

Australian Natural Heritage Charter

for the conservation of places
of natural heritage significance



SECOND EDITION



values
natural
earth processes

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of natural heritage significance

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Preamble

The *Australian Natural Heritage Charter* was first adopted in December 1996 following a two-year period of Australia-wide consultation. It was revised and updated in 2002 following the planned five-yearly review in 2001 by users and expert advisers.

The development and review of the Charter was conducted by a national steering committee made up of representatives of the Australian Committee for IUCN (World Conservation Union), the Australian Heritage Commission, Environment Australia, the Australian Local Government Association, the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales, the Environment Institute of Australia, the Indigenous community and environmental consultants.

* Please note that in this publication words printed in *italics* are defined in Part A of the Charter.

PURPOSE OF THE CHARTER

The Charter is a distillation of ‘best practice’ conservation principles for Australia, based on the consensus of a broad range of experts. It aims to assist everyone with an interest in natural places to establish their natural heritage values and manage them. It can be applied to a wide range of places whether terrestrial, marine or freshwater.

It can be used by organisations or individuals — landowners and managers, non-government and government organisations, decision-makers, voluntary groups, professional practitioners — anyone involved in conserving Australia’s *natural heritage*.

It offers a framework for making sound decisions for managing and restoring natural heritage places based on the *ecological processes* which occur in natural systems. It also provides a process that can be used to support and implement local, state and territory, national and international policies, agreements, strategies and plans. It does not replace statutory obligations.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

In making decisions that will affect the future of a *place*, it is important to consider all of its heritage values — both natural and cultural. Issues relating to the *conservation* of cultural values may affect the selection of appropriate conservation processes, actions and strategies for the place’s natural values.

The Charter relates closely to the general structure and logic of *The Burra Charter — the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999*. The similarity of these documents enables them to be used together for places that have both natural and cultural values. Additional guidance specific to Indigenous heritage issues is provided in *Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values*. A resource which helps to integrate aspects of natural and cultural heritage is the *Protecting Heritage Places Information and Resource Kit*.

WHICH PLACES?

The Charter can be used for any *place* with natural heritage values. These places can be degraded or pristine, large or small, with many heritage values or just one and they can be areas of international, national or local significance. They may be farms, council reserves, mining leases, publicly or privately owned places, the land of traditional Indigenous owners or formally protected areas.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Protecting Natural Heritage — using the Australian Natural Heritage Charter offers additional and more detailed advice on managing places with natural heritage values. To obtain copies, see the contacts listed on page 25.

WHY CONSERVE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE PLACES?

A *natural heritage* place is one that we believe we should keep for the future — because it is valuable to us.

It may be part of a coast, desert, mountain or bushland that we gaze at and see as ‘home’ — a place which connects us to Australia and helps us to define our distinctive identity. It is part of our life support system.

It may also be somewhere that we know is important because of what it is and what it can tell us scientifically. This place could be a desert mound spring, a fossil site, an ancient watercourse or a marine or bush habitat rich with life. We want to keep it because by doing so we will be protecting a resource of biological and/or geological information. This helps us and future generations to better understand the nature of our physical world and how we might live within its means.

Our *natural heritage* places are those we would want to inherit if we were to be born one hundred or one thousand years from now.

By keeping our natural environment healthy we are investing in our own well-being, protecting the essence of Australia’s unique character and securing an irreplaceable gift for the generations ahead.

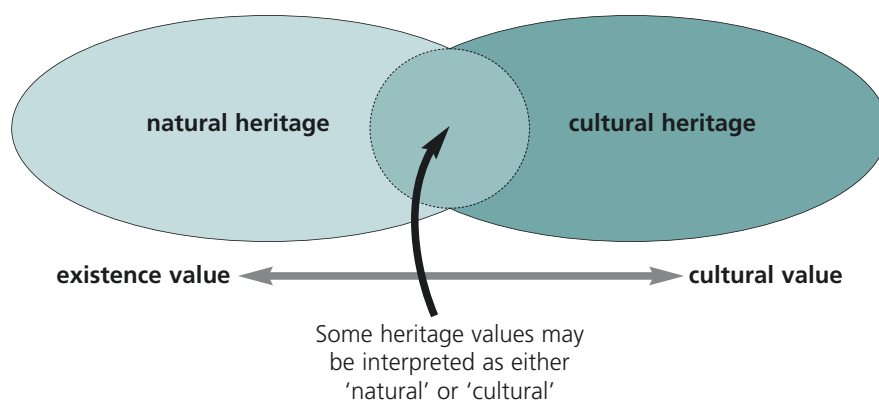
Ethos of the Charter

This Charter encompasses a wide interpretation of *natural heritage* and is based on respect for that heritage.

Natural heritage comprises the natural living and non-living components, that is, the *biodiversity* and *geodiversity*, of the world that humans inherit.

It incorporates a range of values, from existence value to socially-based values. The fundamental concept of *natural heritage*, which most clearly differentiates it from cultural heritage, is that of natural and dynamic *ecological processes*, *earth processes* and *evolutionary processes*, and the ability of *ecosystems* to be self-perpetuating.

Places may have both natural and cultural heritage values. These values may be related and are sometimes difficult to separate. Some people, including many Indigenous people, do not see them as being separate.



The concept of *natural heritage* used in this Charter recognises the role Indigenous people have played in using and shaping Australian landscapes for at least 50 000 years and possibly much longer. *Conservation* of a *place* should identify and take into consideration all aspects of natural and cultural heritage.

This Charter acknowledges the principles of **intergenerational equity**, **existence value**, **uncertainty** and **precaution**. Intergenerational equity and the precautionary principle are elements that are often included in definitions of ‘ecologically sustainable development’. Explanations of these principles follow.

Intergenerational equity

Intergenerational equity means that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.

Existence value

Existence value means that living *organisms*, *earth processes* and *ecosystems* may have value beyond the social, economic or cultural values held by humans.

Uncertainty

Uncertainty means that our knowledge of *natural heritage* and the processes affecting it is incomplete, and that the full potential significance or value of *natural heritage* remains unknown because of this uncertain state of knowledge.

Precaution

The precautionary principle means that where there are threats or potential threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental *degradation*.

How to use the Charter

The Charter provides **definitions** for terms used, and an outline of issues to consider in managing places of natural heritage significance. Words printed in *italics* are defined in Part A.

The **Articles** clarify concepts you will need to understand, but they do not describe how to manage places. They provide best practice guidance on how to approach the task of planning for the management of places of natural heritage significance.

The Charter is divided into four parts:

Part A **Definitions** defines terms you will need to understand

Part B **Conservation Principles** outlines the principles on which sound natural heritage *conservation* is based

Part C **Conservation Processes** defines a range of processes which can be used in natural heritage *conservation*

Part D **Conservation Practice** outlines the steps which need to be taken in planning and implementing plans for the *conservation* of a natural heritage *place*.

The Charter provides guidance to a ten-step process for planning to conserve the natural heritage values of many types of places. Central to this process is the development of a conservation policy and a practical conservation plan.

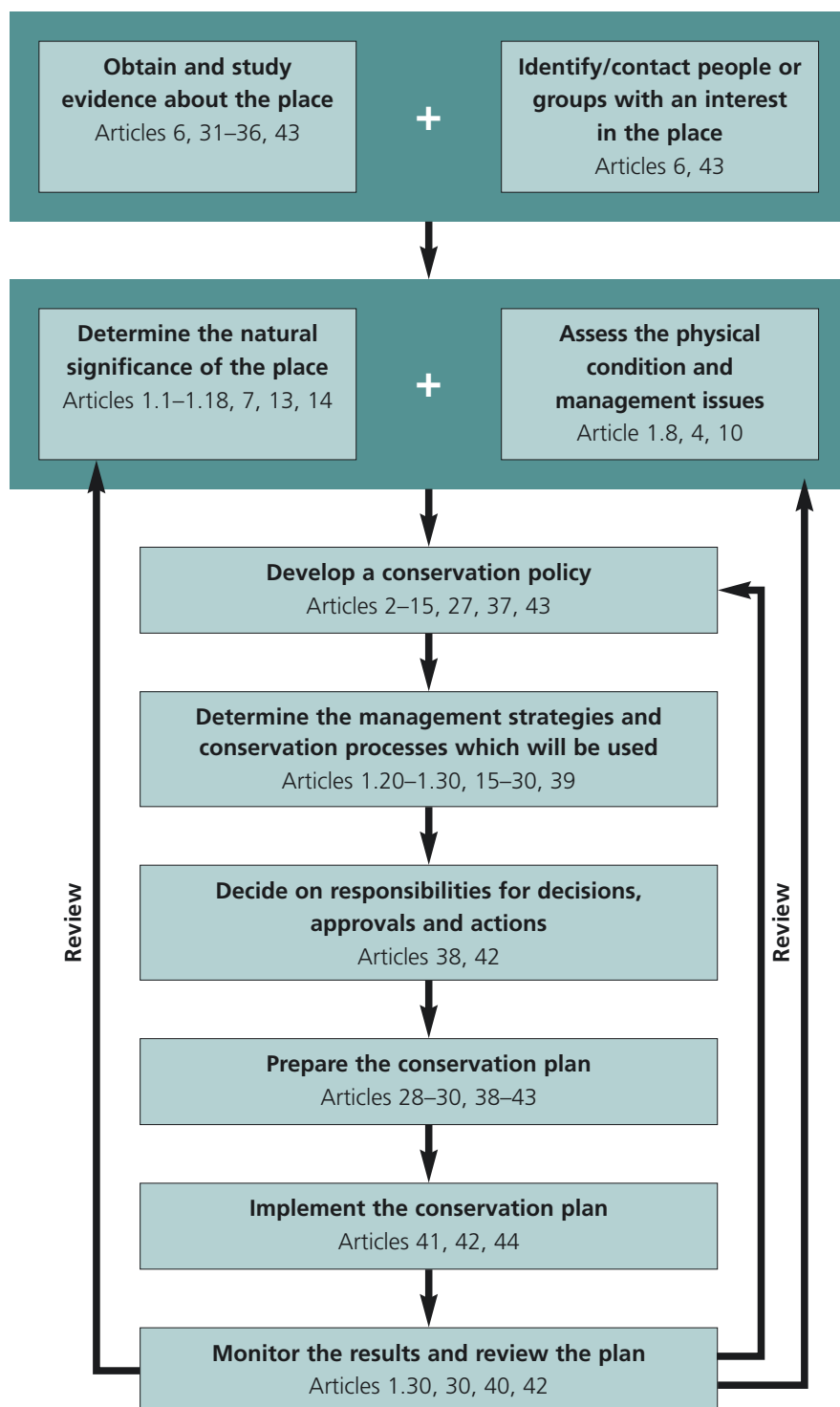
A **conservation policy** outlines the desired goals for conserving the natural significance of a *place* both in the short and long term. The means of implementing the policy is outlined in a **conservation plan**. It describes the actions necessary to ensure the conservation goals are met. It can be part of a broader **management plan** which considers heritage and non-heritage issues in managing a *place*.

The principles and processes presented in the Charter can also be used in developing, implementing, evaluating and revising management plans, community conservation projects and supporting grant applications.

KEY TO USING THE CHARTER

To use the Charter most effectively follow part or all of the processes outlined in the conservation planning diagram opposite and then refer to the Articles and explanatory notes for clarification of terms and concepts.

Developing a conservation plan



This diagram shows the planning process needed to conserve the natural values of places. To help clarify the concepts involved in each step, the numbers of relevant articles are noted in the boxes.

The conservation principles (Articles 2–7) are the basis for all conservation planning and should be considered in each step.

Further guidance for each step may be found in the *Protecting Natural Heritage — using the Australian Natural Heritage Charter* — which assists in using the Charter for conserving places of natural significance.

A

Part A Definitions

Alphabetical listing

Words printed in italics in this document have definitions set out below.

<i>Biodiversity</i>	1.5	<i>Modification</i>	1.28
<i>Community</i>	1.13	<i>Monitoring</i>	1.30
<i>Conservation</i>	1.20	<i>Natural heritage</i>	1.1
<i>Degradation</i>	1.19	<i>Natural integrity</i>	1.8
<i>Earth processes</i>	1.16	<i>Natural significance</i>	1.3
<i>Ecological processes</i>	1.15	<i>Organism</i>	1.11
<i>Ecosystem</i>	1.14	<i>Place</i>	1.2
<i>Enhancement</i>	1.26	<i>Presentation</i>	1.29
<i>Evolutionary processes</i>	1.17	<i>Preservation</i>	1.27
<i>Genetic diversity</i>	1.7	<i>Protection</i>	1.21
<i>Geodiversity</i>	1.4	<i>Regeneration</i>	1.23
<i>Habitat</i>	1.12	<i>Reinstatement</i>	1.25
<i>Indigenous species</i>	1.9	<i>Restoration</i>	1.24
<i>Introduced species</i>	1.10	<i>Species diversity</i>	1.6
<i>Maintenance</i>	1.22	<i>Succession</i>	1.18

Listing by topic

Article 1 For the purpose of the Charter the following definitions apply.

GENERAL

- 1.1** *Natural heritage* means:
- natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which demonstrate *natural significance*
 - geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas that constitute the habitat of *indigenous species* of animals and plants, which demonstrate *natural significance*, and/or
 - natural sites or precisely-delineated natural areas which demonstrate *natural significance* from the point of view of science, *conservation* or natural beauty.
- 1.2** *Place* means a geographically defined site or area with associated natural features of *biodiversity*, *geodiversity* and *ecological processes*.

Note for Article 1.1

This definition is based on that used in the World Heritage Convention which is also known as the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This convention was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972 and is now being adhered to by more than 150 countries.

Articles

VALUES

- 1.3** *Natural significance* means the importance of *ecosystems*, *biodiversity* and *geodiversity* for their existence value or for present or future generations, in terms of their scientific, social, aesthetic and life-support value.
- 1.4** *Geodiversity* means the natural range (diversity) of geological (bedrock), geomorphological (landform) and soil features, assemblages, systems and processes. *Geodiversity* includes evidence of the past life, *ecosystems* and environments in the history of the earth as well as a range of atmospheric, hydrological and biological processes currently acting on rocks, landforms and soils.
- 1.5** *Biodiversity* means the variability among living *organisms* from all sources (including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic *ecosystems* and the ecological complexes of which they are part) and includes diversity within and between species and the diversity of *ecosystems*.
- 1.6** *Species diversity* means the variety of species in a *place*.
- 1.7** *Genetic diversity* means the variety of genetic information contained in the total genes of individual plants, animals and microorganisms in a place.
- 1.8** *Natural integrity* means the degree to which a *place* or *ecosystem* retains its natural *biodiversity* and *geodiversity* and other natural processes and characteristics.
- 1.9** *Indigenous species* means a species that occurs at a *place* within its historically known natural range and that forms part of the natural *biodiversity* of a *place*.

Explanatory Notes

Note for Article 1.5

This definition is essentially the same as that used in Australia's *National Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity* [1996], and in the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The term 'biodiversity' is in widespread use and for consistency has been used in this Charter in preference to 'biological diversity'. However, the meanings and concepts of the two terms are the same.

Note for Article 1.9

Special classes of *indigenous species*, often defined in legislation by terms such as 'threatened species', 'vulnerable species' or 'endangered species', have not been defined in this Charter. However, these concepts might contribute to the *natural significance* of a *place*.

Some legislation sets a date for the historically-known range of species, but this Charter leaves the interpretation of this aspect to individual users.

Note for Article 1.10

Introduced species include those that have been translocated to a place from elsewhere in Australia, and those that are genetically modified by human intervention.

Note for Article 1.12

Habitat elements are the component parts (living or non-living) of the structural environments that make up an *organism's habitat*.

Note for Article 1.19

A degraded *ecosystem* will usually require human assistance to recover.

- 1.10** ***Introduced species*** means a translocated or alien species occurring at a *place* outside its known natural range as a result of intentional or accidental dispersal.
- 1.11** ***Organism*** means any living being.
- 1.12** ***Habitat*** means the structural environments where an *organism* lives for all or part of its life, including environments once occupied (continuously, periodically or occasionally) by an *organism* or group of *organisms*, and into which *organisms* of that kind have the potential to be *reinstated*.
- 1.13** ***Community*** means an assemblage of *species* that inhabits a particular area in nature.
- 1.14** ***Ecosystem*** means a dynamic complex of *organisms* and their non-living environment, interacting as a functional unit.
- 1.15** ***Ecological processes*** means all those processes that occur between *organisms*, and within and between *communities*, including interactions with the non-living environment, that result in existing *ecosystems* and bring about changes in *ecosystems* over time.
- 1.16** ***Earth processes*** means the interactions, changes and development of *geodiversity* over time.
- 1.17** ***Evolutionary processes*** means genetically-based processes by which life forms change and develop over generations.
- 1.18** ***Succession*** means the natural changes where species composition changes over time.

DEGRADATION

- 1.19** ***Degradation*** means any significant decline in the quality of natural resources or *natural integrity* of a *place* or the viability of an *ecosystem*, caused directly or indirectly by human activities.

CONSERVATION PROCESSES

- 1.20** **Conservation** means all the processes and actions of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *natural significance* and always includes *protection, maintenance* and *monitoring*.
- 1.21** **Protection** means taking care of a *place* by managing impacts to ensure that *natural significance* is retained.
- 1.22** **Maintenance** means the continuous protective care of the *biodiversity* and *geodiversity* of a *place*.
- 1.23** **Regeneration** means the natural recovery of *natural integrity* following disturbance or *degradation*.
- 1.24** **Restoration** means returning existing *habitats* to a known past state or to an approximation of the natural condition by repairing *degradation*, by removing *introduced species* or by *reinstatement*.
- 1.25** **Reinstatement** means to introduce to a *place* one or more species or elements of *habitat* or *geodiversity* that are known to have existed there naturally at a previous time, but that can no longer be found at that *place*.

Note for Article 1.20

Conservation may, according to circumstance, also include *regeneration, restoration, enhancement, reinstatement, preservation* or *modification*, or a combination of more than one of these. *Conservation* includes conserving natural processes of change (as opposed to artificially accelerated changes).

Note for Article 1.22

Maintenance may also need to be done outside the *place*.

Note for Article 1.23

Regeneration applies to both the *geodiversity* and *biodiversity* of a *place*, and includes the process of natural *succession*.

Note for Articles 1.24 and 1.25

The timeframe that would apply to the past state as reference for *restoration* and *reinstatement* is not specified. It should be determined for each situation through the conservation policy.

Note for Article 1.25

Reinstatement has the same meaning as the term 'reintroduction' that is commonly applied for plant and animal species.

Note for Article 1.28

Modification may involve changes to safeguard the *natural significance* of a *place*.

Note for Article 1.29

Presentation includes interpretation and education activities.

Note for Article 1.30

Monitoring is used to assist review of decisions by providing knowledge of the effects of conservation processes on the *significance* of a *place*.

- 1.26** *Enhancement* means the introduction of additional organisms, genotypes, species or elements of habitat or geodiversity to those that naturally exist in a *place*.
- 1.27** *Preservation* means maintaining *biodiversity* of a *place* at the existing stage of *succession*, or maintaining existing *geodiversity*.
- 1.28** *Modification* means altering a *place* to suit proposed uses that are compatible with the *natural significance* of the *place*.
- 1.29** *Presentation* means creating awareness and understanding of the *natural significance* of a *place*.
- 1.30** *Monitoring* means ongoing review, evaluation and assessment to detect changes in the *natural integrity* of a *place*, with reference to a baseline condition.

Part B

Conservation Principles



BASIS OF CONSERVATION

- Article 2** The basis for *conservation* is the assessment of the *natural significance* of a *place*, usually presented as a statement of significance.
- Article 3** The aim of *conservation* is to retain, *restore* or *reinstate* the *natural significance* of a *place*.
- Article 4** A self-sustaining condition is preferable to an outcome that requires a high level of ongoing management intervention.
- Article 5** *Conservation* is based on respect for *biodiversity* and *geodiversity*. It should involve the least possible human intervention to *ecological processes*, *evolutionary processes* and *earth processes*.
- Article 6** *Conservation* should make use of all the disciplines and experience that can contribute to the study and safeguarding of a *place*. Techniques employed should have a firm scientific basis or be supported by relevant experience.
- Article 7** *Conservation* of a *place* should take into consideration all aspects of its *natural significance*, and respect aspects of cultural significance that occur there.

Note for Article 2

If cultural values exist for the *place* they should also be considered as part of the significance of the *place* and included in the statement of significance.

Note for Article 4

A self-sustaining condition allows continuation of natural processes of change.

Note for Article 5

The best *conservation* often involves the least work. *Conservation* should not be undertaken unless adequate resources are available to ensure that the *place* is not left in a disturbed or vulnerable state.

Note for Article 7

Some *places* with *natural significance* might also have Indigenous or historic cultural heritage values that should be conserved. *Conservation of places* with cultural significance is explained in *The Burra Charter*, which defines cultural significance to mean aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. For *places* with Indigenous heritage values, reference should be made to *Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values*.

Note for Article 8

Protecting Natural Heritage includes more detail on developing the *conservation* policy for a *place*.

'Management issues' include factors such as the owner's needs, resources, external constraints and the past history of use of the *place*.

Note for Article 9

There may be relevant legislative or statutory requirements that need to be considered.

Note for Article 10

An example of the use of this Article is the *conservation* of migratory bird species.

Note for Article 11

Provision for scientific collecting should be incorporated into the *conservation* plan where appropriate. Accepted protocols for scientific collecting should be observed where they exist.

Note for Article 12

An example is poisoning or draining a water body to eliminate an *introduced* species of fish and to prevent its wider spread, even though this action may threaten other *indigenous* species in the same stretch of water.

CONSERVATION POLICY

- Article 8** The *conservation* policy for a *place* should be determined by a clear understanding of *natural significance* and other management issues. These should be used to determine the desired *conservation* outcomes and future condition for the *place*.
- Article 9** The *conservation* policy should determine uses that are compatible with the *natural significance* of a *place*. Uses that will degrade the *natural significance* should not be introduced or continued.
- Article 10** The *conservation* policy should consider *ecological processes* and other processes that extend beyond the stated boundaries of a *place*, and their level of impact or influence on the *natural significance* of the *place*.

REMOVAL OF ELEMENTS

- Article 11** Elements of the *geodiversity* and *biodiversity* that contribute to the *natural significance* of a *place* should not be removed from the *place* unless this is the sole means of ensuring their survival, security or *preservation* and is consistent with the *conservation* policy.
- Article 12** The destruction of elements of *habitat* or *geodiversity* that form part of the *natural significance* of a *place* is unacceptable unless it is the sole means of ensuring the security of the wider *ecosystem* or the long-term *conservation* of the *natural significance*.

INTRODUCED ELEMENTS

Article 13 Some introduced elements may need to be considered as part of the *ecosystem*. Some may contribute permanently to the *natural significance* of the *place*. Others may need to be retained until a condition of sustainable *natural integrity* can be achieved. The conservation policy should stipulate requirements for longer-term retention, control or eradication.

Note for Article 13

Examples include:

- where loose rocks have been removed, they might be replaced by other rocks to provide reptile *habitat*, and
- where a prolific *introduced species* of plant may be the preferred *habitat* for a range of birds and immediate removal may have a dramatic adverse affect on the birds.

Many factors will influence decisions related to conservation practices involving introduced elements.

DEGRADED NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS

Article 14 Some remnants of natural *ecosystems* that have suffered *degradation* may never recover their *natural integrity* but nevertheless may have *natural significance* that should be conserved.

Article 15 Extreme natural ‘catastrophic’ events may cause disturbance. This is a natural phenomenon, but is not *degradation* unless human *modification* of the natural environment has contributed to the event or the effects. If conservation decisions are needed after such events, this difference should guide the decisions.

Note for Article 14

This does not provide an excuse for allowing the *natural integrity* of a *place* to be degraded as long as other aspects are protected.



C

Part C

Conservation Processes

Note for Article 16

Protection may include direct protective action (such as erection of a fence) and indirect measures such as binding legal agreements, planning instruments, land acquisition, placing a protective covenant on a land title or reserving the *place* as a protected area.

Note for Article 18

The main distinction between *regeneration* and *restoration* is the extent of direct or indirect intervention. The activity known as bush *regeneration* consists of *restoration* and other conservation processes defined here.

Note for Articles 19 and 20

In considering *restoration* and *reinstatement*, the length of time that has passed since the existence of the 'earlier state' will influence decisions on conservation policy and will be a matter of judgment by the practitioner for each *place*.

Note for Article 20

For example, returning an element of *geodiversity* that has been seriously depleted, eg, adding gravel to expand the shallows and riffles of a stream that has been deepened by mining.

PROTECTION

Article 16 *Protection* may include conservation management measures that are either direct or indirect. The aim of *protection* is to prevent or minimise impacts that may degrade the *natural significance* of the *place* and to facilitate *regeneration*.

MAINTENANCE

Article 17 *Maintenance* techniques and action should be consistent with the conservation processes adopted for a *place* and should not detract from its *natural significance*.

REGENERATION

Article 18 *Regeneration* is essentially dependent on natural processes facilitating recovery from disturbance or *degradation*. It does not include physical intervention, but should be accompanied by *monitoring* and *protection* measures that do not create *degradation*.

RESTORATION

Article 19 *Restoration* is appropriate only if there is sufficient evidence of an earlier state to guide the conservation process and if returning the *biodiversity*, *geodiversity* or *habitat* of the *place* to that state is consistent with the *natural significance* of that *place*.

REINSTATEMENT

Article 20 *Reinstatement* is appropriate only if:

- there is evidence that the species or *habitat* elements or features of *geodiversity* that are to be reintroduced have existed there naturally at a previous time, and
- returning them to the *place* contributes to retaining the *natural significance* of that *place*, and
- processes that may threaten their existence at that *place* have been discontinued.

ENHANCEMENT

Article 21 *Enhancement* is appropriate only if there is evidence that the introduction of additional *habitat* elements, elements of *geodiversity* or individuals of an *organism* which exist at that place are necessary for, or contribute to, the retention of the *natural significance* of the *place*.

Article 22 Where *organisms* or elements of *geodiversity* are introduced to a *place* for the purpose of *enhancement*, the individuals introduced to the *place* should not alter the natural *species diversity*, *genetic diversity* or *geodiversity* of the *place* if that would reduce its *natural significance*.

Article 23 *Enhancement* in existing natural systems should be limited to a minor part of *biodiversity* or *geodiversity* of a *place* and should not change *ecosystem processes* nor constitute a majority of the *habitats* or features of *geodiversity* of the *place*.

PRESERVATION

Article 24 *Preservation* is appropriate where the *natural significance* of a *place* is fully manifested in its existing stage of natural *succession* or the existing state of its *geodiversity*, and where the *natural significance* is dependent on retaining existing conditions which may otherwise be lost by progression in natural processes.

Article 25 *Preservation* should be limited to the minimum intervention, or the change of *maintenance* actions, needed to suspend the natural *earth processes* or processes of *succession*. The intervention or change should not adversely affect surrounding *ecosystems*.

Note for Article 21

An example of *enhancement* is planting large numbers of a specific tree species to provide a *habitat* for a bird species identified as a particular part of the *natural significance*.

Note for Article 22

This means that genotypes different to the local genotype of a species at a *place* should not be introduced to it unless it is necessary for *restoration* or *preservation* of the *natural significance*.

Note for Article 23

This Article refers to existing natural systems and is not an argument against the creation of a new *habitat*.

Note for Article 24

Preservation is an exception to the general conservation principle of allowing natural *ecological processes*, *evolutionary processes*, *earth processes* and *succession* to continue. There may be situations where the conservation policy is to maintain the *ecosystem* of a *place* at a particular point in its *succession*, eg, *preservation* may be an appropriate conservation process for the locality of the Wollemi pine in New South Wales, thought to be a rare surviving relic of a previous climatic environment.

Note for Article 28

Presentation does not need to be limited to on-site activity and can include off-site programs.

Note for Article 30

Monitoring should be designed and conducted so as to identify changes relevant to the conservation program and unforeseen effects of conservation actions.

MODIFICATION

Article 26 *Modification* of a *place* to accommodate other non-conservation uses is acceptable where *natural significance* is retained and where the *modification* will not adversely affect the *natural significance* of other *places*.

Article 27 *Modification* should be limited to that which is essential to a use for the *place*, such use being determined in accordance with the conservation policy.

PRESENTATION

Article 28 *Presentation* should interpret to visitors and others the *natural significance* of the *place* and should encourage appreciation and respect. It should also encourage an appropriate level of awareness, understanding and support for the heritage values and conservation objectives of a conservation program or activity.

Article 29 *Presentation* may not be appropriate for all *places* for reasons of security and privacy or cultural significance. It should only commence after a *place* has been given adequate *protection*.

MONITORING

Article 30 *Monitoring*, which allows review of the effectiveness of conservation programs and re-examination of the appropriateness of decisions, is fundamental to improving conservation practice. It requires keeping adequate records.

Part D

Conservation Practice



OBTAINING INFORMATION ABOUT A PLACE

Article 31 Work on a *place* should be preceded by research and by review of the available physical, oral, documentary and other information about the existing *biodiversity* and *geodiversity*, including information from Indigenous people.

Article 32 Studies should be of as high a quality as possible. They should be prepared or reviewed by other people with appropriate experience, knowledge or professional qualifications. Information should be checked on site before any decisions about intervention activities are made.

Article 33 Evidence of the existing *biodiversity*, *geodiversity* and any other significant features of the *place* (such as cultural heritage) should be recorded before any disturbance of the *place*.

Article 34 Study of a *place* may require some disturbance to provide the data needed for deciding its *natural significance* and the conservation policy. In these cases the disturbance should have minimal impact on the *biodiversity* and *geodiversity* of the *place* and the actions should be recorded.

Article 35 Physical intervention is justified where it is needed to secure evidence about to be lost or made inaccessible through necessary conservation work or other unavoidable action.

Article 36 Investigation that requires physical disturbance of a *place* may be permitted if it will create, or add substantially to, a body of knowledge and provided that it is consistent with the conservation policy of a *place*.

Note for Article 31

The minimum information required before work or other conservation actions or processes start at a *place* is the identification of its *natural significance*.

Note for Article 33

If the *place* is known to, or likely to have cultural heritage values, reference can be made to *Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values* or *The Burra Charter* to assist in understanding, documenting and respecting these values.

Note for Article 34

A permit or licence is likely to be required for such studies.

Note for Article 37

The conservation policy should be of as high a quality as possible. It should be prepared or reviewed by a person with appropriate experience, knowledge or professional qualifications.

See Articles 8, 9, 10.

If management objectives are used instead of a conservation policy, key elements of Article 37 should be taken into account.

Note for Article 38

The process to develop a conservation plan is shown as a diagram on page 7.

The conservation plan may also acknowledge or reflect the local, state and territory, national and international policies, agreements, strategies and plans that may be statutory or guiding documents.

The conservation plan may be a component of a broader management plan for a range of land uses for the *place*, eg a farm plan, a plan of management for a reserve or a land or vegetation rehabilitation program.

Note that 'conservation management plan' is a commonly used alternative term.

CONSERVATION POLICY

Article 37 A conservation policy outlines the desired goals for conserving the *natural significance* of a *place* in both the short and long term. It should be a succinctly written statement which considers:

- the statement of significance and its supporting evidence
- a description of other management issues
- the implications of these issues for future management of the *place*, and
- the desired conservation outcomes and desired future condition.

This policy should be incorporated into a conservation plan for the *place*.

CONSERVATION PLAN

Article 38 A conservation plan should be prepared which outlines how the conservation policy will be implemented. The plan should include:

- a statement of significance
- a description of the management issues
- the conservation policy
- the conservation processes to be used
- organisations and/or individuals responsible for implementing the conservation plan
- a monitoring program to log changes in the *place*, and
- an evaluation process for assessing the success of the conservation plan in achieving the desired conservation outcomes.

- Article 39** The conservation processes to be used should be determined with reference to the conservation policy and to the conservation principles.
- Article 40** There should be a process to ensure that the conservation plan is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Article 41** The requirements of the conservation plan should be made known as part of the *presentation* of the *place*.
- Article 42** Appropriate expert direction and supervision should be maintained at all stages of implementing the plan, a log kept of new evidence, and additional decisions recorded as amendments to the conservation plan.

CONSULTATION

- Article 43** Consultation with individuals and organisations with an interest in the *natural significance* or future use of a *place* is highly desirable, especially at the time of developing the conservation policy and the conservation plan.

RECORDS

- Article 44** The records associated with all stages of the *conservation* of a *place* should be kept in a permanent archive and made publicly available, subject to requirements of security and privacy.

Note for Article 39

Conservation processes may be used in combination or sequentially to achieve the desired conservation outcomes.

Note for Article 43

The benefits of consultation include the benefit of additional knowledge or experience concerning a *place* and assistance in resolving any conflict prior to commitment to a management regime. It is recognised that some landholders may wish not to consult where there is no statutory obligation to do so. If a *place* appears to have heritage values for Indigenous people, steps for effective consultation can be found in *Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values*.

Notes on the second edition

These notes about the changes made in the second edition of the *Australian Natural Heritage Charter* are intended to assist those familiar with the original 1996 edition and do not form part of the Charter.

KEY CHANGES

1. The title

This revision of the Charter will be known as *Australian Natural Heritage Charter*, Second edition (or abbreviated to ANHC).

2. Article numbers

The number of new, amalgamated and deleted Articles in the second edition meant that retaining the 1996 Article numbers would have been confusing. Therefore, Article numbers have changed and these changes are shown in the conversion table at the end of these notes.

3. Explanatory notes

Explanatory notes have again been used to clarify Articles where needed, but after the publication of the Charter in 1996, a handbook was printed to provide further advice. An updated version called *Protecting Natural Heritage — using the Australian Natural Heritage Charter* will reflect the second edition of the ANHC.

4. Definitions

The definitions have been slightly re-ordered, and new definitions have been added for *natural heritage* and *presentation*. Definitions for community diversity, conservation management measures, disturbance and ecosystem diversity have been deleted. Many definitions have been edited to improve clarity and to reflect the current use of terms in Australia.

The sub-heading ‘actions’ has been deleted, and those definitions are now included with ‘conservation processes’.

5. Conservation principles

Several new Articles have been added:

- Article 2 (basis of *conservation*)
- Article 4 (objective for places to be in a self-sustaining state)
- Article 13 (introduced elements that may contribute to *natural significance*)
- Article 14 (conserving significance of degraded ecosystem remnants)
- Article 15 (decisions following extreme natural events), and
- Article 41 (*presentation* to include awareness of conservation plan).

6. Conservation processes

Conservation actions and processes have been combined into a single list and the order in which they are listed has been amended to follow a more logical sequence from least to greatest intervention requirements.

Advice has been added about *protection* (Article 16) and an additional process has been included (*presentation*), which reflects the importance of interpretation, appreciation and education in conserving heritage places. New Articles (Article 28 and Article 29) explain the use of *presentation*.

Monitoring has also been included in this section; previously it only appeared in Conservation Practice.

7. Conservation practice

Additional guidance is provided in four new Articles: Article 32 (studies), Article 39 (determining the conservation processes to be used), Article 40 (review of conservation plans) and Article 41 (*presentation*).

8. Cultural heritage

The Charter strengthens a number of references to *conservation* of Indigenous and historic cultural heritage values where these values co-exist with natural heritage values.

Conversion table

First and second editions

This table relates the Article numbers in the 2002 and 1996 editions of the Charter.

Subject	2002 Article	1996 Article	Subject	2002 Article	1996 Article
Part A Definitions			Part B Conservation Principles (continued)		
Definitions	1	1	Disciplines and experience	6	4
Biodiversity, biological diversity	1.5	1.3	Natural significance	7	5
Community	1.13	1.14	Conservation policy	8	6
Community diversity	Deleted	1.4	Statement of significance	2	7
Conservation	1.20	1.22	Compatible uses	9	8
Conservation management measures	Deleted	1.31	Ecological processes beyond places	10	9
Degradation	1.19	1.20	Removal of elements	11	10
Disturbance	Deleted	1.21	Destruction of elements	12	11
Earth processes	1.16	1.17	Introduced elements part of ecosystem	13	–
Ecological processes	1.15	1.16	Significance of degraded ecosystems	14	–
Ecosystem	1.14	1.15	Decisions after extreme natural events	15	–
Ecosystem diversity	Deleted	1.5	Part C Conservation processes		
Enhancement	1.26	1.25	Protection	16	–
Evolutionary processes	1.17	1.18	Maintenance	17	23
Genetic diversity	1.7	1.7	Regeneration	18	12
Geodiversity	1.4	1.8	Restoration	19	13
Habitat	1.12	1.13	Reinstatement	20	17
Indigenous species	1.9	1.10	Enhancement	21–23	14–16
Introduced species	1.10	1.11	Preservation	24, 25	18, 19
Maintenance	1.22	1.30	Modification and natural significance	26	20
Modification	1.28	1.28	Modification and conservation policy	27	21
Monitoring	1.30	1.32	Modification records	Deleted	22
Natural heritage	1.1	–	Presentation	28	–
Natural integrity	1.8	1.9	Presentation not always appropriate	29	–
Natural significance	1.3	1.2	Monitoring	30	34
Organism	1.11	1.12	Part D Conservation Practice		
Place	1.2	1.1	Research precedes work	31	24
Presentation	1.29	–	High studies quality	32	–
Preservation	1.27	1.27	Record evidence before intervention	33	25
Protection	1.21	1.29	Intervention impacts and recording	34	26
Regeneration	1.23	1.23	Loss of evidence	35	27
Reinstatement	1.25	1.26	Disturbance to add to knowledge	36	28
Restoration	1.24	1.24	Conservation policy content	37	29
Species diversity	1.6	1.6	Conservation plan content	38	30
Succession	1.18	1.19	Determining conservation processes	39	–
Part B Conservation Principles			Conservation plan review and updating	40	–
Significance — basis of conservation	2	–	Awareness of conservation plan	41	–
Aim of conservation	3	2	Plan supervision	42	31
Self sustaining condition	4	–	Consultation	43	32
Basis of conservation	5	3	Keeping records	44	33

Administration of the Charter

STATUS OF THE CHARTER

The *Australian Natural Heritage Charter* was originally published in 1996 and subsequently reviewed and updated into this current second edition published in 2002.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUTURE REVIEW

The Australian Committee for IUCN (World Conservation Union) and Environment Australia plan to administer, promote and distribute this Charter. In addition, they monitor and collate the views of users, and review and update the Charter.

FOR COPIES AND COMMENTS

The Charter and other publications referred to in the Charter are available on the Internet at: www.ea.gov.au/heritage/law.

To obtain copies of the Charter or submit comments please contact:

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ANHC STEERING COMMITTEES

ANHC First Edition (1996) Steering Committee members were Dianne Campbell, Pam Eiser, John Heath, Theo Hooy, Mary Lou Morris, John Pritchard, Lisa Florian and Meg Switzer.

ANHC Second Edition (2002) Steering Committee members were Paul Adam, Dianne Campbell, Steve Corbett, Pam Eiser, George Gibbons, Ross Manthorpe, Mary Lou Morris, Armstrong Osborne and Meg Switzer.

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ecosystems

values

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/law/naturalheritage/

protection

geodiversity