

Kimberley National Heritage Assessment Information sheet

What is the National Heritage List?

The National Heritage List recognises, celebrates and protects our most important natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places.

Places on the National Heritage List reflect our continent's development, from its ancient origins and its first people to its architectural masterpieces, the spirit and ingenuity of our community and our unique, living landscapes.

There are currently 89 places in the National Heritage List. These include Uluru-Kata Tjuta, Bondi Beach, the Great Barrier Reef, the Sydney Opera House, the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Fremantle Prison, Port Arthur, the Ningaloo Coast and the Stirling Range.

Why is there a National Heritage assessment of the west Kimberley?

The Kimberley, with its outstanding wildlife, glorious coastal stretches, spectacular gorges and waterfalls and invaluable Indigenous and historic heritage, is a special place. The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that long term protection of the Kimberley's environmental and cultural heritage is balanced with the social and economic aspirations for the region.

In February 2008 the Australian and Western Australian governments agreed to undertake an assessment of the west Kimberley to identify its National Heritage (and potential international heritage) values.

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts subsequently asked the Australian Heritage Council to commence an assessment of the west Kimberley and to provide its advice by 30 June 2010 on which areas have National Heritage values, for possible inclusion in the National Heritage List.

What would National Heritage listing mean for the west Kimberley?

National Heritage listing would provide recognition and protection of any outstanding heritage values in the west Kimberley. It is these values, and not the entire place, that are protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. A person cannot take an action that has, will have or is likely to have a significant impact on the National Heritage values of a listed place without the approval of the Australian Government Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

Some values, such as important geological features, are more robust than others and would only be impacted by major ground disturbance. Others, such as the mangrove and vine thicket plant communities, and particular Indigenous sites, are more sensitive to disturbance.

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The Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities works with owners and managers of listed places to ensure that National Heritage values are protected. The Australian Government may provide financial or other assistance for the identification, promotion, protection or conservation of National Heritage places.

National Heritage listing of areas in the west Kimberley will help ensure heritage values are part of decision-making, so heritage protection is balanced with the social and economic aspirations of the Kimberley community.

What would listing not mean for the west Kimberley?

National Heritage listing does not change land ownership, and does not affect Native Title.

Management of National Heritage listed places remains with the current land owner or manager.

Any lawful existing uses of land and sea can continue. Existing grazing, for example, will not be affected by National Heritage Listing. Other examples include mining and exploration activities that are currently permitted, activities currently permitted under state management planning, including recreation activities like fishing, camping or hiking, and any activities currently permitted under Native Title.