (2014) concluded that the region's iconic nature based tourist attractions were not developed to their potential and that its visitor appeal was not fully realised. The Strategy identified geotourism in the Murchison sub region as a potential 'game changing' tourism initiative, with capacity to help the region realise its potential as a major tourism destination in its own right.

More information about geotrails is detailed in Appendix B.

Geoparks

Geotourism attractions are now being developed around the world primarily as a sustainable development tool for the development of local and regional communities. A major vehicle for such development is through the concept of 'geoparks'. A geopark is a unified area with geological heritage of particular significance and where that **heritage is being used to promote the sustainable development of the local communities who live there.**

Unlike World Heritage Areas and national parks, geoparks can embrace both protected and any resource extraction areas, focusing on sustainable development objectives. Geoparks also focus on community engagement and ownership. In Australia, national parks focus generally only on biodiversity and more often than not with insufficient attention given to geological heritage.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, **unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.** Whilst World Heritage Areas and national parks are created in perpetuity, the status of global geoparks are reviewed by UNESCO every 4 years.

While a geopark must demonstrate geological heritage of particular 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. Geoparks are both a regional development concept as well as a branding tool. They achieve these goals through conservation, education and geotourism. **Geoparks can comprise both protected and non-protected areas and enable and celebrate sustainable development of primary industries such as mining, agriculture and forestry.**

The socio-economic benefits of geopark development include the following.

1. Measurable economic benefits - additional visitors, direct and regional economic output, household income and wages, and local employment.
2. Through establishment of a management entity, higher level of centralised coordination in areas of product development, travel and hospitality services, tourism promotion/branding.
3. Maximisation of sustainable development and management of 'over tourism, an emerging issue in Tasmania.
4. Provides a framework for focus on the 10 UNESCO Topics e.g. culture, education, climate change, geoconservation, sustainable development etc.
5. Through its defined mission, community engagement is maximised and measured.

Geoparks can choose to evolve through a series of levels from 'aspiring', 'national', 'regional' (e.g. European or Asia-Pacific Regions) to 'global'. There are now hundreds of geoparks around the world. Support to

individual geoparks is offered through the Global Geoparks Network Bureau which is currently representing 140 members from 38 countries. The original target of the Global Geoparks Network is establishing 500 geoparks around the world. The number is growing at a rate of about 10 new global geoparks per year. On 21st February 2019, the 4th open session of the International Geosciences and Geoparks Programme took place in Paris and determined that the new aspiring geopark applications for the UNESCO Global Geoparks to be evaluated during 2019 included 14 new applications (of which seven were from countries in our region i.e. Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, South Korea and China) and four were extensions to existing geoparks.

UNESCO member countries are entitled to nominate a maximum of two applications per year. During 2017, two Pre-Aspiring Global Geopark proposals had been advanced in Australia by local government authorities in Queensland (the Etheridge proposal) and in New South Wales (the Warrumbungle proposal). Under the UNESCO Global Geopark operational guidelines, applications are only accepted annually between 1 October and 30 November. Before any formal application can be made, the proponent of any UNESCO Global Geopark must submit an expression of interest, usually before the 1st of July, via the official channel as defined by the Australian National Commission for UNESCO or government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, involving, if applicable, a 'National Geoparks Committee'. In the case of Australia, the official channel is the UNESCO representative in Australia, and it is currently understood that any application needs to be reviewed by designated agencies in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade once approval of the respective State or Territory Governments has been obtained.

The Etheridge proposal was suspended last year because of community resistance to the concept of a geopark (perceived to be a mechanism for environmental protection) and the involvement with UNESCO (an international agency which is perceived to be seen as implementing additional levels of environmental controls and influence). After considering the views of the Geological Survey of NSW (GSNSW), the project Steering Committee decided last year to abandon plans to nominate for a UNESCO Global Geopark, and instead, accept the offer of the GSNSW to assist in developing an alternative geotourism strategy for the region.

In 2018, following consultations with the national government geoscience agency, Geoscience Australia, it was recognised that a national approach was needed to better manage major geotourism projects to maximise these indicative benefits and to take account of current perceived government and community group concerns.

More information about geoparks is detailed in Appendix C.

Geotourism Projects and the Proposed Draft National Geotourism Strategy

Currently the AGC is of the view that the establishment of a draft national geotourism strategy offers the best means of ensuring an orderly development of geotourism on the basis of having first gained government support and endorsement, recognising that each state and territory has individual needs and priorities. One of the issues under consideration is that a national geotourism strategy could establish a national set of administrative procedures for 'georegional' assessment to provide for potential geopark nomination at state and national levels (e.g. Rottnest Island Conservation area) and, as approved by governments, at a UNESCO Global Geopark level.

Angus M Robinson
Member, Geotourism Forum of Ecotourism Australia Ltd, and Coordinator, National Geotourism Strategy, Australian Geoscience Council

Tel: 0418 488 340

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PRIMARY ECOTOURISM AUSTRALIA CONTACT DETAILS

Rod Hillman
Chief Executive
Ecotourism Australia Ltd
1A/88 Buckland Road
NUNDAH Qld 4012
Tel: 07 3256 6777
Fax: 07 3256 6488
Email: ceo@ecotourism.org.au
web: http://www.ecotourism.org.au

Attachments

Appendix A
Definition and Benefits of Geotourism

In summary, geotourism

- adds considerable content value to traditional nature-based tourism (the primary motivator of travel to Australia) as well as cultural tourism, inclusive of indigenous tourism, thus completing the holistic embrace of 'A' (abiotic – landscape and geology) plus 'B' (biotic – flora and fauna) plus 'C' (culture) aspects. It empathises an approach of increasing interest to protected area managers, particularly given the experience gained from the now discontinued Australian National Landscape programme;
- celebrates geoheritage and promotes awareness of and better understanding of the geosciences - of increasing interest to geological survey organisations;
- contributes to regional development imperatives in areas experiencing social and economic difficulties through increased tourist visitation, particularly from overseas – of increasing interest to local government authorities (LGAs) and state based, regional development commissions and agencies;
- creates professional and career development for geoscientists – of particular interest to the AGC and constituent member societies;
- provides a means of highlighting and promoting public interest in mining heritage – of particular interest to The Australasian Institute of Mining & Metallurgy, the Australasian Mining History Association and the Australian Institute of Geoscientists;
- provides the means of increasing public access to geological information through a range of new information and communication technology (ICT) driven applications e.g. smartphones, drones, 3D visualisation, augmented reality etc. – of increasing interest to geological survey organisations and visitor information centres; and
- Engenders an increasing awareness of the importance in geology as a fundamental science that has had and will continue to have major impacts on civilisations.

Geotourism promotes tourism through visits to geological features (geosites), use of 'geotrails' and viewpoints, guided tours, geo-activities (such as geological time trails, fossil walks, rock gardens etc.), and patronage of visitor centres and museums. Geotourism attractions are now being developed around the world primarily as a sustainable development tool for the development of local and regional communities. A major vehicle for such development is through the concept of geoparks as exemplified by the UNESCO Global Geopark program. A geopark is a unified area with geological heritage of outstanding significance and where that heritage is being used to promote the sustainable development of the local communities who live there.

In 2013 a 'proof of concept' project promoting geoscience awareness on the Sapphire Coast of New South Wales was launched. GeoTreat, a smartphone-based application, brings to life some 19 geosites forming part of a key 'geojourney' along a section of the coastline south of Narooma and extending into Victoria (a national landscape region known as 'Australia's Coastal Wilderness').

Also in 2013, Cartoscope Pty Ltd, a NSW tourism publication company with links to the mining and exploration industry, received a TQUAL Grant under the Tourism Quality Projects program. This grant from the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism supported innovative, sustainable and high quality tourism projects and enabled Cartoscope to produce some 100,000 copies of a NSW Geotourism map identifying some 96 sites in NSW which are significant geological sites, museums or tours. There are short descriptions of the geology with map references and location flags on the map so the sites can be easily

found. Both public and school teacher responses to the geotourism map and the media publicity has been very positive and has well exceeded expectations to the extent that a second edition was published and launched in 2018, and which received significant sponsorship from the NRMA, the AGC, the Geological Survey of NSW, various professional societies, Geoscience Australia, a number of Local Government Authorities amongst other sponsors.

Geotourism Resources can be located at:

- https://www.gsa.org.au/Public/Geotourism/Public/Geotourism/Geotourism%20and%20Geotrails.aspx?hkey=754eb036-9266-452e-95b8-e135a1db04d1
- http://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/index.php/geotourism-industry-groups/

A presentation delivered to the International Workshop on the Business of Geotourism and Geoparks held in Perth on 14th May 2018 summarises a current status of 'Geotourism Developments in Australia'. https://www.slideshare.net/leisuresolutions/geotourism-developments-in-australia

Engagement with the Tourism Industry through Ecotourism Australia Ltd and FACET.

Progress has also been made in gaining some support from the nature-based tourism operators. The peak nature-based tourism industry association, Ecotourism Australia Ltd (EA) established in November 2013 a new industry grouping, the Geotourism Forum, to advocate and nurture the development and growth of geotourism recognising that it is sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing the earth's geological features in a way that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation, and is locally beneficial. The purpose of the Geotourism Forum is to advise EA of how best geotourism can be advanced and nurtured having regard to the EA's interest in inspiring environmentally sustainable and culturally responsible tourism.

In late 2014, EA communicated with the Hon Greg Hunt MP, the then Australian Government Minister for Environment in response to his expressed need to understand better how a coordinated review of the opportunities that could be achieved through Australia embracing the concept of geotourism and the introduction of geoparks, as well as advice that could assist government in the delineation and assessment of geopark proposals. The Minister subsequently advised EA that, after reviewing the national policy UNESCO's Global Geopark Network, he was 'positively disposed' towards Australia joining this initiative subject to a number of funding conditions. The Minister also indicated that he needed to consider how best to progress Australia's involvement in this initiative having sought the views of state and territory environment ministers and the Australian Local Government Association. It should be noted that Minister Hunt no longer has portfolio responsibility for matters relating to geopark development.

The Geotourism Forum, co-convened with the GSA Geotourism Standing Committee, a major geotourism workshop as part of the 2015 Global Eco Conference held at Rottnest Island, Western Australia, at the 2016 Global Eco Conference held in Hobart and with another workshop held in Adelaide in 2017.

At the opening address to Global Eco 2018, Adelaide, in November 2018, the Hon Ian Hunter MLC, then SA Minister for Sustainability, Environment & Conservation, stated that "geotourism is (also) an emerging market that South Australia is especially well placed to cater for, with megafauna fossils at the World Heritage Naracoorte Caves, evidence of the world's earliest animals in the Flinders Ranges, and stunning geological formations in parks like the Gawler Ranges, Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges, and the ice-age gem of Hallett Cove right on Adelaide's doorstep."

In May 2018, in association with Geoparks WA, the Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco-tourism Inc (FACET)

convened an International Workshop in Perth that focused on the business of geotourism and geoparks.

Engagement with Local Government/ Regional Development Agencies through SEGRA

Geotourism has been featured at annual conferences of 'Sustainable Economic Growth Regional Australia' (SEGRA) since 2012; with the GSA Geotourism Standing Committee and the EA Geotourism Forum convening the inaugural geotourism workshop at the 2014 conference at Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. SEGRA 2015 was held in Bathurst, New South Wales, an event which saw the genesis of the Etheridge and Warrumbungle global geopark proposals. SEGRA 2016 was convened in Albany, Western Australia, at SEGRA 2017 in Port Augusta in South Australia, and at SEGRA 2018 in Mackay, North Queensland. In August 2019, SEGRA will be held at Barooga in the NSW Riverina and arrangements are being made by the GSC for the Geotourism Spotlight Session to be coordinated by the Geological Survey of NSW with a focus on 'public geoscience' outreach, of which geotourism is a key component.

Appendix B
Geotrails

A geotrail can deliver geotourism experiences through a journey linked by an area's geology and landscape as the basis for providing visitor engagement, learning and enjoyment.

At the SEGRA (Sustainable Economic Growth Regional Australia) conference convened in Bathurst in October 2015, the opening presentation by the workshop convenor and GSA Geotourism Standing Committee Chair addressed the development of a formative Red Centre Geotrail of which Uluru is now a global iconic attraction. Dan Cove, formerly Operations Manager of Jenolan Caves explained how geotrails can offer genuine potential for both adding new dimensions to a regional visitor experience and as a tool for encouraging extended travel time within a region. In his presentation, Ian D Lewis, Honorary Director of the Kanawinka Geotrail, illustrated how the geopark promotes rural tourism and landscape care for the many volcanoes, famous caves and coastline features across the area of Western Victoria and South-Eastern South Australia, encouraging visitors to select from a number of highway trails through the region via accommodation hubs. Ken Moule, Chief Executive of Global GBM, showed how the contribution of technology to the tourism experience, opened the way for a new regional imitative 'around map enabled' mobile apps to economically promote attractions and enhance the visitor experience.

Phil Smart, President and Founder, Gondwana Coast Fossil Walk Inc. illustrated how, that in recent years, the geotourism potential of the Ulladulla rock platforms had been developed by his team of volunteers into a successful tourist attraction. His project, including the Brodie Park Geological Time Walk, was awarded in 2016 the best tourist attraction on the NSW South Coast.

In summing up, the workshop convenor said that the concept of geotrails has provided an alternative and attractive approach to nurturing regional development by celebrating geotourism, geological and mining heritage. Geotrails can offer genuine potential by both adding a new dimension to a regional visitor experience and as a tool for encouraging extended travel time within the region.

The development of geotrails was also discussed at the Geotourism Workshop forming part of the Global Eco Conference of Ecotourism Australia held at Rottnest Island in November, 2015 and the Geotourism Spotlight Session of SEGRA 2016 held in Albany, Western Australia.

Featured at the 2016 Global Eco conference, the West Coast 'Living Earth' GeoTrail, a co-venture of Mineral Resources Tasmania, Department of State Growth Tasmania, and West Coast Council is currently undergoing

continuing development with work being directed at enhancing the quality of the interpretation. This geotrail, connecting the mining centres of Zeehan, Rosebery and Queenstown, currently provides information to enable visitors to understand and appreciate the geological processes and landscapes which are featured throughout the geotrail. Each site has a roadside sign, either a large sign with information and explanations, or a small sign showing the relevant QR Code web-link to the Living Earth website. http://www.cradlecoast.com/literature/Cradle%20Coast%20GeoTrail%20FINAL.pdf

All the presentations from all SEGRA and Global Eco conferences referred to in this report can be downloaded from http://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/index.php/geotourism-industry-groups/

Queensland's 'Dig The Tropic' http://www.digthetropic.com.au/ is an operating example of a formative geotrail. Dig The Tropic is a themed journey linking the wonders of the Southern Great Barrier Reef with the mysteries of Queensland's Outback. Following the Tropic of Capricorn, visitors can experience a living museum created by ancient events left behind, visiting sites such as the Stone House Museum, Age of Dinosaurs Museum, Lark Quarry, the Sapphire Gemfields, Capricorn Caves and the Great Barrier Reef. Active geotrails proposals are continuing to be being implemented or considered by various government agencies and/or university groups in Western Australia (Murchison, Geraldton , and John Forrest and Meckering Geotrails), Tasmania (West Coast Living Earth GeoTrail, Furneaux Islands Geotrail), Queensland (Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, Dig the Tropics, Boulder Opal), New South Wales (Port Macquarie – now completed), South Australia (various projects including the Brachina Gorge Geotrail),Victoria (Kanawinka/Great Ocean Road area), and Norfolk Island.

In the Northern Territory, there two well defined trans-continental 'road adventures' exist as self-drive geotours. These are the Explorers Way extending from Port Augusta to Darwin, and the Savannah Way which passes East-West from Cairns to Broome through the Gulf Country, Katherine Region, Victoria River District and the Kimberleys. In addition, the Red Centre Way (formative Red Centre Geotrail) is under reconstruction with government funding. A fourth major geotrail is the largely unsealed, 'Gold Rush Way' linking the historic Arltunga and Halls Creek (WA) gold fields via the Tamani region – a known and active gold producing area.

There are also a wide range of smaller, dedicated journeys along walking tracks, old rail easements etc. being deemed suitable for development as geotrails in NSW, Tasmania, Qld, WA and SA.

NSW's 'Modern Mining Trail' concept http://www.modernminingtrail.com.au/ represents another formative geotrail example. This is a unique opportunity to travel through Central NSW on the Modern Mining Trail and explore Australia's mining – past, present and future. The Modern Mining Trail incorporates Parkes, Bland, Orange and Cobar regions through their Visitor Centres, featuring the following modern mines: Northparkes Mines, Newcrest's Cadia Valley Operations, Peak Gold Mine (Cobar), Peak Hill Open Cut Experience, Barrick Cowal Gold Mine, and Great Cobar Copper Mine. The Modern Mining Trail region is also home to a number of tourism experiences that have linkages to history of mining and the role that modern mining plays in communities today. Attractions include: the Henry Parkes Centre, the CSIRO Parkes Radio Telescope, Peak Hill Open Cut Gallery and the Big Fish Fossil Hut, Age of Fishes Museum, Canowindra, the Golden Memories Museum in Millthorpe, West Wyalong's Barmedman Mineral Pool, West Wyalong Heritage Museum and the Bland Shire Heritage and Gold Tour, the Great Cobar Heritage Centre and associated Miner's Heritage Park and Heritage Walk.

Appendix C
UNESCO Global Geoparks

Geoparks can evolve through a series of levels from 'pre-aspiring', 'aspiring', 'national', 'regional' (e.g. European or Asia-Pacific Regions) to 'global'. In China, there are three levels of geoparks: provincial, national and global geoparks, as well as 72 mining parks. They are all managed by local county or municipal governments under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Land and Resources. Currently, there are over 320 provincial geoparks (originally labelled as 'scenic areas') in China, among which 200 have already gained national status. With 37 of these designated as global geoparks (including Hong Kong Geopark) having acquired global status, China manages by far the largest number of global geoparks in the world.

A decision to establish global geoparks as UNESCO sites was taken by Member States at the 38th UNESCO's General Conference, the governing body of the organisation, which met in Paris from 3-18 November 2015. This new branding formalises a relationship with Geoparks first established in 2001. Global Geoparks have become an increasingly important tool for UNESCO to engage Member States and their communities in the Earth Sciences and geological heritage. During the UNESCO's General Conference, Member States also decided to endorse the statutes of a new international programme: the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP). This allows the organisation to more closely reflect the societal challenges of Earth Science today and provides an international status to a former network of sites of geological significance.

On 18th January 2018, the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO announced the establishment of a UNESCO Global Geoparks programme in New Zealand. The National Commission has appointed a Geoparks Expert Advisory Panel to encourage and support New Zealand nominations for UNESCO Global Geopark status and already one 'aspiring' global geopark nomination (Waitaki Whitestone) is currently under consideration by UNESCO.

The Global Geopark brands is a voluntary, quality label and while it is not a legislative designation, the key heritage sites within a geopark should be protected under local, regional or national legislation as appropriate. UNESCO offers support to Global Geoparks on an ad-hoc basis via requests from Member States. Geopark status at any level, including 'global' does not imply restrictions on any economic activity inside a geopark where that activity complies with local, regional or national legislation. The focus of geoparks is on promotion and appreciation of geological heritage, geology and landscapes. These earth heritage sites are part of an integrated concept of protection, education and sustainable development http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/global-geoparks

For example, in the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark (Ireland), there are many quarries – dolomite, limestone, cement factory, and there is active exploration for shale gas, which would need to be extracted by fracking technologies. All of these operations are undertaken in compliance with Irish legislation from both jurisdictions in the country. In Gea Norvegica Global Geopark (Norway) are located large larvakite quarries which export polished ornamental stone all over the world. In Magma Global Geopark (Norway) one of their partners is Titania A/S which operates as a mining company extracting ilmenite in Norway for the European titanium pigment industry.

There are six Global Geoparks in Europe that are geoparks specifically because of their mining history, and that mining continues in some of these territories.

In summary, a geopark achieves its goals through conservation, education and tourism. It seeks to conserve significant geological features, and explore and demonstrate methods for excellence in conservation and geoscientific knowledge. This is accomplished through protected and interpreted geosites, museums, information centres, trails, mine sites, guided tours, school class excursions, popular literature, maps,

educational materials and displays, and seminars. Geoparks are capable of being community-driven. Geoparks stimulate economic activity and sustainable development through geotourism. By attracting increasing numbers of visitors, a geopark fosters local socio- economic development through the promotion of a quality brand linked with the local natural heritage. It encourages the creation of local enterprises and cottage industries involved in geotourism and geoproducts. The geopark concept is an iconic one, applicable across all continents. The value of the global geopark concept is explained in a journal article https://www.geoexpro.com/articles/2017/03/unesco-global-geoparks

An application area for a UNESCO Global Geopark has no stipulated size but its geographical boundaries must clearly embrace a contained area of land (both protected and non-protected); with private landowners having the option of not allowing geopark activities on their land, should they choose not to participate. An application area can be as large as the boundaries of a local government area (as has been the case for the Etheridge and Warrumbungle projects).

UNESCO approves a global geopark for an initial four year period, at the end of which it is reassessed for revalidation purposes to establish that it has complied with all agreed requirements and the UNESCO Global Geopark Code of Ethics http://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/GLOBAL-GEOPARKS-NETWORK-CODE-OF-ETHICS-final.pdf

The nomination procedure for UNESCO Global Geoparks requires the completion of a self-assessment document,
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/EN_UGGEvaluation_DocA_Self-evaluation_FINAL_12Feb2016_PR.xls

and the completion of a comprehensive application dossier
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/images/Application_dossier_UGG_15Dec_2016.pdf

Even if an area has outstanding, world-famous geological heritage of outstanding universal value, UNESCO has determined that it cannot be a UNESCO Global Geopark unless the area also has a plan for the sustainable development of the people who live there. To succeed, a UNESCO Global Geopark nomination, lodged by an appropriately incorporated management body, must have the support of local communities.

By raising awareness of the importance of the area's geological heritage in history and society today, UNESCO Global Geoparks provides local people with a sense of pride in their region and strengthens their identification with the area. The creation of innovative local enterprises, new jobs and high quality training courses is stimulated as new sources of revenue are generated through geotourism, while the geological resources of the area are protected.

Appendix D
Engagement with the Australian National Landscapes Programme

A number of the Geotourism Standing Committee's members have been actively involved in and have championed the Australian National Landscapes (ANL) Programme because of the opportunity to promote geotourism concepts. The Programme was the first time the tourism sector, nature conservation managers and tourism advocacy organisations had worked closely together to present Australia's top nature tourism experiences. The Programme facilitated coordinated tourism planning and management and provided a focus for international marketing. The Programme was delivered 'bottom up', with coordinating bodies for each ANL made up of land managers, regional tourism bodies and local government. The system is 'blind' to land tenure boundaries and in that sense, resembles the geopark structure. Three of the ANLs straddle state

borders, demonstrating a unique level of cooperative management.

The Australian National Landscapes Programme included the following regions: Australian Alps (New South Wales/Victoria), Australia's Green Cauldron (New South Wales/SE Queensland border region), Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics area (Queensland), Australia's Red Centre and Australia's Timeless North (Northern Territory), Australia's Coastal Wilderness (New South Wales/Victoria), the Flinders Ranges and Kangaroo Island (South Australia), the Great Ocean Road (Victoria), the Greater Blue Mountains and Sydney Harbour (New South Wales), the Kimberley, Ningaloo-Shark Bay and Great South West Edge (Western Australia), and Tasmania's Island Heritage. Eurobodalla Shire lies immediately to the north of the designated 'Australia's Coastal Wilderness' National Landscape.

Unfortunately in 2014, the two key participating Australian Government agencies advised that they had stepped back from a central coordination role, and would instead encourage local steering committees and the tourism industry to further advance this concept. However, in 2017 the peak tourism industry lobby group, the Tourism and Transport Forum Australia, has released a white paper extolling the virtues of the ANL programme, a move that can only assist in promoting the development of geotourism.

Appendix E
Australia-China Memorandum of Cooperation

In June 2016 a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Geological Society of Australia and the Geological Society of China was executed. This Memorandum of Cooperation seeks to promote better understanding and closer cooperation between the two associations for the promotion and advancement of geotourism. At this stage, it is proposed that any co-operation agreement could embrace areas of activity which could include

- growing and enhancing the level of best practice 'nature-based' tourism in both China and Australia;
- progressing protection, conservation and presentation of the geoheritage of natural and mixed protected areas, geoparks (in China), national parks and reserves (in Australia); Australian National Landscapes and areas on the World Heritage List (as defined in the World Heritage Convention 1972) areas (both countries);
- exploring opportunities to promote ecotourism and geotourism;
- raising the profile of China and Australia as world- leading 'nature-based' tourism destinations;
- exploring other co-operative projects such as participation in conferences; and
- fostering the development of 'sister park' relationships between China and Australia.

On 9th December 2017, a historic Memorandum of Cooperation embracing a 'sister park' arrangement was signed between the Zhijingdong Cave UNESCO Global Geopark and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve. The Reserve's Administrator, also a member of the GSA Geotourism Standing Committee, executed this agreement during his visit to the spectacular karst landscape in Guizhou Province in south-west China. The Reserve looks forward to sharing information and management practices, receiving delegations and greater numbers of visitors from China and negotiating possible staff exchanges.

It is realised that a number of Chinese UNESCO Global Geoparks are now keen to develop 'sister park' arrangements with key scenic landscape regions in Australia.